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Spring

2022

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BOARD TALK

president's message >>>

Welcome Spring!

Thanks to everyone who participated in our March Open Community Meeting. Your input allowed the Board to make decisions on three major projects; LanternFly Mitigation (see page 4), **Increasing the Working Capital Fee for New Homeowners** (see page 4) and replacing the carpet in the Clubhouse. The location of the new park benches has been finalized and will be installed soon (see page 6). There is also a section on Q&A from the Open Community Meeting (see page 6) as well as updates on our new pool vendor, Municipal Services Act, and storm drain repair. Finally, see page 5 to gain a better understanding of key financial accounts; Deferred Maintenance Reserves, Capital Reserves, and Working Capital Reserves.

"Board Talk" is focused on improving communications throughout the Hearthstone Community. Please send your comments to Jim Vonderhorst.

be considerate of your neighbors >>>

Show them that you care!

Living in an active adult community like ours may be different than what you experienced prior to moving to Hearthstone. Homes may be closer to one another, home lots are smaller and yes, there are those Rules and Regulations that we all must follow. Please keep the following in mind to be a better neighbor...

Please complete a Modification Request Form for ALL exterior work.

Modifications must be pre-approved by the ARC for **all** exterior work.

Please follow the one-way signs on upper Weber (by the "lollipop")

We continue to have close calls due to residents and guests not following the signage.

Please Obey Speed Limits!

There are posted speed limits in our community. This is for the safety of all. Please slow down and watch your speed. Be sure to **STOP** at all stop signs. Running through these signs puts you and your neighbors at risk. Remind your guests, and delivery personnel, of the speed limits.

Please Park Considerately

Parking is at a premium in our community. If parking on the street, don't take two parking spaces. **No one should be parking in front of mailboxes.**

Please Use the Pet Area

When walking your pet, please be considerate of the community and your neighbors. Do not allow your pet to relieve themselves on a resident's property. If an emergency happens on the way to the Pet Area, have them use the common area between the street and sidewalk and then clean thoroughly. **All residents are required to pick up after their pets and dispose of properly.**

spotlight on expenses >>>

Do You Know What Your Homeowner Fees Pay For?

The 2022 Budget has been approved by your Board. In an effort for more transparency, the board will use Board Talk as a means to help the residents better understand the Community Budget and expenses.

We all pay monthly Home Owner Association (HOA) fees: single family homes pay \$239, and the Town Homes pay \$294. This represents a \$0 increase over 2021 dues. Condominium fees are \$239 (Community Fee) and \$299 (Condo Association Fee)

Some of the monies are used for typical maintenance items such as lawn maintenance, snow removal, trash collection, pool operation and cleaning of the club house. We also must contribute monies to our reserve accounts. Reserve accounts will be used for future major infrastructure repairs such as street repaving and sidewalk replacement.

All items that have been mentioned can be found in the budget. The budget is available to all residents upon request. Here are some other examples...



Belgium Block Replacement

In 2021, Board Members identified damaged or missing Belgium Blocks that needed to be repaired. The cost to your Association was \$3,843



Sidewalk Repair

In 2021, Board Members identified cracked sidewalks that needed to be replaced. The cost to your Association was \$8,450

updates from the board >>>

Architectural Review Committee Updates: Bob Bottini

The ARC Committee is currently collaborating with residents on 4 projects. Any residents who have started/completed exterior projects without an approved Modification Request will be sent a non-compliance notice and will be visited by the ARC Committee to discuss resolution. The ARC is also creating guidelines for replacement of front walkways.

Landscaping Updates: Joyce Eldridge-Howard

*Spring clean-up has begun. Mulch will be applied soon. Three landscaping projects have been approved by the Board (See "2022 Board Projects" for details). **For your convenience, you may have received a listing of shrubs from 3G Landscaping Design & Supply**, an arm of Custom Landscaping. They will remove and plant listed shrubs in front of your property at your request. This service is optional and is charged directly to the homeowner*

Building and Grounds Updates: Tom Cavagnaro and Robert Killion

Proposals for community entrance sign replacement, clubhouse fireplace repair and clubhouse rug replacement are being collected and reviewed. Wood fence panel behind Thornton SF homes repaired.

Budget Update: Robert Killion

First quarter financials will be distributed by Nancy with the recap of our March Open Community Meeting. Operating budget will continue to be tight due to increases in pool contract, MEM Fees and inflation.

Hearthstone Community Manager: Nancy Capella

Electrical Repairs on Condo utility panels scheduled for April 12th. Currently working with Hillsborough Township to obtain expense reimbursement due to the Municipal Services Act.

2022 board projects >>>

Every year, the Board must identify any potential projects for the New Year that must be planned for and expensed against the 2022 budget. The Board has identified the following as projects to be addressed for the year:

1. **Replace Community Entrance**
Signs: **In Process**
2. **Reinvest Community Funds per 2021 audit: In Process**
3. **Review upcoming reserve expenditures coming due in 2022: In Process**
 - a. **Replace Rug in Clubhouse.**
 - b. **Replace AED**
 - c. **Replace Pool Cover**
4. **Establish Welcome Sessions for new Homeowners**
5. **Landscaping: Board Approved for Spring completion**
 - a. **Replace shrubs at entrance**
 - b. **Update landscaping around clubhouse**
 - c. **Address tree roots on Thornton**
6. **Research and establish new contract with a Pool Vendor: Completed**
7. **Research and determine what can be done to mediate LanternFly Infestation: Completed**
8. **Investigate Municipal Services Act and act accordingly: In Process**
9. **Investigate Working Capital Fees for New Homeowners: In Process**

Depending on the needs of the Community and our budget, projects may be added to or deleted from this list during the year

Your 2022 Hearthstone Community Board Members

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Jim Vonderhorst | President |
| Joyce Eldridge-Howard | Vice President |
| Robert Killion | Treasurer |
| Bob Bottini | Secretary |
| Tom Cavagnaro | Trustee |
| Nancy Capella | MEM Property Mgmt. |



Did You Know?

The Clubhouse is now available to rent for private events. Contact Nancy for details

Did You Know?

There are now new windows that open in the exercise room to allow for better ventilation



Thinking of replacing landscaping? (Or any exterior modification)

Contact Nancy for a Modification Request Form, complete and submit your request. Installation may begin AFTER receiving approval from the Architectural Review Committee

Upcoming Meetings

Our next **Open Community Meeting** is scheduled for May 18th in the Clubhouse. Details will follow.

2nd Quarter Birthdays

Joyce Eldridge-Howard: April 14

Jim Vonderhorst: April 21

Vivien Herritt: April 28

Bob Bottini: April 29

Zahava Schaefer: May 5

Roger Velic: May 5

Jan Senese: May 11

Would you like your birthday to be listed in "Board Talk"?

Send your name and date of birth to Bob Bottini at: zajsara04@icloud.com

board member spotlight >>>

Nancy Capella:

Although not a Board Member, Nancy has been our MEM Community Manager for the last 15 years. Nancy began her career with American Standard and then J&J before leaving to stay home and raise her three children - Bobby, Chrissy and Gina. Nancy also has a background in the Real Estate Appraising field for 25 years where she received her license in appraising. She enjoys her time in the mountains with Lou, anytime spent with her kids and cooking/baking. Fun fact... Nancy was a brown belt, bartender, boxer, and bouncer which must be the result of growing up in a family of Irish NYC Police Officers. We thank Nancy for all she does at Hearthstone!



lanternfly mitigation planned >>>

Based on the input received at our March Open Community Meeting, the Board has contracted with Viking Pest Control to treat 402 trees in our Community. There will be two applications:

On or around July 10th: **Basal Trunk Application**, which will cause the sap from trees to become poisonous to lanternflies thereby controlling the population and minimizing damage to the trees.

On or around August 10th: **Knockdown Spray Application**, which will kill infestations of the pests that have attacked the trees.

Trees to be treated include:

- 123 in the front of Townhome and Single-Family homes
- 207 in common areas
- 72 in and around Condos
- **Trees in the rear of homes will not be treated due to cost**
- **Oaks and Arborvitaes will not be treated since they are not attractive to the insects.**

Please keep in mind that this is a minimal application and will not completely eradicate all lanternflies! Homeowners may still need to take additional measures to minimize the nuisance.



proposal to increase the working capital fee to new homeowners >>>

WATCH YOUR MAIL FOR THIS AMENDMENT TO THE BYLAWS...WE NEED YOUR VOTE!

Currently new homeowners contribute an “application fee” equal to three months of the Annual Community Assessment. This money goes directly to the Association’s “Working Capital” account which allows the Association to take on new projects for the betterment of the Community.

Existing homeowners attending the March Open Community Meeting were supportive of the Board’s proposal to increase this “application fee” to five months of the Annual Community Assessment.

However, since this results in a change to the Association’s Bylaws, an affirmative vote of a majority of the members is required. You can vote in person at our May Open Community Meeting or by absentee ballot which will be sent to you shortly.

This change will have no impact on current homeowners other than increasing our revenues and minimizing future increases in community assessments

YOUR VOTE IS CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS INITIATIVE!

Thank you for your participation in this important vote

storm drain update >>>

Late last year, the Board contracted with Tri State Engineering to perform the following work to address our storm drains and Hurricane IDA damage. We reviewed the work with Tri-State on April 4th and determined:

Retention Basins: Status: All Work Completed

1. Clean all trash/sediment out of head wall and inlet/outlets
2. Remove all excess vegetation
3. Install 6 mil filter fabric and 3-4 inches of graded base stone to improve flow

Within the Community: Status: All Work Completed EXCEPT items #2 & 3

1. Clean out ALL storm drains on the entire site and check for any obstructions in pipes
2. Install topsoil and grass seed at all low areas throughout the site (*much has been washed away*)
3. Repair retaining wall (Weber and Sunnymead) and install filter fabric and decorative stone
4. Install new sewer lid on Weber
5. Remove excess erosion at the site behind 57 Thornton and install filter fabric and stone for water runoff.

Tri State will be on-site during April to reinstall topsoil, seed and straw in all locations previously treated and to repair the retaining wall at Weber and Sunnymead

understanding HOA financials >>>

The Board is frequently asked about three key financial “reserve” accounts of the Homeowners Association and how they work. The following is a recap.

Capital Reserves: *This account, funded by our monthly homeowner dues, contains the funds necessary to replace major components owned by the Association when the effective life of the component ends. In the recently completed Hearthstone at Hillsborough Capital Reserve Study, forty-five key components, and the useful life of each, are listed including **sidewalk and road replacement, townhouse and clubhouse roof replacement, clubhouse HVAC replacement, clubhouse furniture and gym equipment, community fencing, etc.** The Board decides if and when to replace these items based on the Capital Reserves Study, an item’s current condition and the monies available. The monies in the Capital Reserve Accounts must be spent only on Capital Reserve items. Examples of Capital Reserve expenditures coming due are:*

- **2022: Carpeting in the Clubhouse, \$15,000. Replace Community Entrance Sign, \$15,000**
- **2025: Pool Furniture, \$11,000**
- **2028: Asphalt Paving, \$600,000. Clubhouse Furniture, \$16,250. Tennis Court Overlay, \$35,000.**

Working Capital Reserves: *This account is funded primarily by the fees charged to new homeowners when purchasing a home in the Community. It is used to purchase new items for the enhancement of the Community. Examples are the **new park benches and new windows in the gym.** Use of this account is at the Board’s discretion*

Deferred Maintenance Reserves: *This account, funded by our monthly homeowner dues, is used for Community maintenance items that occur every 3-5 years. Examples are **striping of the roadways, power washing of Condos and Townhouses, painting of outside trim, roadway crack filling, etc.***

welcome new ARC members >>>

*Thank you to **Pam Maiolo** and **Rich Couzzi** who have volunteered to serve on the Architectural Review Committee (ARC). Volunteers on the ARC, Social Committee and the Board enable our Community to grow and run efficiently. Thank you to all!*

upcoming social events >>>

First Monday of each month, 7:00pm to? Left-Center-Right Dice Game (LCR) in Clubhouse.
Questions? Call Thelma (908) 359-6223. Bring \$5.00 in single, one-dollar bills.
Saturday, June 18, 4pm: Barbecue and Entertainment by the Pool (Details to follow)
Sunday, August 28th, 2-4pm: Ice Cream Social at the pool (Details to follow)

mark your calendar!>>>

Hearthstone Community Open Board Meeting, Wednesday, May 18th 6:30 PM – Clubhouse. *Vote on Working Capital Amendment to the Community Bylaws...We need your vote!*

board approved final location of new park benches >>>

- 2 New Benches around curb, on Weber, near Steele
- Existing bench at Weber and Steele around curb to be relocated to the Bocce Court area.
- 1 new Bench at 2/4 Steele Condo Courtyard
- 1 new bench at 2/4 Waterman Condo Courtyard
- Existing bench on Upper Weber (past chain) will be relocated across street out of doggy refuse area.
- Existing Bench in Cul de Sac area remains in current location.

municipal services act update >>>

The Board is applying for rebates from the Township of Hillsborough due to the Municipal Services Act of New Jersey. If successful, the Association should receive three or four thousand dollars to offset our operating expenses for streetlamp utilities and snow removal. Watch this space for updates.

new pool vendor selected >>>

Dream Pools is our new pool maintenance vendor. Additional details will be sent as we approach the pool season. Operating hours will be:

May 28th – July 3rd: Weekends and Holidays only: Noon to 7pm

July 4th -September 5th: Daily, Noon to 7pm

Q&A form the March Open Community Meeting >>>

Question: Should we investigate placing solar panels on the Clubhouse roof to lower utility expenses?

Answer: Solar panels may lower utility costs but are not currently being considered due to the upfront costs. An increase in the Association's "Working Capital" funds, via the proposed amendment to our bylaws, may increase the chances of solar panels being considered by the Board in the future.

Question: Can we repaint the lines in the roadway and parking areas?

Answer: The Board will discuss at the April Board Meeting. Line Striping was last done in 2017 at a cost of \$1725

Question: There is a dead tree in the forested area behind my house and I'm afraid it may fall and damage property.

Answer: Homeowners should advise the Community Manager if there are dead trees in forested areas that present a danger to Association or Homeowner property. If deemed a danger, the Association will remove.

condo corner >>>

**Your 2021 Hearthstone
CONDOMINIUM Board Members**
Rob Kenific
Jan Senese

Condo Alert

**The Condo Board urgently
needs Condo homeowners to run
to fill three open positions.**



websites >>>

Hearthstone FACEBOOK Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HearthstoneAtHillsborough>

Hearthstone Website
<https://www.hearthstoneathillsborough.org>

hearthstone committees >>>

All residents are welcome to join the various committees that our community has to offer. If you would like to know more about the committees in Hearthstone or become a member, please contact Nancy or the following contact numbers:

| Committees | Contact |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Social Activity | Thelma Emory (908) 359-6223 |
| Knitting | Fran Cavagnaro (908) 359-5282 Ilona O'Sullivan (908) 428-6328 |
| Book Club | Joan Ebersbach (908) 428-4857 |
| <u>Mah Jongg</u> | Contact Clubhouse Office if Interested (908) 359-1102 |
| <u>Bunco</u> | Debbie Francolini (908) 217-7698 Thelma Emery (908) 359-6223 |
| <u>Bridge</u> | Contact Clubhouse Office if Interested (908) 359-1102 |
| Summer Water Aerobics | Joan Kathenes (908) 829-4055 |
| Architectural Review (ARC) | Bob Bottini -Chairman Rich Schaefer Walt Vestea Pam Maiolo Rich Couzzi |
| Alternate Dispute | Nancy Capella, Info |

MEM Property Management
 Headquarters: 65 Challenger Road, Suite #320, Ridgefield Park,
 NJ 07660
 Phone: 201-798-1080 Fax: 201-798-8588
 Emergency Number: (800) 506-3360
 Client Services email: clientservices@memproperty.com
 Web site: www.memproperty.com

**All Social Events and planned meetings can now be
scheduled at the Clubhouse**

Social Activities Committee: Meets in the Clubhouse the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 10:00am

Knitting (crochet, needlepoint, etc.) meets in the Clubhouse. We offer to teach those who want to learn how to knit or crochet. (Call Ilona (908)359-5282 or Fran (908)428-6328). Meets in the Clubhouse every Tuesday, 7-9pm

Book Club: Meets every 1st Thursday of the month at the Clubhouse library at 7:00. This is a casual group formed to enjoy many types of books. You may experience and enjoy many types of books you might not have tried before. Everyone is invited to join us for a casual discussion about a new book each month. The group, led by Joan Ebersbach, discusses the book we read during the last month and together chooses a new book for the following month. Contact Joan at vettejoan@comcast.net if you have any questions.

Bunko: Meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month in the Clubhouse at 7:00pm. Cost is \$5.00 per person. Refreshments served.

CONDO OWNERS: WEATHER ANNOUNCEMENT

Should there be a power failure due to inclement weather please take the following precautions to ensure safety:

- If you see there is a threatening lightning/thunderstorm, please DO NOT use the elevators.
- Should you be stuck in an elevator, use the phone located inside the elevators to call for assistance.
- According to the Fire Marshall of Hillsborough Township, the emergency lights will remain on for only ONE (1) hour after a power outage. The purpose being to serve as a warning to either remain where you are or to allow for a safe evacuation of the building in the possibility of a fire. They do not remain for longer than that.
- Keep flashlights on hand. If using candles, always use precaution. NEVER leave lit candles unattended.
- Use the good neighbor policy. If you know of a neighbor that may need assistance, do not hesitate to check on them.

