

Norbeck Hills Community Newsletter

Winter 2006/2007

On-Line Assessment Payment Program Now Available!

Norbeck Hills can now accept payments online. If you are interested in paying your monthly assessments electronically, please follow the instructions listed below:

1. Before you begin, you will need the following information:
 - The name of your association (Norbeck Hills Homeowners Association)
 - Your 10 digit account number with the Association
 - Either your checkbook or credit card
 - 5 minutes of your time!
2. Log into www.smartstreet.com.
3. Click the blue box in the upper left hand side of the screen marked *Pay Assessments*.
4. You may either set up a one time payment or recurring payments of your assessments. If you select a one time payment, click on the down arrow to choose to pay by e-check (no fee) or by credit card (note, there is a \$5.00 fee to pay by credit card). Fill out the appropriate form with your association name, account number, your name and address, payment information, and amount. Follow the prompts as indicated.
5. If you prefer, you may set up recurring payments of your assessments. You must first register for a login name and password before you utilize this method. Follow the prompts as indicated.

That's all there is to it! If you have any questions, please feel free to call TMGA's Accounting Department at (301) 948-6666 x119.

Norbeck Hills Payment Address Changed

For those homeowners who currently pay their assessments electronically through their banking institutions, please note that the mailing address has changed. Please advise your bank that the new mailing address for payments is as follows:

Payment Processing Center
PMB/Box #134
211 East Lombard Street
Baltimore MD 21202-6102

Trash Policy Reminder

The trash policy for Norbeck Hills Homeowners Association was written in order to keep the community clean and to prevent rats from nesting in your yard and on the common areas. Every resident of Norbeck Hills is responsible for ensuring that they follow the trash policy. Please remember to follow these very simple guidelines:

1. Household trash is collected by our private contractor twice a week (Wednesdays and Saturdays).
2. Montgomery County collects recyclable materials once a week, on Thursdays.
3. Trash containers must be placed at the curb in front of each home for trash collection. Household trash should be placed in tightly closed containers in front of your residence for collection no earlier than dusk the night before your designated trash/recycling pick-up days. **Placing trash in anything other than a trash can with a lid is in violation of the Covenants, attracts unwanted wildlife, and is prohibited.**

4. Recycling bins and yard trimmings set out for recycling should be placed out on the curb for collection no earlier than dusk the night before your designated recycling collection day AND promptly removed by dusk the day of collection.
5. Please be considerate of your neighbors and do not block the sidewalk in front of your home or place items that are the residents' responsibility to transport to the Solid Waste Transfer Station with your trash or recycling.
6. All trash containers must have a lid and be tightly closed. Paper placed out to be recycled should be put in paper bags or wrapped with twine and weighted down sufficiently to prevent blowing around on windy days. All recyclable lawn waste must be put into the large paper lawn recycling bags.
7. All trash and recycle receptacles must be removed from view no later than midnight on the day of collection. Containers should be stored so that they are hidden from view in the rear yard or garage. Trash and recycle receptacles may not be stored in front of the home.

Please feel free to contact TMGA at (301) 948-6666 if you would like to receive a copy of the entire policy or if you should have any questions. Thank you!

 Holiday Trash and Recycling Pick-Up 		
<u>Holiday</u>	<u>Trash</u>	<u>Recycling</u>
Christmas	No change	Friday, 12/29
New Years Day	No change	Friday 1/5

Christmas Tree Disposal



Once the holidays are over and it's time to discard your Christmas tree, please be sure to do it in the proper way. Your tree should not be thrown in the woods or left on the common areas. Montgomery County Recycling will pick up your tree for free provided that the steps listed below are followed:

- Trees will be picked up on all regularly scheduled recycling pick-up days through January 31, 2007. If you plan to take down your tree after January 31, 2007, then you will need to dispose of it on your own.
- Before placing your tree out for pick-up, please remove all tinsel, ornaments, wrappings, garlands, and other decorations.
- Your tree should be placed at the curb in front of your home next to your regular recycling bin.

Please feel free to call TMGA at (301) 948-6666 if you should have any questions regarding this matter.



Meeting Dates

The Board of Directors meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Re/Max Building at 3300 Olney-Sandy Spring Road. We welcome and encourage all homeowners and residents of the community to attend, as the Board makes their decisions based on community feedback. The upcoming meetings will be held on the following dates:

- January 18, 2007
- February 15, 2007
- March 15, 2007



Tree Pruning

The Board of Directors previously adopted a policy with regard to the maintenance of common area trees that encroach onto private property. In reviewing this matter, the Board also reviewed state law as it relates to this issue. Because much of the Association is wooded and several ornamental trees have been planted on the common area, the Association often receives requests from homeowners to maintain common area trees that are overhanging their property, or whose roots could create potential damage to the building structures.

The most cost-effective way to address tree pruning is to address the entire neighborhood, or large sections of the community, at one time. If this work must be done on a work order basis, as would be the case to respond to individual homeowner requests, the cost would be prohibitive to the Association and would result in a significant increase in every owner's assessment. For this reason, the Board looked to Maryland State Law to determine what the Association's policy should be to address requests that are received to prune back overhanging limbs.

Based on Maryland law, owners whose property is affected by common area trees have the right and authority to prune back tree branches or otherwise modify trees to minimize or eliminate the effect that these trees have on their property. This action can be taken to the extent that it is not the proximate cause of the tree dying. Of course, if a tree is dead, it is the Association's responsibility to remove it, and we will continue to do so in the future. Please note that your right to prune trees includes any tree limbs that overhang your property from a neighbor's yard. This right is not just limited to common area trees with branches overhanging your property.

Be careful, however, because if your actions result in the death of that tree, you are then liable for damages. Therefore, if a tree is planted on your neighbor's property, it would be better to

discuss your concern with your neighbor before cutting the branches. If a tree is growing on community property, you may wish to call The Management Group and present a plan before cutting away too much tree and endangering the tree.

At the end of this article is a link to help you properly trim your tree limbs. Trees are living things that need moisture and fertilizer in the poor soil we have here. Autumn is the best time to cut back your hardwood trees. Use a proper saw or shears to avoid tearing the tree. Read through the article referenced below regarding flowering trees, and as always, the local nurseries are a great source of information as well.

If you inherited trees and shrubs when moving into your home, you can enhance your property by taking a little time during the year to trim them and keep them healthy. As always, cut up and bag your yard waste for recycling. The common areas are NOT the appropriate place to discard yard waste and tree trimmings. Limbs cut into 3 foot lengths will be picked up on recycle day. Together we can keep the neighborhood looking great. More info is at http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_prune/prun001.htm.



Home Maintenance Process

Earlier this year, you may have received a letter from Norbeck Hills advising you of maintenance or architectural issues at your home. These letters were issued as part of a continuing effort to maintain the appearance of the homes in the Norbeck Hills community.

As Norbeck Hills ages, it has become more important for homeowners to objectively look at their property periodically and to perform maintenance projects as needed. To assist in this process, representatives of Norbeck Hills Homeowners Association inspect the front, back and sides of each home each year and issue maintenance letters accordingly. These letters identify maintenance issues on homes (e.g., faded

or peeling paint) and architectural issues (e.g., incorrect storm door colors, unapproved structures, etc.).

If you received a maintenance letter, it is important that you follow the instructions on it. Once the repairs have been completed, please make sure to forward a signed copy of this letter to The Management Group Associates (TMGA) to indicate that the repairs have been done. If you need an extension of time in which to do the work, then please forward to TMGA a written request for this. The Association may or may not grant an extension, based on the circumstances.

If the repair has not been made or the Association has not heard from you, a series of three letters will be issued reminding you of the work that needs to be done. If, after all three letters have been sent, we still have not heard from you or the repairs have not been completed, then further enforcement action will be pursued. This enforcement action may include referring your home to the Department of Housing and Code Enforcement or taking legal action. We hope that such enforcement action will never become necessary and would be happy to work with you to address the issues on your home.

You may wish to check the Association's website at www.norbeckhills.org for important information to assist you with maintaining your home. This information includes an Architectural Change Request form. If you have any questions regarding why you were cited or the maintenance process in general, please feel free to contact Victoria López or Jessica Bateman at (301) 948-6666.

Maintenance Help Available

If your home needs maintenance, but you do not have the funds to do so, you may be able to qualify for several programs to help you repair your home.

Rebuilding Together Montgomery County is a non-profit organization, in operation since 1990, whose purpose is to repair the homes of low-

income homeowners at no cost to them with the use of volunteer labor. Rebuilding Together Montgomery County is now taking applications for home repair services. Qualified homeowners receive home repairs at no cost. These repairs are done with volunteers. Applicants must own their home, reside in their home, and meet the following household income guidelines - \$29,000 for one person, adding \$4,000 for each additional resident. To receive an application or to discuss the program further, please call (301) 933-2700. You may also find information at www.rebuildingtogethermc.org

Financial Report Quarter Ending September 30, 2006



1. The Association had cash totaling \$53,344.97 in its operating checking account.
2. The Association had outstanding assessments due of \$12,501.45. Of this amount, the auditors project \$1,423.00 may not be collectible.
3. Year-to-date, the Association has an operating excess of \$40,084.10. This is primarily due to lower expenditures than budgeted for snow removal. A majority of the Association's expenses for upkeep of the common areas, etc. are incurred during the summer and fall.
4. The Association had reserve fund cash and investments totaling \$124,811.10. The Association is contributing \$6,750.01 to reserves each month. The Association has contributed a total of \$57,000.06 to the reserves this year.

The financial statements are posted on the community website at www.norbeckhills.org. Please feel free to download a copy. If you would like to receive a hard copy of the statements in the mail, feel free to contact Ruchita Patel at (301) 948-6666.

Neighborhood Yards

See What's Possible, With a Little Time and Energy!

