

Fall 2011

www.highmeadowhoa.com

High Meadow Dispatch

Quarterly Newsletter of the Home Owners Association and Tax District



Inside this issue:

Welcome, New Neighbors	1
Important Contacts	1
Finance Update	1
Unemployment & High Meadow	1
Committee Updates	2-3
Power Outages/Safety Reminders	3
Insurance Matters	4
Wasp/Hornet Invasion	4
Reserve Funding Status	5

Welcome, New Neighbors!

Welcome to High Meadow!

Welcome to...

Vicente and Maria Diesta 31 Ledgewood Drive

We hope you'll love living here. Please feel free to contact the Tax District or Homeowners Association Boards, Greenfield Property Management, or your neighbors for anything you need!

Important Contacts

High Meadow Website	www.highmeadowhoa.com
Greenfield Property Management	(203) 791-9936

Finance Update

	<i>Cash Balance (Operating Account)</i>	<i>Cash Balance (Reserves)</i>	<i>Receivables*</i>
HM Home Owners Association	\$ 1,243.21	\$ 75,582.88	\$ 18,221.43
HM Tax District	\$ 2,432.82	\$ 34,144.22	\$ 46,648.51

*Receivables include all money due to the HM-HOA or HM-TD, including past-due monthly fees and taxes and delinquent payments of the Special Assessment due July 1, 2011

As compared to total budget, the HM-HOA and HM-TD are both slightly under budget so far this year (the fiscal year ends June 30).

Unemployment at 9.1% Nationally—Impact on High Meadow

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor, the Connecticut unemployment rate in August 2011 was 9.0%, consistent with the national rate of 9.1% for the same time period (www.bls.gov/cps). Unfortunately, those numbers have been slow-moving with little change since at least April. Many people have felt and continue to feel the strain of the tough economic times of the past few years. We cannot bury our heads in the sand and ignore this fact, yet at the same time we have certain costs that are essential to keeping High Meadow running. It is an on-going task of the Boards to prioritize and re-prioritize projects to keep our costs reasonable.

Our budgets are based on anticipated income from the monthly fees and taxes that are the responsibility of every unit owner. When those fees are not paid, we find ourselves in a very tough situation.

If you have hit upon some particularly tough times, please reach out to the Boards so that we can work with you to arrange a payment plan. It is in everyone's best interest to have reasonable expectations of our income to manage the property appropriately. We appreciate your cooperation, and encourage you to reach out to us.

Committee Updates

Thank you to all who have responded to our request for volunteers to serve on committees to take on certain projects around High Meadow!

Sewer/Septic

Members: Tulio Lopez, Steve Dwyer, Frank Capatano

Septic system at High Meadow is failing. Sewer/Septic Committee has been charged with evaluating options for maintenance/repair of existing system, or tying into public sewer system.

Option to tie-in to the Center School Sewer Line is viable. Some initial applications have been submitted to the Brookfield Wetlands Committee. It will be necessary to do the work in the wetlands area during the dry season (summer).

Working with Nelson Malwitz Chairman of Brookfield WPCA

Engineering work necessary to determine best route for HM to tie-in to this existing line. Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) approved funds to do engineering work. Start date not known.

Costs: The final cost will not be known until the engineering study and pipe routing plan are completed, and the total number of hook-ups is determined. The original estimate was a total project cost of \$1.5 million, which means an average \$950 per year per unit for 20 years, if HM is the only hook-up. We are hoping these costs could be decreased if other condos also participate in the project. Additionally, there is an \$85 per quarter usage fee. These estimates compare to a cost of \$1.8 million to rebuild HM septic fields over 5 years.

Updates:

- Soil testing has been conducted to determine areas to be defined as “wetlands”
- Some wildlife concerns have arisen that need to be investigated; not anticipated to be show-stopper
- Formal application to be submitted to Wetlands Committee in November
- Identified more than \$14,000 in funds that were put into escrow account when HM was built that can be applied to the costs of this project

Land Development

Members: Steve Stuart, Frank Capatano

Updates:

- Committee evaluated undeveloped land and presented to HM-TD Board in August (*see August HM-TD minutes online for further details*)
- Need to consult local real estate agents/developers to help assess land value
- Routing of sewer line is critical—no definite plans will be made for new development until sewer plan/project finalized

Finance

Member: Mike Lofrumento

See update on Reserve Funding Project Status Updates (page 4)

Committee Updates (continued)

Recreation

Members: Kerri Pierz, Jeff Dunkerton

Evaluate needs for recreation facilities at High Meadow: tennis courts, basketball court, pool, playground and Club House

Updates:

- Pool was closed for the season on September 26, 2011
- Basketball Court—Repair or Replace?
 - Basketball court is crumbling and hoop needs replacement; work needs to be done to maintain the quality of this amenity and for safety reasons.
 - Options:
 - Do Nothing: court will remain unusable
 - Repave existing court and replace hoop
 - Install new hoop in tennis courts
 - Budgeted \$2500 to spend in 2012 for this project
 - Options under investigation now so that best value can be determined and project planned for future



Landscaping

Members: Jackie Wetmore, Kathy Craig, Pete Citrone, Isabelle Lopez

Evaluate landscaping needs throughout property

Updates:

- Tree pruning and removal is complete throughout property
- Foundation support needed for 50 Ledgewood: work expected to be under-budget

Power Outages, Safety Reminders

The end of summer storms had us all wondering—if we lose power, do we lose water? Fortunately the answer to that question is most likely not. Electricity would have to be knocked out to the pump station and the generator for the pump station would have to fail in order for us to lose water in the event of a power outage. We hope to not have another winter like last year, but nevertheless, that is important information to know as snowy weather is not that far off.

This time of year is also a good time to take care of a few household tasks to ensure we all are safe:

It is your responsibility to have your **chimney cleaned** and to keep your **dryer vents cleaned**. Also with the recent electrical fires in some units, we highly recommend that everyone has their **circuit breakers inspected** by a qualified electrician.

Please contact Greenfield Management if you would like recommendations for companies that provide these services.

Insurance Matters: Important Changes

Recent changes to the Connecticut General Statutes, and more specifically, the Common Interest Ownership Act, make insurance at condominiums important to understand. In Connecticut the Associations master insurance is always primary, and the individual home owner policies you all have are secondary.

What does this mean to you, and do you still need an individual homeowners policy?

You always need an individual homeowners policy, While the Associations' policy is primary, it does not cover your personal property or contents, and it does not cover loss of income if you are an investor owner. It does not cover relocation costs if your unit is damaged and you or your tenant need to stay somewhere else while restorations are completed. Additionally, the Associations' master policy has a \$5,000.00 deductible, so damages up to \$5,000.00 would be covered by your individual homeowners policy.

The type of coverage you should carry is called an HO6 Policy, which is specifically designed for condominiums. Additionally, you should have a rider which includes loss assessment coverage. Loss assessment coverage will pay your share of any assessment levied by the Association for a loss not covered. For example, many insurance carriers are now imposing deductibles specific to ice damming of \$5,000.00 per unit. What this means is if High Meadow were to suffer ice damming on 5 units, the deductible would be \$25,000.00. Loss assessment coverage on your individual HO6 policy would cover you for any special assessment the Association would levy to cover the \$25,000.00 deductible.

The Associations' master insurance as primary is a confusing statement... what does it mean? The best way to explain it is by example. During Hurricane Irene, the power outage caused a freezer to defrost and leak onto the wood floors of a unit. The unit owner was not home for several days, so they were not aware of the water on the wood floors. The floors buckled and were badly damaged. The unit owner assumed their insurance policy was responsible to cover them, and notified their agent, but not the Association. In the past, this was the proper way to handle the claim. The refrigerator is the property of the unit owner, the damage was specific to their unit, and it was not a result of anything in the common area. The new law requires the Associations' master insurance to cover this claim, less the deductible, and any exclusions that are specifically noted in the Associations' Declaration and Bylaws. The claim needed to be reported to both the Association and the agent for the unit owners HO6.

The importance of these changes are significant. Insurance companies base premiums on risk, number of losses, and reconstruction costs. The change in law means all Associations are going to see more losses, and it is reasonable to assume higher premiums will follow. Higher premiums mean higher operating budgets and higher common charges. How can you help keep insurance costs down? First, maintain your unit, its appliances, electric panel, plumbing fixtures etc.. Second, report all claims immediately to the Association via the property manager, and to your insurance agent for your HO6 policy. Third, if you are traveling, ask a neighbor or family member or friend to check on your unit.

Yellow Jackets and Hornets—Be on Alert!

We have had an invasion by yellow jackets and hornets over the last few weeks. There have been 4 incidences now of them getting in between the walls and the siding of the units. The exterminator believes they are being flooded out of hives and looking for warm places to hive. People should call Greenfield if they see them in their units or high levels of activity outside the unit.

Reserve Funding Project Status

We do not take the request for Special Assessments lightly. We know that the economy continues to struggle in many areas, and we are all trying to avoid additional out-of-pocket expenses if possible. We appreciate that our residents recognized the importance of building our Reserve Funds so that we can maintain the high quality of our property and its amenities. With the approval of the Special Assessment to build an appropriate Reserve Fund for important upcoming projects, we will utilize space in this Newsletter to continue to update you on the progress, and show where your money is being put to work.

PROJECT	TOTAL COST	YEAR 1 COST	PROGRESS	NEXT STEPS
COMPLETED PROJECTS				
Tennis Court	\$19,475	\$0	Only maintenance (cleaning) planned for 2011. Crack sealing TBD	Cleaning completed
ON-GOING PROJECTS				
Roof Repairs	\$531,815	\$33,595	Roof work on 29-39 Ledge wood complete	Roof on 2-14 Ledge wood and 26-36 Ledge wood to be done next
Retaining Walls	\$67,482	\$26,201	9 retaining walls completed	11 walls left to do
Tree Care	\$204,750	\$19,500	Work to remove certain trees is complete	Pruning of ornamentals and pines to be completed.
Basketball Court	\$2,500	\$0	Initial quotes received for new basketball hoop	HMTD Board to evaluate options for custom hoop to be installed at end of tennis court vs. repaving and replacing hoop in existing location.
ON-HOLD PROJECTS				
All Septic fields and 39-45LW	\$2,025,000	\$25,000	On hold waiting town sewer plans	Re-evaluate with progress of sewer project
Foundation Support: 50 LW	\$25,000	\$25,000	Project in the bidding phase	Engineer report obtained
Driveways	\$94,215	\$6,281	Driveways have been prioritized by Board.	The 5 worst driveways have been repaved. Drainage has been added to the driveways of 50-58 Ledge wood.
FUTURE WORK				
Pond Rehab	\$20,000	\$0	Work planned for 2012	None at this time
Road Paving	\$95,000	\$0	Work planned for 2015	None at this time
Pool Liner Replacement	\$10,000	\$0	Work planned for 2020	None at this time



Happy Fall!