



North Fairlington

News

Historic Fairlington Villages

FEBRUARY 2005

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WWW.FAIRLINGTONVILLAGES.COM

Auditor Reports 1 Percent Surplus for 2004

The Association ran an operating surplus of \$53,173 in fiscal 2004, nearly offsetting the operating deficit of roughly \$61,000 the Association incurred in the year before.

David Bremer, the Association's outside auditor, reported a 2004 budget of \$4.58 million for the year that ended Sept. 30. Bremer presented his draft audit at the Board's January meeting.

"Fairlington Villages continues to be one of the best-managed associations in the D.C. area because of the leadership of management and the Board," said Bremer, whose firm audits the books of nearly 500 community associations. "You have good fiscal controls."

The Board transferred the surplus to unappropriated members equity. At year-end that account stood at \$58,953. The account helps provide

liquidity for condo operations and a cushion if the Association runs a deficit.

Bremer noted that the Association was increasing its contributions to reserves from \$1.2 million in 2004 to \$1.4 million this year. At year end the Association had \$2.1 million in reserves, up from \$1.7 million in 2003.

Reserve funds are set aside for the repair and replacement of the Association's major physical assets such as roofs, pools, hallways, balconies, patio fences, sidewalks, sewer lines, and building masonry. The Board expects to launch several major infrastructure renovation projects in the next couple of years, including renovation of the apartment hallways and reconstruction of the swimming pools.

The condo will spend more than \$500,000 this year to renovate the

parapet walls on the flat-roofed buildings, including replacing coping stones and deteriorated bricks, and renovating the scuppers.

A contractor will conduct a new reserve study in the spring, and the Board will use it to help develop the 2006 budget.

Bremer observed that only one unit owner's condo fee account, out of 1,703, was delinquent more than six months, calling that "incredible." The board vigorously pursues delinquent accounts.

The auditor praised Legum & Norman, the Association's management company. "They are one of the best financial management companies in the business," he said. In conducting the audit, the auditor examines Legum & Norman's invoices, payments, and internal control systems.

Continued on page 5

Arlington Assessments Resume Skyward Climb

Arlington County's 2005 real estate assessments for Fairlington units again skyrocketed by about 20 percent to twice that, after slowing a bit last year.

A sample survey of Fairlington models found increases ranging from 23 percent to 44 percent. That was more than double the increases of a year ago but about the same percentage rise as two years ago.

Fairlington assessments have nearly tripled since the area's real estate bear market ended in 1999. The 2005 assessments marked sixth straight annual increase.

Assessments of Braddock II units, of which North Fairlington has 44, hit

\$243,900, up from \$169,00 in 2004 and \$150,800 the year before. The Association has 268 of the one-bedroom apartments among five models, each between 700 and 767 square feet.

Clarendon IIs, the 1,383-square-foot, three-story townhouse that with 525 units is predominant among the stock of 1,703 homes in the condo, hit \$364,100, up 30 percent from last year. The 1,500-square-foot Clarendon I, which is more common in South Fairlington, was assessed at \$397,800, up from \$302,000.

Assessments are intended to reflect 100 percent of a home's fair-market

value in the second half of 2004, but real estate agents notes that they always lag behind actual sales prices – by tens of thousands of dollars.

Continued on page 5

| Unit | % | Assessment |
|--------------|----|------------|
| Braddock II | 44 | \$243,900 |
| Staunton | 23 | \$277,900 |
| Berkeley | 30 | \$323,200 |
| Barcroft I | 30 | \$322,800 |
| Sherwood | 38 | \$333,700 |
| Clarendon II | 30 | \$364,100 |
| Monticello | 27 | \$365,000 |
| Mt. Vernon | 26 | \$400,500 |
| Dominion I | 28 | \$423,000 |

Source: Dept. of Real Estate Assessments

Hallway Panel Nears Presentations

Residents may have a chance to review presentation boards illustrating proposals to renovate the condo's apartment building hallways during the Fairlington Historical Society's House and Garden Tour on May 14.

Between now and then, the Ad Hoc Hallway Committee expects to have recommended a designer to the Board of Directors. The committee has been meeting for months to develop details of the condo's needs, everything from which hallways will be

renovated first to how to deal with regulations on postal boxes.

At the committee's January meeting (which occurred too late for this issue), management and contractors were to discuss plans to address lead paint, which tests indicated was present in hallways. Residents should not be concerned about the presence of undisturbed lead paint. The condo has been advised by the Environmental Protection Agency on what steps it may take.

Pool-fix Panel Starts Work

An ad hoc committee on replacing the pools began meeting in January to advise the Board of Directors.

Last summer residents responded to a survey that asked whether and how they would like the pools to be redesigned. The pool renovations committee is considering all responses. There are many options, so the work of the committee will be to evaluate how to update the pools, while keeping within the budget.

"Our goal is to figure out how we

can renovate the pools to be more in line with what residents want, while not affecting their condo fees," said committee chair Olivia Shorter.

The committee plans to study the most beneficial and cost-effective way to replace each of the pools, doing one per year for the next six years. Pool 1 will be replaced first.

The committee hopes to complete its work before the Board sets the 2006 budget this summer.

Board Reviewing Commercial Parking

The Board of Directors and management are working with Arlington County to zone parking on Abingdon Street across from the firehouse in an effort to restrict commercial parking by nonresidents.

Some residents have reported non-resident use of the street for parking of several commercial vehicles. The county is considering zoning the area as a residential zone prohibiting commercial parking or restricting parking to certain hours. If you have questions, please call the office.

Variance Process Under Review

Because of growing interest in home renovations, the Board of Directors and Variance Committee are reviewing the process by which owners receive condo approval for structural changes to their units. The Board is expected to consider Variance Committee recommendations at its Feb. 2 meeting.

Activities Around the Grounds

Super Bowl Party 2005

North Fairlington will sponsor a Super Bowl Party in the community center on Feb. 6. The game will be shown on a large screen television or an LCD projector. We'll provide the beer and snacks. So come and bring a friend for the annual Americana celebration of pop excess. Kick-off is 6:25 p.m., or whenever the network finishes its slate of pre-game commercials.

Games Night

The monthly North Fairlington Games Night offers residents and friends an opportunity to meet neighbors over cards and board games. Please join us Feb. 27 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the community center.

Home Tour Set for May 14

The Fairlington Historical Society's Home and Garden Tour will be held May 14 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tickets are \$10 each and may be reserved by sending a check payable to FHS, Treasurer, P. O. Box 16095, Alexandria, VA 22302.

Those interested in having their homes on the tour; serving on the committee or with any questions may contact Margaret Williams at 703-379-7252 or Margaretwms@hotmail.com.

The FHS site is www.fairlingtonhistoricalsociety.org.

Raising a Racket for Charity

The Tennis Committee and the Arlington County Tennis Association will sponsor a charity tournament benefiting the Joy of Sports Foundation April 22-24 on the main tennis courts. If you are interested in participating or helping to organize, please contact Sue Geibel at 703-578-1133.

Board Reconsiders 5K

The Board of Directors has postponed a rerun of the Fairlington 5K in April. Board members said they were concerned about the race route, lack of participation by residents, and benefit to a single charity.

Arlington firefighters last sponsored the race three years ago as a benefit for a camp for burned children. The condo revived the race last year, keeping the link to the camp. But at the last minute the course was reset after the county said it would charge for police overtime to monitor the race through Fairlington.

The Board said it would remain open to rescheduling the race in the fall in response to local interest. The Board may consider a "fun run" open only to residents of Fairlington. If you have interest or comments, please contact Cory Loudenslager at corylesq@aol.com or 703-671-4156.

Manager's Corner

Bill Reynolds



Flat Roof Repairs – The flat roof repair program continues in Ward 4 throughout February. The work in Wards 1 and 3 has been completed. Notices will be distributed to buildings in advance of the workers starting on your building. Residents in adjacent buildings may be affected by the traffic of the contractors as they come and go.

This program is expected to continue into the spring, but only affect small areas of the property at any given time.

New Security Service – The condo has replaced its patrol service, Wackenhut, with Securitas Security Services USA under a one-year contract through January 2006. The contact phone number is 703-930-7282.

Changes in Occupancy/Emergency Contact – We recently experienced several emergencies in which we were unable to reach the owner/occupant of the unit. In most cases the resident had rented the unit and didn't realize that there was any need to register in the office. Please: If you haven't registered with the office it is important to do so immediately. In the event of a water leak or smell of smoke, it is critical that we can contact the affected resident.

Outside Water Faucets – In December we found a number of faucets that had not been shut off, some of which broke causing water damage inside units – at the owners' expense. To avoid the possibility of broken pipes, please shut off any exterior faucets, if you have access to the valve.

Email Addresses – If you have picked up your 2005 decal, you know that we are soliciting email addresses from all owners and residents. Our goal is to improve communications, as we will be able to email groups of owners/residents regarding a variety of matters, including the newsletter. If you haven't given us your email address or if you don't know whether it is current, please stop by or call the office at 703-379-1440.

If you are still parking in one of the lots with a 2004 decal, your vehicle is subject to towing without notice. Please bring a current registration when you pick up the 2005 decal.

Leaves – Do you still have leaves in your backyard? If so you must bag those leaves and take them to the curb for pickup. Leaf removal on the property has been completed. Throwing or raking leaves into the common area this time of year will result in a charge to you for the leaf removal.

Snow Season Is Here (Maybe) – It is our goal to remove snow promptly, however we have to assign priorities. These are:

- Clear streets for emergency vehicles;
- Clear parking lots, building steps and entrances;

Property Management Office

Location

Fairlington Villages
A Condominium Association
3001 South Abingdon Street
Arlington, Virginia 22206

Hours

8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday
9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday
Closed Sundays and federal holidays

Communications

Telephone: 703-379-1440
Fax: 703-379-1451
General Info Email: office@fairlingtonvillages.com
Service Request Email: service@fairlingtonvillages.com
Website: www.fairlingtonvillages.com

Staff

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Bill Reynolds | General Manager |
| Susan Shepard | Operations Manager |
| Miguel Galvez | Maintenance Manager |
| Trish Lall | Assistant General Manager |
| Julia Dickerman | Resident Services Coordinator |

Emergency

After Hours Emergency: 703-600-6000

Patrol Service

To contact security duty officer, call 703-930-7282.
If the officer does not answer, the phone will page him/her.
If the officer does not call back within 10 minutes, call again.
Security hours: 8 p.m.-5 a.m. nightly.

- Clear snow from all other sidewalks;
- The management office has a limited number of snow shovels available for you to borrow. If you borrow a shovel please return it to the office as soon as you are done with it so that it is available to other residents. During heavy snows or in the event of sleet your patience will be appreciated.

Maintenance Tip – Should you suddenly lose power to a portion of your unit, it is most likely the result of a “tripped” circuit breaker. In most one-level apartment units, the circuit breaker panel is located in or near the kitchen, and in most townhouses and two-level apartment units, it is in the basement utility area. To reset the breaker, find the one that is out of alignment with the others (all breakers should either be in the “on” or “off” position). Turn it off and then reset it on. If you regularly have a problem with a breaker, you may have an overloaded circuit or a weak breaker. First reduce the load on the circuit. If that doesn't work you may need an electrician. CAUTION: If the breaker will not reset or it continues to trip when you reset it, there is likely a short in the line or a bad breaker.

The News is published by
Fairlington Villages,
A Condominium Association

Newsletter Staff

Managing Editor Bennett Minton
Webmaster Chris Larson
Designer MBC ink

Board of Directors

President, Ward 1 Director
Guy Land 703-998-7663
Vice President, Ward 2 Director
Sarah Kish 703-379-6369
Treasurer, Ward 3 Director
Carmel Cassidy 703-379-1610
Secretary, Ward 6 Director
Tom Burke 703-379-8279
Ward 4 Director
Larry Straub 703-379-1739
Ward 5 Director
Cory Loudenslager 703-671-4156
At-Large Director
Terry Placek 703-671-7550
At-Large Director
Roger Lowe 703-931-0418
At-Large Director
Claudia Wolfe 703-998-0294

Committee Chairs

Buildings & Grounds
Kay Speerstra 703-998-5361
Communications
Bennett Minton 703-845-8409
comm@fairlingtonvillages.com
Community Activities
Jennifer Butler 703-998-6581
Tracy Darroch 703-845-5825
Parking, Security & Traffic
Mirta Arazoza 703-824-8140
parksec@fairlingtonvillages.com
Pool
Toni Castagnolo 703-671-7694
Tennis
Peggy Bultman 703-998-7305
Variance
Jerry Kraus 703-845-8251
variance@fairlingtonvillages.com
Ad Hoc Hallway Renovation
Gordon Shelp
Glenda Taylor
designadhoc@fairlingtonvillages.com

Comments, articles, and letters are welcome. The deadline for submissions is the 10th of each month. Please deliver or email materials to the management office. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions.

Board Meeting Agenda Feb. 2

The following is the preliminary agenda of the Feb. 2 Board of Directors meeting. The Board invites residents to review the agenda, contact a Board member with concerns or suggestions, and attend. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at the community center.

- I. Homeowner Forum
- II. Contractor Presentation – Lancaster Landscapes Inc.
- III. Call to Order
- IV. Establishment of Quorum
- V. Approval of Minutes – Jan. 5
- VI. New Business
 - A. Trash Violation – 4613 30th Rd.
 - B. Variance Request – 2820 Columbus St. (stone pathway)
 - C. Variance Request – 4811 31st St., C2 (cable line)
 - D. Variance Request – 3062 Buchanan St., C2 (wall modifications)
 - E. Handicapped Parking Request – 3059 Buchanan St.
 - F. Reserve Study Contract
 - G. Revision to Variance Request Form
 - H. Certification of Candidates
 - I. 2005 Election Panel – Non-director Members
 - J. 2005 Election Panel – Director Members
 - K. Amanda Taylor Award
- VII. Management Action Items
- VIII. Reports
 1. Officers (President and Secretary)
 2. Treasurer
 3. Committees
 4. Management Financial
 5. Management Administrative
 6. Maintenance
- IX. Establishment of Next Board Meeting – March 2

The agenda and the management report are available for review in the management office. The Board packet is available for review beginning on the Thursday before the meeting.

Website to Be Updated

The Fairlington Villages website will be revamped to improve ease of use, under changes the Board of Directors approved in January.

The changes – coming soon – include giving committee links greater prominence, eliminating redundant pages and consolidating others, and expanding the newsletter archive.

Webmaster Chris Larson and other Communications Committee members spent several months reviewing the site (www.fairlingtonvillages.com) before making recommendations.

Larson said he hoped the changes would ease user navigation. He noted that the site features floor plans for

the 20 unit models but that it can be difficult to find their links. Those and other features will be better highlighted.

The current “Resources” tab is dedicated to the Residents Manual, an update of which is about to be released and will be posted on the site.

The condo is considering ways to improve its ability to track maintenance requests on-line, allow owners to submit on-line variance requests and other forms and perhaps develop a website search function. The Ad Hoc Technology Committee may review possible improvements and potential vendors.

Board Notes

The Board of Directors met Jan. 5. The following are highlights.

New Business

A. Trash Violation - 3021 Columbus St.: Mr. Burke moved not to assess a \$50 trash charge and a \$25 late fee. The motion was divided: to waive the trash charge (failed 2-7) and to waive the \$25 late fee (passed 8-1).

B. Trash Violation - 4629 31st Rd., B2: Mr. Burke moved to assess a \$50 trash charge. Failed 1-8.

C. Trash Violation - 4828 28th St.: Mr. Burke moved to assess a \$50 trash charge. Passed 9-0.

D. Variance Request - Garden Shed - 2848 Columbus St.: Ms. Wolfe moved to approve a request to permit a garden shed in the backyard exceeding the height of the fence by 12 inches, with the understanding that the shed shall be removed or brought into compliance upon the transfer of the unit; the owner would be responsible for any damages to the building or fence caused by the shed. Passed 6-3.

E. Variance Request - Convert Attic Space and Install Spiral Staircase -

4904 29th Rd., C2: Ms. Wolfe moved to approve the request, including the engineer's statements, with the understanding that all work is to be performed by a licensed/bonded and insured contractor and in accordance with the submission. The owner would indemnify the Association for any damage caused by the modifications and for all costs, judgments and/or expenses related to modifications. The homeowner would be responsible for building permits. Failed 0-9.

F. Handicap Parking Request - 4615 31st Road: Mr. Lowe moved to designate a handicapped parking space in Lot 54 from Dec. 16, 2004 through June 30, 2005. Passed 9-0.

G. Fiscal 2004 Audit: Ms. Cassidy moved to accept the audit for fiscal 2004. Passed 9-0.

H. Patrol Service Contract: Mr. Lowe moved to enter into a one-year contract with Securitas Security Services USA, Inc., for the period of Feb. 1, 2005 to Jan. 31, 2006, at an hourly rate of \$18.97, plus holidays for 63

hours per week, and to purchase a vehicle for use by the officers and staff at an annual cost of \$10,320. Passed 8-1.

I. Catch Basin Inlet Covers: Ms. Placek moved to authorize management to replace two storm drain covers at certain locations for \$7,200. Passed 9-0.

J. Change Order for Flat Roof Coping/Parapet Replacement Repairs: Ms. Cassidy moved to authorize a change order with Northeast Contracting Corporation for replacement of bricks as needed at an increased cost of \$12 per brick, for an estimate of \$75,072 for all 92 buildings. Passed 9-0.

K. Suit to Obtain Court-ordered Sale - 4885B 28th St.: The motion was withdrawn by unanimous consent at the request of Mr. Land.

L. Towing Refund Request: Ms. Cassidy moved to reimburse the owners at 3025 Columbus St. \$200 in fees for towing from a restricted lot. Failed 1-8.

Assessment

Continued from page 1

"I know a lot of people are upset," said veteran real estate agent Lois Robinson. "Everyone likes to brag about how high the values are, but then they complain about the taxes."

The increases were announced Jan. 14. The county said all real estate assessments increased 18.8 percent, led by condominiums.

The county board will set the tax rate in April. Last year the board, flush with cash, lowered the rate to 95.8 cents per \$100 of assessed value. That still left Fairlington homeowners with property tax increases of hundred of dollars. An unchanged tax rate this year would leave a Sherwood owner with a tax hike of \$888.

Owners have until March 1 to appeal their assessments. They may begin the process by calling the Department of Real Estate Assessments, at 703-228-3920, and speaking to the neighborhood appraiser. With scores of virtually identical units, however, Fairlington owners face long odds in reducing their bills.

Information on the assessment process, including figures for every property in the county, is available from the real estate assessments link on Arlington's website: www.co.arlington.va.us/dmf/tax_yr_inf.htm.

Alexandria announces its 2004 assessments in March.

-Bennett Minton

Audit

Continued from page 1

The Association's total assets – cash, investments, receivables, and property less depreciation – stood at \$2.5 million, up from \$2.2 million in the prior year.

Lower interest rates and declining reserve balances reduced the Association's interest income from \$118,769 in 2003 to \$87,058 last year. Because the condo allocates interest income to operating expenses, the lower income put additional pressure on the operating budget. But because of the lower interest income, the Association's taxes also declined.

Most expense categories were relatively close to the amounts initially budgeted, but a few accounts were significantly over budget. These included water and sewer expenses (largely because of increases in Arlington's rates) and non-insured losses (on account of Tropical Storm Isabel in September 2003 and water leaks from a wet summer).

To help manage costs and keep the budget in the black, the Board deferred several projects, among them delaying the exterior painting of one ward and postponing window caulking.

Bremer will attend the condo's annual meeting March 30 to report on the audit and respond to questions. The management office has copies of the audit.

-Guy Land

February Activities

| <i>Sunday</i> | <i>Monday</i> | <i>Tuesday</i> | <i>Wednesday</i> | <i>Thursday</i> | <i>Friday</i> | <i>Saturday</i> |
|---|--|--|--|---|---------------|--|
| | | 1 February Pool Working Group - 7 pm | 2 Board of Directors 7 pm | 3 Reserves & Infrastructure Committee - 7 pm | 4 | 5 |
| 6 Superbowl Party 6:25 pm Kickoff | 7 | 8 FCA Meeting 7:30 pm (S Fairlington CC) | 9 Communications Committee - 7 pm | 10 Activities Committee - 7 pm | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 Reserves & Infrastructure Committee - 7 pm | 15 Parking, Security & Traffic Committee - 7 pm | 16 Telecommunications & Technology 7 pm | 17 Variance Committee - 7 pm | 18 | 19 Fairlington Historical Society Oral History Training 9 am |
| 20 | 21 Management Office Closed | 22 Apartment Hallway Committee - 7 pm | 23 | 24 Historical Society 6:30 pm | 25 | 26 |
| 27 Games Night 7 - 9 pm | 28 B&G Committee 7 pm | 1 March Pool Working Group - 7 pm | 2 Board of Directors 7 pm | 3 Reserves & Infrastructure Committee - 7 pm | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 Pool Committee 7 pm | 8 FCA Meeting 7:30 pm (S Fairlington CC) | 9 Communications Committee - 7 pm | 10 Activities Committee - 7 pm | 11 | 12 |

Meetings held at the community center unless otherwise noted. Please call the office to confirm.

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Fairlington Villages, A Condominium Association
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