

Georgetown Village

COURIER

For
and
about
the
residents
of
Georgetown
Village
Condominium

October – November - December 2016

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Edward E. Reich

I have been thinking about expectations lately. In part, this was prompted by a recent *Washington Post* article entitled “Condominiums in crisis: Financial troubles put many communities at risk.” While this article tends towards the melodramatic in describing the worst-case scenarios for condominium communities, it does reflect a reality of what can happen without sound community leadership, and homeowner interest and support.



Fortunately, we are nothing like the communities described in that article, but it led me to think about why, which led further to thinking about expectations: expectations homeowners can reasonably have of their Board members; expectations that the Board can reasonably have of other homeowners; and finally expectations homeowners (and all residents) can reasonably have of each other.

I don't intend this column to be a comprehensive list. The Community Associations Institute has a comprehensive *Rights and Responsibilities for Better Communities*, published elsewhere in this newsletter, which is far more comprehensive. I just want to speak to a few key points.

In this President's Corner, I want to address the first of these sets of expectations, expectations that I believe homeowners can reasonably have of their Board members. I will address the other sets of expectations in future newsletters.

I think homeowners have a right to expect their Board members to act at all times in what they believe to be the best interests of the community. We can disagree about how that principle gets applied in any particular situation, but it has to be the fundamental basis for all decision-making. The fiduciary responsibilities of Board members require them to put the community's best interests ahead of their own. That includes making the hard, and even unpopular decisions, when they know that is what circumstances require.

Second, I believe homeowners have a right to expect Board members to devote the time and effort necessary to carry out the work of the Board and the community that they committed to serve. An important part of this is educating oneself on the complexities of State and County condominium laws, as well as the GVC governing documents, such as the Declaration, Bylaws, and Rules.

This is not always easy. Remember that Board members are volunteers, all with lives of their own, and many with full-time jobs. But choosing to run for the Board must be accompanied by an understanding of what that entails, and a willingness to devote the time and effort the job requires.

I have served with many Board members over the years. The level of time and effort among Board members has varied widely, often because of each Board member's particular circumstances. The absolute minimum requirements are coming to Board meetings well-prepared, having read about the issues to be discussed and having given them some thought, as well as dealing with issues that arise between meetings. For those Board members who can do

more, such as serving as officers and committee chairs, so much the better.

A third important expectation I believe homeowners have is that Board members, and Management, act with transparency. Homeowners have a right to know what issues the Board is dealing with, and how those issues are being addressed. Open meetings, published Board meeting highlights, and the availability of Board meeting minutes, all contribute to this transparency. Because Board members are making decisions that affect all homeowners, and are spending money received from them, homeowners have every right to know how those decisions are being made.

Finally, Board members should be open to the thoughts, suggestions, comments, and criticisms of other homeowners. Ultimately, a Board member may or may not agree with the suggestion or criticism, but at least it should be considered with an open mind.

I will admit to not being unbiased, having served on the Board for the past 20 years, but I think GVC's Board members have consistently measured up very well against these standards. Certainly not perfect, but very well. And that is one major reason I can read the *Washington Post* article's parade of horrors and say "thank God I live at Georgetown Village Condominium."

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

October Activities

- 7 *GVCourier* Newsletter Delivery 4:30 p.m.
- 10 Columbus Day On-Site Office Closed
- 12 Board of Directors Meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 18 Landscape Committee Meeting 7:30 p.m.

November Activities

- 08 Board of Directors Meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 11 Veterans Day On-Site Office Closed
- 15 Landscape Committee Meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 24/25 Thanksgiving Holiday On-Site Office Closed

December Activities

- 01 Board and Budget/Finance Committee Meeting 7:30 p. m.
- 09 *GVCourier* Newsletter Deadline 4:30 p.m.
- 13 Board of Directors Meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 20 Landscape Committee Meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 26 Christmas Holiday On-Site Office Closed

Georgetown Village Condominium
 On-Site Management Office
 11400 Commonwealth Drive
 North Bethesda, MD 20852-2867
<http://georgetownvillage.org>

Telephone: 301-770-5264 □ Fax: 301-881-6508
 Email: GVC-Office@Georgetownvillage.org
 Business Hours: Monday through Friday
 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
 Closed Saturday, Sunday and Holidays

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Edward E. Reich
Vice President	Merry L. Elrod
Secretary	Merry L. Elrod
Director	Vacant
Director	Susan M. Kessler
Treasurer	Mark E. McArdle

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Budget and Finance	Mark E. McArdle
Landscape	Carol M. Beasley
Marketing and Communications	Carol M. Beasley
Security, Safety & Transportation	Merry L. Elrod
Election Committee	Edythe Bishop

**SCHOOL IS OPEN
 DO NOT SPEED THROUGH
 GEORGETOWN VILLAGE
 SPEED LIMIT IS 20 MPH**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from the July 12, 2016 Board of Directors Meeting:

The Board accepted the final independent Auditor's Report for FY 2016, submitted by the Goldklang Group on July 12, 2016.

The Board approved a proposal from Greenlink, Inc., for installation of replacement plant material.

Highlights from the August 9, 2016 Board of Directors Meeting:

To encourage homeowners to install water-conserving toilets, the Board agreed to waive labor charges under the In-Unit Service Program for the installation of such toilets.

The Board approved the proposals from Professional Maintenance Management, LLC, for building cleaning services, for the balance of FY 2017, with options for FY 2018 and 2019.

The Board approved purchase of certificates of deposit for both the Replacement Reserve and Unappropriated Members Equity accounts.

Highlights from the September 13, 2016 Board of Directors Meeting:

The Board approved proposals from Greenlink, Inc. for plantings at various buildings throughout the community.

The Board exercised the option for the 2017 pool season in the contract with Community Pool Service. The Board approved a proposal from Community Pool Service for replacement of the Swim Club wading pool main drain.

The Board approved a proposal from Greenlink for underground drainage systems behind 11305 Commonwealth Drive, 11309 Commonwealth Drive, and 11319 Commonwealth Drive.

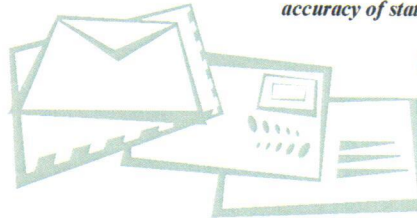
The Board approved a proposal from Hann & Hann for power washing of the exterior side of the Swim Club brick walls.

The Board accepted the proposal from TOBE Design Group for designer services in connection with interior renovations of the Community Center.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OR COMMUNITY

"Letters to the Editor or to the Community" must bear the writer's name and address. The use of initials or a pen name, or the omission of a signature, will eliminate a letter from consideration for publication. Letters are published as received and are the sole opinion/perception of the author; the Courier cannot vouch for the factual accuracy of statements made therein.



*There are no new letters
at this time.*

USE CAUTION WHEN APPROACHING THE TRAFFIC CONTROL GATES

*By Merry L. Elrod, Safety, Security and
Transportation Committee Chair*

When approaching the gate, if there is a vehicle ahead of you, do not follow too closely. The gate arm and its support must be allowed to close completely between vehicles.

Following another vehicle too closely and not allowing the gate arm and its support to fully close, and then fully raise, may result in damage to your vehicle and to the gate arm and support, which the Association then has to pay to repair.

There are cameras at each gate, and you may be held responsible for the cost of repair if you are identified as causing the damage.

GVC RULE REMINDERS

Storage of Items: Bicycles, tricycles, baby carriages, strollers, car seats, toys, coolers, sports equipment, car parts, umbrellas, laundry, rugs, doormats or similar objects must be stored within a resident's unit or in the unit's designated storage bin. **NONE OF THESE ITEMS MAY BE STORED ON BALCONIES OR PATIOS**, or in the public halls, under stairwells, in trash rooms, passageways (such as sidewalks), or in other public areas of the buildings.

Many trash rooms are equipped with bicycle racks, which may be rented on an annual basis beginning each June. Contact the Management Office for further information. Additional outdoor bike racks

are available in the 11300 and 11400 blocks of Commonwealth Drive and in the 5800 block of Edson Lane. These are available free year round on a first come, first serve basis.

Patios and Balconies: Residents must take care when using patios and balconies. **ONLY OUTDOOR FURNITURE** and **PLANTERS** can remain on balconies and patios. The patio or balcony is not a storage area. Please do not beat/shake rugs, sweep litter, leaves or dirt, or drop any items (including cigarette or cigar ashes or butts) onto a neighbor's patio or balcony. Barbecues of any kind are strictly prohibited at Georgetown Village.

For more complete information, visit <http://www.georgetownvillage.org>.

MARINE CORPS RESERVE TOYS FOR TOTS 2016 CAMPAIGN

Again this year, we will participate in the Toys for Tots donation drive. Last year's toy drive was a huge success. This was possible because of the generosity of our homeowners and residents: the kindhearted people of Georgetown Village Condominium.



The On-Site Management Office again will be the collection point. We will be glad to pick up your donation during business hours if you are unable to deliver it.

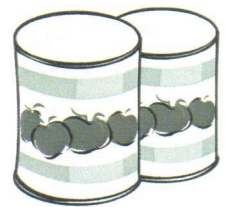
Donations will be accepted until **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2nd**.

6TH ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE FOR MANNA FOOD CENTER

Fighting hunger & feeding hope in Montgomery County!

Thursday, November 3rd through Friday, November 18th.

Our goal is to collect 304 boxes or cans (one per household) of non-perishable food to stock the shelves of the food center. Desired items include:



Peanut Butter • Pasta • Beans • Canned Tomato Sauce • Macaroni and Cheese • Soup • Baby Food • Tuna Fish or
Other Canned Meat • Canned Pasta • Canned Fruits & Vegetables • Shelf-Stable Milk
• Cereal • Oatmeal • Rice

Donations will be accepted at the On-Site Management Office during business hours, or call to arrange a pick-up from your door.

LANDSCAPING UPDATE

Over the next several weeks you will begin to see landscaping improvements throughout the community. There are two phases that will be undertaken:

Replacement Plant Material – Our landscaping contractor, Greenlink, Inc., will be replacing plant material that has died and/or had to be removed due to the harsh winter and extremely dry summer we experienced this year. Many patio shrubs will be replaced and areas in front of buildings where the area is very shady will be refurbished. We expect this work to begin around October 3rd and continue as weather permits.

Landscaping Enhancements – The Board recently approved a number of landscaping enhancements that follow the plans laid out in GVC’s Long Range Landscape Plan. Some patio shrubs that require extensive pruning will be replaced with shrubs that do not require continual pruning. Foundation plantings will be installed at the buildings that have not received any enhancements, and the shrubs at the front of the Community Center will be replaced. Owners and residents in the buildings scheduled to receive enhancements already have been notified. We expect this work to take place in November, again, as weather permits. Additional landscaping enhancements have been planned and will be undertaken when the budget permits.

Our community’s landscaping is one of its best assets, adding to the “curb appeal” and value of our property. Please help us maintain a beautifully landscaped community by being mindful of our shrub and flower beds and not allowing children or pets to wander through them. Thank you.

SNOW REMINDERS

DO:

Before the snow arrives, go to the grocery store for food you may need for 2-3 days.

Be sure to have flashlights and spare batteries on hand in case of a power outage.

Purchase an ice scraper or snow brush and a small shovel-- and use them!

Clear snow from your car frequently (every 2 hours). This will prevent a major buildup of snow that is too heavy to move.

Assist elderly or disabled residents in walking up or down slippery outside stairs.

If you have a front-wheel-drive vehicle, back into a parking space so that you can get out more easily.

DO NOT:

There are no “reserved” parking spaces in a snow storm. Do not park your car in a spot someone else

has taken the time to clear. This is a courtesy all GVC residents should extend to their neighbors.

If you clear a space, do not place personal items or signs in the parking space to prevent others from parking in it. Do not leave notes on vehicle windshields.

Do not shovel or throw snow onto bushes or shrubs. Do not park in corner parking spaces marked by orange cones or park in a way that allows your vehicle to extend over the sidewalk.

Do not park in fire lanes, entrances to the development, or in the striped walking lane in front of each building. This lane will be marked with a yellow/black stanchion.

Do not ask or expect the Building Services Staff or the Maintenance Technicians to help you clear a parking space or shovel out your car. Their responsibilities are to keep the sidewalks and driving areas clear and to perform their regular duties.

WATER CONSERVATION/PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM 2016

In the last couple of years, GVC's water bills have increased significantly and have contributed to a slight rise in condo fees. Unfortunately, we will probably have to budget an increase for water in the coming year. So it is in all our interests to control unnecessary water use. In order to do this we are initiating a Water Conservation Campaign in which we need your help.

If you are experiencing any plumbing-fixture issues in your kitchen or bathrooms, such as a dripping faucet or so-called 'phantom' flushes of the toilet, please call the On-Site Management Office for an appointment so that the maintenance staff can make any necessary repairs.

There will be ***no charge for labor*** associated with a water-leaking issue; the only charge will be for parts required to make the repair.

In early October our Maintenance Staff will include the **Water Conservation Campaign** as part of our ongoing preventative maintenance program. The staff will aggressively check for leaks in all units in an attempt to reduce our water consumption.

The staff will also continue to do following: Smoke Alarm Battery Testing and replacement (batteries replaced yearly) and Water Alarm Battery Testing and replacement as necessary.



WATER CONSERVATION KICK - OFF!!!

We encourage GVC's residents to be aware of the water they use on a daily basis so that water use and water bills can be minimized in the future.

We recommend, and can provide and install through GVC's In-Unit Service Program, the following hardware:

- Low-flow faucet aerators: *save 0.25 gallons/minute*
- Low-flow showerheads: *save 0.75 gallons/minute*
- Toilet inserts: *save 0.3 gallons per flush*
- New toilets: *save 1.9 gallons per flush*

In addition, significant amounts of water may be being wasted through plumbing leaks. A leaking faucet or running toilet can, over time, waste a considerable amount of water, increasing the costs all of us pay. We urge you to notify the Management Office immediately when you notice a leak.



TRASH/RECYCLING AT GVC

GRAY TRASH CANS

All trash, including shredded paper, must be bagged and tied



SMALL BLUE RECYCLE BINS—LOOSE NO BAGS

Newspapers

Magazines

Unwanted mail

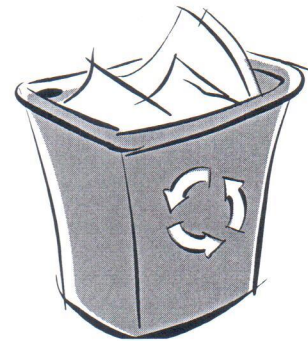
Computer and office paper

Paperback and Hardcover books

Small **collapsed FLAT** cardboard boxes, i.e., cereal boxes

milk/drink boxes, frozen dinner, snack and pasta boxes

NO BAGS



Large cardboard boxes **MUST** be collapsed **FLAT** and placed against the wall behind or alongside the blue bins

LARGE RECYCLE CANS WITH WHITE TOPS-LOOSE NO BAGS

Plastic bottles

Unbroken glass bottles and jars

Deli containers and trays, bakery trays and cake domes

Fruit and vegetable containers, cups

Bi-metal (steel/tin) cans

Clean aluminum cans and foil products

Non-hazardous aerosol cans

NO PAPER OR PLASTIC BAGS



For large oversized items, appliances, hazardous materials, etc. Please contact the GVC On-Site Management Office at 301-770-5264

Perhaps the greatest achievement for any association is creating and sustaining a sense of community among residents and leaders. This goal is best achieved when homeowners, non-owner residents and association leaders recognize and embrace their rights and responsibilities. It was with this goal in mind that CAI developed Rights and Responsibilities for Better Communities. These principles can serve as an important guidepost for board and committee members, community managers, homeowners and non-owner residents.

Homeowners have the right to:

1. A responsive and competent community association.
2. Honest, fair and respectful treatment by community leaders and managers.
3. Participate in governing the community association by attending meetings, serving on committees and standing for election.
4. Access appropriate association books and records.
5. Prudent expenditure of fees and other assessments.
6. Live in a community where the property is maintained according to established standards.
7. Fair treatment regarding financial and other association obligations, including the opportunity to discuss payment plans and options with the association before foreclosure is initiated.
8. Receive all documents that address rules and regulations governing the community association—if not prior to purchase and settlement by a real estate agent or attorney, then upon joining the community.
9. Appeal to appropriate community leaders those decisions affecting non-routine financial responsibilities or property rights.

Homeowners have the responsibility to:

1. Read and comply with the governing documents of the community.
2. Maintain their property according to established standards.
3. Treat association leaders honestly and with respect.
4. Vote in community elections and on other issues.
5. Pay association assessments and charges on time.
6. Contact association leaders or managers, if necessary, to discuss financial obligations and alternative payment arrangements.
7. Request reconsideration of material decisions that personally affect them.
8. Provide current contact information to association leaders or managers to help ensure they receive information from the community.
9. Ensure that those who reside on their property (e.g., tenants, relatives and friends) adhere to all rules and regulations.



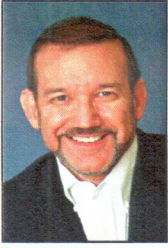
Community leaders have the right to:

1. Expect owners and non-owner residents to meet their financial obligations to the community.
2. Expect residents to know and comply with the rules and regulations of the community and to stay informed by reading materials provided by the association.
3. Respectful and honest treatment from residents.
4. Conduct meetings in a positive and constructive atmosphere.
5. Receive support and constructive input from owners and non-owner residents.
6. Personal privacy at home and during leisure time in the community.
7. Take advantage of educational opportunities (e.g., publications, training workshops) that are directly related to their responsibilities and as approved by the association.

Community leaders have the responsibility to:

1. Fulfill their fiduciary duties to the community and exercise discretion in a manner they reasonably believe to be in the best interests of the community.
2. Exercise sound business judgment and follow established management practices.
3. Balance the needs and obligations of the community as a whole with those of individual homeowners and residents.
4. Understand the association's governing documents, become educated with respect to applicable state and local laws and manage the community association accordingly.
5. Establish committees or use other methods to obtain input from owners and non-owner residents.
6. Conduct open, fair and well-publicized elections.
7. Welcome and educate new members of the community—owners and non-owner residents alike.
8. Encourage input from residents on issues affecting them personally and the community as a whole.
9. Encourage events that foster neighborliness and a sense of community.
10. Conduct business in a transparent manner when feasible and appropriate.
11. Allow homeowners access to appropriate community records when requested.
12. Collect all monies due from owners and non-owner residents.
13. Devise appropriate and reasonable arrangements, when needed and as feasible, to facilitate the ability of individual homeowners to meet their financial obligations to the community.
14. Provide a process residents can use to appeal decisions affecting their non-routine financial responsibilities or property rights—where permitted by law and the association's governing documents.
15. Initiate foreclosure proceedings only as a measure of last resort.
16. Make covenants, conditions and restrictions as understandable as possible, adding clarifying "lay" language or supplementary materials when drafting or revising the documents.
17. Provide complete and timely disclosure of personal and financial conflicts of interest related to the actions of community leaders, e.g., officers, the board and committees. (Community associations may want to develop a code of ethics.)





Mark Goldberg

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