

Lakeside Terrace

Con-Do-It

www.lakesideterracecondo.com

Lakeside Terrace Condominium Association

March 2011

CANDIDATES NEEDED-- HAVE YOU CONSIDERED RUNNING?

Around the middle of March, owners in the LTC Association will receive a letter seeking candidates for the Board. In the letter will be two forms that candidates are required to fill out: a Statement of Candidacy and the Code of Ethics. Please consider running for election; think about protecting your interests in the considerable investment that you have in this community. Serving on the Board is one way that you can have a direct effect on the way the condominium is run as it is the Board that decides on the projects to be funded and approves spending that money. Board members have a major influence on the value of the property and the quality of life for the residents.

An often used reason for declining is that you don't have experience in Condo Boards. Yet many talents are valuable on the Board. Fresh eyes and new approaches can be valuable assets. What is required is the ability to work with others, a willingness to spend several hours a month to participate and learn about issues, and the vision to recognize that condo communities are cooperative organizations. They do require some give and take as well as work to make them into a neighborhood.

If interested, talk to present members and find out their experiences, then please consider running for the Board which is such a vital part of our community.

The nomination cutoff is April 11.

CONFUSION ON RESERVE FUND PROJECTS

How the Reserve Fund is to be used has been the source of some confusion at recent

Annual Meetings. There are three general areas for which these saved funds are used:

Planned major projects

The majority of Reserve Fund projects are for things that we know will need to be replaced or repaired and are too expensive to be funded from the annual operating budget. Examples include repairs and replacement of major equipment (pumps, air chillers etc), building upkeep (balconies, roofs, elevators etc), the more expensive upkeep of the property amenities (swimming pool and tennis courts) and the building interiors (hallway carpets, painting, redecorating, community room, etc).

In order to plan for sufficient money to provide for these projects, a Reserve Fund Study is conducted every few years to provide guidelines on what major projects should be anticipated based on the condition of the property, an approximate order of the projects, and what current replacement costs are projected to be.

Unexpected Problems

The Reserve Fund is also the account that funds unexpected problems. If the problem that arises is potentially very expensive, it may require the Board to put off scheduled Reserve Fund projects or require special assessments, a very painful circumstance for all residents.

This is partly why we find ourselves on a major decorating catch-up at the moment. Three years ago we were told we had to fix a non-functional fire hydrant that we thought had been corrected by a fire hydrant project 20 years earlier. The Board tightened its belt, held back on scheduled projects, and drew minimally on the Fund to let it grow. The cost of the fire hydrant problem looks to be less expensive than projected. As a result we are now able to do some catch-up funding.

New Capital Projects

A third use of the fund is for funding new capital projects, items we don't presently have. Examples would be solar heating for the swimming pool or a gazebo by the pond. In general, approval to spend Reserve Funds for these kinds of projects requires a vote by the owners at the annual meeting. However, if the proposed expenditure is less than \$25,000, the Board does have the authority to commit the funds.

How to untangle the confusion

So where does the confusion enter? The terminology "capital expense" can be applied to all three categories, but it is only the third use, for "new" projects, that requires an owners' vote.

One practical guideline to separate "old" from "new" is to check the latest Reserve Fund Study and see if an item was on the schedule to be replaced, upgraded, or refurbished and that funds were being saved toward that purpose. If it is, then it can be funded from the Reserve Fund at the discretion of the Board. The elevators came under this process. The cabs were scheduled to be refurbished in 2008. When the Board looked at this project, it was suggested that not only the cab interiors be replaced but that the door closing mechanisms could also be replaced, reducing the likelihood that the elevators would stall between floors. It would save a significant amount to replace them when the elevator doors were already off. The Board agreed that this upgrade was worth the additional cost over the projected cost.

The management of the Reserve Fund allows the Board the flexibility to upgrade responsibly those items that are on the Reserve Schedule. It also allows the Board to change the anticipated scheduling.

Our carpets were not scheduled to be replaced until 2020. This was a serious miscalculation on the reserve schedule; the residents in both buildings were very aware of the poor condition of the carpets. Again, the Reserve Fund allows the Board the flexibility of moving the projects forward or putting them on hold depending on need for the project and/or the condition of the Reserve Fund.

THE BUDGET COMMITTEE BEGINS

- A budget draft has been prepared by L&N for FY/2012. Copies have been made available to members of the Budget Committee and the Board.
- Greg Kaminski is chairing the Budget Committee. The first meeting was Wed. March 2. The remaining meetings are Mon March 7, and Wed March 16 in the Community Room, A Bldg, 7 pm. The meetings are open to the residents.
- In addition to Mr. Kaminski, the following residents are members of the committee: Nancy Almac, Len Blank, Elaine Cromwell, Pat Dunigan, Dick Getzinger, Miriam Gorman, Zoe Huang, Joe Prendergast
- The Budget Committee will present the Draft Budget at the March 22 Board Meeting. At the April 12 Board meeting, the Board will review the Draft Budget, make final adjustments if any, approve it for dissemination to the unit owners. (Please note the rescheduled date is April 12 for the Board Meeting.)
- May 24 is the date for the Annual Meeting when the budget is accepted.

THE ELEVATORS – HALF DONE

The elevators have had all the rollers and the inside doors replaced. Please help us keep them scratch free. If you have a contractor bringing in materials, ask him to be careful.

The rest of the cabin refurbishing will be started within the month. We will have new walls, new floors, and handrails in the passenger cabins. John Blanton will post a schedule as soon as he has a starting date. They will progress one cabin a week.

DECORATING SCHEDULING

At the last Board Meeting, a resident asked when the decorating would be finished. Ms. Barracato said that the Decorating Committee hopes it would be mostly complete by the Annual Meeting the end of May. The ramp construction is the project that the scheduling depends on. The Board is waiting on another

proposal. Once the ramps are in progress, the painting and the carpets will move along quickly. The carpets are ordered and the contract has been signed with the painter.

As for the order, the carpet wall edgings will be removed just before painting begins. Once the painting is complete, the carpeting will start, one floor at a time. The old carpets will be removed one day, and the new laid the second day. The crews will move down floor by floor and should complete the job in each building in a week. More detailed information will be provided to the residents when the timing is known. The lobby furnishings will be added after the carpets are laid.

The ceiling in the A building lobby will be replaced as soon as a contract is signed. It will be similar to the one put in the B building several years ago

Several residents have asked how the Reserve Fund is being impacted by the re-decoration projects. The Budget Committee and the Board are both watching and projecting, and an article will be provided in the Con-Do-It within the next two months. However residents should be reassured that everyone is intent on maintaining the Reserve Fund in a healthy condition.

FIOS REPORT

Zoe Huang and Leonard Blank interviewed several other comparable condo communities to see what they offer their residents in the way of television service and then presented a report to the Board. They found that most communities include the price for basic television in their condo fees. The pricing for bulk basic cable ranged from \$17 to \$25 per unit per month. FIOS was installed in a one association at Verizon's expense, and individuals could choose to subscribe if they wished.

How does that compare to our situation? At present we have a contract with Comcast to supply service to each unit (ie they wired the buildings), and our residents can choose whether to subscribe or not at their expense. Our contract will end in a year. The ideas the report challenged us to consider:

1. Do we want to pick up a "bulk" contract to supply basic cable to everyone? (This

would involve our association paying a monthly bill to Comcast.)

2. Do we also want to have a FIOS option? (This would involve Verizon wiring all our hallways for FIOS. While they have done this for a neighboring condo externally, we don't know whether we might have to pay for our interior wiring.)

Our L&N manager, Scott Murdoch, has worked with other associations on their television service. He has volunteered to find out the details that would impact us.

The Board appreciates the work that Ms. Huang and Mr. Blank put into the report to bring the situation to the attention of our community.

PAINTING A BLDG BALCONIES

The Board approved a contract for \$46,000 to paint the A Building balconies. The job includes cleaning and scraping loose and peeling paint on the balcony ceilings, the metal lentils, the balcony partition walls, the floors and window panels. The project has been approved by the Board with the expectation that it will allow us to put off a more extensive renovation for several years.

The work will be done with the use of a cherry picker so that access to the balconies will be from the outside rather than through the interiors. The work is expected to begin later this spring or early summer.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SET OFF THE FIRE ALARMS

Setting off the fire alarms is usually caused by smoke from a burnt meal and is just an embarrassing situation. If it happens to you, take your key with you and meet the firemen at the front door. You can tell them what happened and direct them quickly to your unit. (The firemen have access to emergency keys, but it takes extra time.)

As long as it is only smoke, and the burnt toast or the pan is in the sink, open your balcony door, turn on your fan, and block the crack under your hallway door with a towel. You may be able to prevent setting off the hall alarms if it is only minor smoke.

If there is any flame at all, do not turn on your kitchen fan -- it can spread a fire. If it is a grease fire, pour baking soda or salt on it, never water, and/or cover it with a lid.

Every wing has a fire extinguisher near the lobby. Do you know where they are on your floor? If not, locate them for your own safety.

MORE ON PARKING SPACES

One of the frequent questions the office gets is how to rent a parking space. Our parking spaces are small individually owned pieces of property. They are usually sold by one owner to the next purchasing owner. They receive separate property tax bills from Montgomery County as the owners know well. Rarely, although occasionally, an owner will put his space up for rent. They are almost never sold because they are important assets when selling the unit. The spaces ‘under cover’ are highly coveted.

Last month the Con-Do-It contained an article on what to do when you find someone in your space. One resident complained that the article was pushing towing over reporting it to the office and trying to find the owner. It needs to be repeated that the office does not take the lead in deciding what to do. That is the owners’ prerogative, but the office will cooperate.

The most common trespassers are realtors who figure they will be in and out quickly. In practice most residents contact the office over daytime problems. It is very helpful to take the license tag number, the car make and color, and report it to the office. Our security camera registers the license numbers of people coming in, and repeat offenders can be identified. All resident car owners are required to display hang tags and can be identified by that.

Perhaps the most egregious problems are those who poach when a storm is on the way. These are deliberate trespassers, and for the owner to choose to have these cars towed is totally appropriate. Fortunately most residents are very cooperative and follow rules, but it does happen on occasion. At least one resident was towed for inappropriate parking in the very disruptive storm the end of January. If the owner chooses not to tow, the car should be

identified so that the office is aware of the problem and can send out a warning note.

One space is available for rent:

There is one space at the end of A bldg., partially covered and available. Check with the office.

ITEMS FROM THE BOARD MEETING

Financial Summary

	Dec 2011	Jan 2011
Operating Cash	\$325,965	\$329,116
	Gain \$3,151	
Replacement Reserve	\$1,310,175	\$1,318,580
	Gain \$8,405	
Total Cash/Investments	\$1,636,140	\$1,647,696
	Gain \$11,556	
Delinquencies: \$8,971 in January		
Cumulative: \$114,508		

Reserve Fund : \$25,881 for elevators
\$4,315 for fire hydrant

Operating Accounts:

- Administrative, \$2,227 under budget for Jan and \$18,595 under budget for fiscal year due to lower than expected legal and insurance expenses
- Utility expenses, \$19,747 under budget for Dec and \$9,367 under budget for the year
- Repair and maintenance, \$1,778 over budget for Jan and \$11,480 over budget for fiscal year
- Maintenance Service Agreement expenses, \$5,608 over budget for Jan, \$8038 over budget for the fiscal year

Greg Kaminski, LTC Treasurer

Property Engineer: John Blanton reported

- Valley Crest cleaned up storm damage
- Pump Phase Protection is in process
- We are in process of getting new entry access key boxes for the Fire Department for both buildings
- WSSC backflow preventive testing done
- A proposal for replacing the pool coping stones for \$9,780 by High Sierra was accepted by the Board
- There was no extra charge by Allied Waste for the trash from an eviction last month.

Management Report: Scott Murdoch from Legum & Norman reported:

- Fire Hydrant Project: Bay State has completed the topography survey and has received general comments back from WSSC. A second submission is in progress and plans are expected to be approved within the next two or three weeks.
- The WSSC mandate to separately meter our commercial units has been extended to January 1, 2012.
- Proposals for a new Reserve Study have been received and will be under consideration for the next meeting.
- The repair work by Minkoff required by the November flood damage in B Bldg has been completed.

MISSING PACKAGES

We have had several packages disappear recently from Building B. Please let the office know if this happens to you. It would be appreciated, if you keep an eye out for anyone roaming the halls when packages are about.

LAUNDRY ROOM REMINDERS

Rules prohibit doing laundry between 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. The noise from the machines is a problem for adjacent units.

In addition there are things that each resident who uses the laundry room can do to make it pleasant for all users.

- Please take your laundry out of the washers and dryers promptly when the cycle is finished: approximately 30 minutes for the washers and 45 minutes for the dryers.
- If the machines are full of another tenant's clothing, please allow at least 20 minutes before unloading them to do your laundry.
- If you spill some soap or forget tissues in your pockets and end up with tissue everywhere, be courteous. Clean it up.
- Finally, don't forget to clean the lint trays.

HOUSEKEEPING

Do you have your hang tag displayed in your car? You can get them in the office. Make sure they are visible on the dashboard or rear

window shelf. John Blanton will be checking the lot for tags soon.

MOVIE NIGHT SCHEDULE Community Room Bldg A 7:30 pm 2nd and 4th Wednesdays

Date	Movie	Rated	Year	Type
(Wed) Mar 9	Mrs Brown	PG	1997	Drama
(Wed) Mar 23	The Blind Side	PG 13	2009	Drama
(Wed) Apr 13	Secretariat	PG	2010	Drama
(Wed) Apr 27	Inside Job	PG 13	2010	Docu- mentary

The Movie Club welcomes your input. Please send your suggestions and comments to Len Blank at lbblank@gmail.com or call him at 202-257-1928.

TRASH TALK

Do shopping bags recycle? Yes and No

YES -- Paper bags go in the "*mixed paper*" bin.
clean, dry, folded paper bags of any size

Typical paper bags: from Giant, Safeway, and other grocery stores, or from specialty stores: The Container Store, Macys, Home Depot etc.

NO -- Plastic bags go in the *trash chute* or in the *dumpster downstairs*
any size, any type of plastic bags

- Use plastic bags, tied or secured by a twister, to dispose of foam carry-out containers, tissues, paper towels, wax paper, Saran wrap/plastic film, and other small non-recyclable items.
- Put them in the chute or take large filled bags to the dumpster in the garage.

UNITS FOR RENT OR FOR SALE

In order to make information available to interested people, a bulletin board is posted by

the office for owners to list a contact number for units available for rent or for sale.

THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next Board Meeting is March 22 in the Community Room, A building. The Open Forum will begin at 7:00 pm. Residents are encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns at this time. Both the Open Forum and the Board Meeting may be recorded.

WEBSITE INFORMATION

The Con-Do-It and the approved Minutes of the Board meetings are posted on the LTC website each month. We also have a courtesy serve list for non-resident owners who would like to have Con-Do-Its emailed to them. Please make requests to the office.