

Pond Meadows Condominium Association, Inc.

Mahwah, NJ 07430

Newsletter April 2014

The Spring

The harshest winter in years has come to a close...we hope. The chipmunks have not yet returned to our grounds but the rabbits are here and ready to multiply. The hawk pair which claimed Pond Meadows as their exclusive territory last year will no doubt arrive soon and find that their seasonal home is still rich for hunting and nesting.

The warmer weather also brings an opportunity to commence a number of projects which have been in the planning stages for the last few months but could not have been operationalized because of the cold and the snow. These will be more fully described further below.



The Website

The Pond Meadows Condominium Association website represents a very effective advance in community communications and disclosure. The day in which notices and announcements are paper borne mostly came to a close some time ago. Now we find ourselves in a contemporary electronic culture of smart phones, iPods, Kindle readers, and other devices the sophistication of which escapes most people who can recall when Sputnik was launched. Even e-mail seems to have become obsolete for many people more socially comforted by Facebook.

The community does have (finally) a very well designed website. Access to it is readily available off of the Arthur Edwards, Inc. homepage (<http://www.arthuredwardsinc.com/ae/home.asp>) under the header, "Communities." The "LOGIN" is simple. Once entered, you will find sections for "Announcements," "Documents (including Board minutes)," an "Events Calendar," "Classifieds,"

"Requests (for work orders)," your "Account Information," among several other accessible and useful windows. Contact through the website is immediately confirmed for your records by a return e-mail.

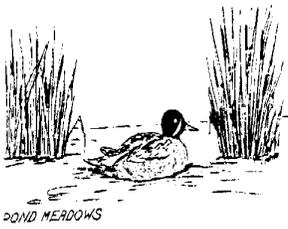


A community website serves the functions for which it was designed if it is freely used. The more information is fed to it the more effective its purpose in serving the community. Residents should send in announcements and any other notices or requests to keep the site active. Without residents' use, the site will eventually wither and its purposes defeated. It is the case now that only a little more than NINE PERCENT (9%) of the members of the Association have used the site to retrieve information or to check on their accounts. Those who have not are *strongly* encouraged to establish a "LOGIN" identity and to begin to use their account as a matter of course.

The Board will increasingly use the community site to post notices and documents, as may be legally required, and decreasingly use paper and mailings. The latter is no longer cost effective and efficient. It is not without reason that conventional mail is called "snail mail" by those adapted to the electronic culture. We encourage you to become accustomed to the site.

Parking

The rationale for installing reasonable parking regulations for Pond Meadows Condominium was set forth in some detail in the December, 2013, "Board Newsletter." It is the case that flagrant abuses are generally the exception. The new parking policies seek to preserve the *status quo* of thoughtful use of the lots while furthering the safety and welfare of the residents. They will be



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posted on the website once adopted at the April Board meeting, but everyone will receive a copy of them. Some changes should be noted here:

1. Vehicles “authorized” to use the parking lots had to be “registered” with the recently completed “census.” Those lists affiliate vehicles with specific units for purposes of information and contact. If a vehicle is not “registered” with management, it has to be deemed “unauthorized.” Provisions in the new policies have been made for those who have not yet registered and for visitors.
2. Use of the parking lots is contingent upon a member of the “Association” being in “good standing.” The meaning of “good standing” is described in detail in the policy.
3. “Hang tags” have been purchased, with an identifying number, and will be distributed consistent with the registration lists by management. The “hand tag” will establish that your vehicle is authorized to be on the grounds. More information is to follow.
4. Towing shall be made a means of enforcement of last resort, but the conditions for its lawful use have been completed.



Landscape Architect

The Board conducted a number of extensive interviews with representatives from invited firms who specialize in site planning, landscape architecture, and open space design. This initiative was part of a larger, long-term, plan to schedule a rehabilitation of the grounds. The intent primarily was to seek an expert proposal/report which could provide the community with an informed schedule of replacement and redesign over the next five to seven years.

The community is now twenty-eight years old (and so are some of the shrubs.) We have reached a critical point in addressing the needs of the grounds, and we look forward to working with an experienced firm as the plan unfolds. That firm is MKW & Associates, LLC, of Rutherford, New Jersey. It is a firm with over forty years of regional and national experience. The Board found its work to be impressive, and was engaged by the scope and depth of the analysis it provided.



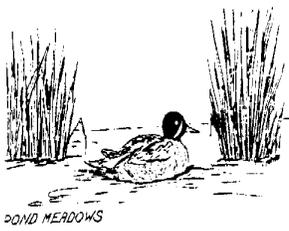
The Buildings

Parallel to the long range plan to rehabilitate the grounds are plans to commence campus wide initiatives to remediate some of the issues associated with the normal wear and tear and the aging of the structures. Repairs have certainly been necessary, but repairs cannot be the foundation of a scheduled plan for the whole community.

The Board, accordingly, has established projects to be carried out this year in three principal areas:

1. Refurbishing and repair of all decks where the need has been determined.
2. Repair or replacement of all utility shed doors and jambs/framing where needed.
3. Painting of all trim, doors, deck undersides, fascia, posts, and other exposed areas in all buildings.

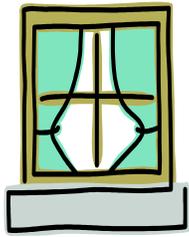
Be reminded of the prior, still ongoing, project to replace your windows where the seals have been broken or the tapes disintegrated. These aluminum framed windows have removable sashes with sealed inserts. Those inserts can be ordered and installed by either Atlas Aluminum & Glass



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Company in Ramsey or Mayfair Home Improvement in Hawthorne, the two vendors historically used to repair and replace both the windows and sliding doors at Pond Meadows.

The first steps in the new plans have already begun. Notices providing more details shall be sent out very soon. These projects consider the following:

- only thirty-two (32) units (all upper level) have decks. The other sixty-four (64) units do not.
- Thirty-two (32) units (all end units) do not have utility sheds. The other sixty-four (64) do.
- Some units have patios. Others do not.
- Sixty-four (64) units have attic fans. Thirty-two (32) do not.

In short, not all units have the same needs, and each varies in the nature of the repairs which attach to it. The projects are, however, designed to address improvements to the buildings *across the entire campus* without focusing on some to the exclusion of others.

The Recycling Shed

You should be made aware that the recycling shed will be moved (probably over the summer) from its present site to a site on Pond Meadows Drive. This has been made necessary because of issues arising a few years ago which have recently been under official review by the municipality. The open lawn area on Northerly Drive was designated as a “buffer” area in the original site maps approved by the municipality when the Master Deed was filed and the condominium was created. That means that the area cannot be encumbered by structures or other improvements. It comes as a complete surprise, therefore, to find that the recycling and

storage sheds, which have existed on the site for as many years as even original owners can remember, have been deemed to constitute uses for which variances are required. Applying for the appropriate variances would require that notices be served on every home and/or unit owner in the area within two hundred yards of the shed and that any of their objections would have to be argued before the Planning Board.

It has been decided that the most economical and prudent course would simply to demolish the existing sheds and restore all paved areas to natural turf areas.



Some Notes

Thanks and congratulations to Dave Van Hook for placing his name before the membership at the last meeting for election to a seat on the Board. Dave will fill the unexpired term of Londy Reynolds. The Board also elected Dave to serve in the capacity of the Treasurer. Thanks, Dave!

The Association has recently acted to renew its contract with Classic Landscaping, who has not yet begun work on the grounds. The harsh winter has caused a lot of natural debris to fall – which we hope will be cleaned with dispatch.

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The Board of Directors thanks you for your support and cooperation.

Let us work together to improve the community!