

Mews News

The monthly news letter of the Landmark Mews Community Association

JANUARY 2011

For Board meeting dates & locations, minutes & reports, governing documents, architectural standards, community news, residents directory, and other important information, log on to **www.landmarkmews.com**.

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Neighborhood Watch Chairman: Joel Kaplan
superjk2010@gmail.com

President's Message

This is my first monthly report to you as President. I appreciate the Board's confidence in me, in designating me President for 2011, and I look forward to working with my fellow Board members in making our community an ever-better place to live. I invite you to contact me with comments and questions; my email address is at the end of this report.

I also want to thank Loren Scieurba for his hard work and dedication to the community in 2010. Loren had a

number of issues to contend with, most notably snowmageddon, and he and the Board did an admirable job keeping the community's business on track for another year.

As we started off 2011 by dodging two potentially heavy snowfalls, the Board held its first meeting on January 12th. The Board received an updated Financial Report, a Property Report, acknowledged that we have a pet waste issue, took an enforcement action against a Homeowner, discussed the results of the garage sale survey, and approved a

resolution affirming that individual garage sales are allowed within the community.

Financial Report

Treasurer Marty McDonald updated the Board. The final numbers for 2010 came in well under budget, despite having exceeded the amount we budgeted for snow. 2011 is the year for our next Reserve Analysis, as required by Virginia law every five years. Marty has begun receiving letters of interest from companies that provide the analysis, so that we can send out a formal Request for Proposal in February. The Reserve Analysis not only looks at the Association's financial condition, but provides us with an assessment as to the remaining time before we need to undertake major projects, such as our roads, curbs, gutters, and lighting. It is a comprehensive evaluation of our infrastructure's condition and scheduled replacement.

Property Report

Property manager Roger Casalengo updated the Board. We did not undertake many projects in 2010, however, Roger outlined a host of items on his project agenda for 2011. These items include, tree trimming in the alleys, pointing on the brick wall, Berm beautification, lighting, and the Manchester entranceway. Our Landscape Advisory Committee provided a report to the Board in December of 2009. While several of the items on their list have been completed, the Committee will provide an updated report to the Board in March of this year. We hope to include several of their recommendations in this year's project list.

Pet Waste

We have a pet waste issue in the community and it is an ongoing problem. I am certain that the majority of the waste left on The Berm and other places within the community is left by dog walkers living elsewhere, and this is an issue I plan to address with the adjacent Homeowner's Associations. Unfortunately, we also have a few Mews residents who are not diligent about picking up after their pets. The responsibility of owning a pet continues past your own walls. It is simply inconsiderate and rude to leave pet waste out in our public areas or worse, on someone's private property. Finally, it is not okay to simply let a pet out through your yard fence to take care of business and leave the waste. The Board is taking this issue very seriously and will take further action against anyone who willfully disregards our rules and common consideration with regard to pet waste.

Homeowner Dues

The Association has the responsibility to collect dues from all of our Homeowners. It is the dues that fund our budget and keep our community looking as great as it does. However, there are some Homeowners who feel they no longer need to pay dues once they put their property up for sale. Given the current economic conditions, a home may take several months to sell. Not necessarily due to market conditions, but most likely due to issues relative to the financing that exists on a particular home. Your Board is diligent about pursuing all legal actions associated with residents that do not pay their dues for whatever reason. The Association's remedies include filing a lien against a property or pursuing a civil judgment against a Homeowner. At our

January meeting, we voted to file a lien against one such Homeowner's property.

Garage Sales

The Board discussed the results of the recent garage sale survey. The results of this unscientific survey were as follows:

Yes No

22 31 I support individual garage sales within Landmark Mews walls

26 26 I support a community garage sale within Landmark Mews walls

31 21 I support a community garage sale outside Landmark Mews walls

The Board received only 53 responses. That means that 95 Homeowners *and* all of the renters did not respond to the survey. In considering how to respond, the Board looked to what its core interest is in regulating activities on a resident's own property: Resident safety and ensuring compliance with rules applicable to any other visitors, the same considerations as for any other social event a resident might have at his or her home. This means complying with prohibitions of on-street parking and visitor parking rules. Otherwise, the Board does not want to tell homeowners what they can and cannot do on their private property. After reviewing the results and some discussion amongst the attendees, the Board approved a resolution (5-0) that affirms the ability for Homeowners to hold an individual garage sale with the following restrictions:

1. A notice to the Board Secretary no less than 15 days prior to a garage sale indicating the hours of the sale and a certification that the Homeowner will

abide by the rule adopted by the Association herein with regard to individual garage sales and will abide by the Visitor and On-Street parking restrictions.

2. Items may not be placed out for sale in a driveway prior to 6:00 AM and may not remain out for sale later than 6:00 PM.

3. Garage sales may only be held on a Saturday or Sunday. The Board did not address community-sponsored garage sales at this meeting.

We heard several objections to holding garage sales – whether by individuals or community, but do not believe they are meritorious. Essentially, they boil down to opposition to inviting “strangers” into the community who will “cause crime.” If we are going to bar “strangers,” it would require that we also prohibit estate sales, Realtor[®] “open houses,” and all contractors. All include “strangers” who could commit crimes. Last year, when this matter first arose, we checked this assertion with the Fairfax County Police. They told us they had never investigated a crime with the genesis being a garage sale, nor had they heard this theory before.

With having had an almost year-long discussion of this issue, the Board believed it was past time to put it to rest.

Slow it Down while Driving in the Community

I would like to appeal to Homeowners to please slow down while driving in the community and to please obey the Stop signs. During these winter months when the roads are slick, it is especially important to slow down and obey the signage. We have both children and the elderly living in the community, and it is

simply not safe to drive fast on our narrow streets.

Mailboxes and Fire Hydrants after a Snow Storm

I would be grateful if Homeowners that live adjacent to mailboxes and fire hydrants could take a couple of minutes to shovel the snow from in and around these areas when shoveling your own driveway and walkways. These areas are often neglected after snow storms. These areas are not only dangerous to Homeowners trying to retrieve their mail, but to the mailperson who is leaving the mail.

That is it for this month. The next meeting will take place on Wednesday February 9th at 7:00 PM at the home of Bill Gaffney, 6317 Manchester Way.

Thank You!

Dan Aminoff, President

Contact me: prez@landmarknews.com

REAL ESTATE ACTIVITY

Courtesy of Fred and Nancie Williams, Weichert Realtors and Landmark Mews homeowners.

FOR SALE:

6326 Manchester Way, \$589,500

5204 Cottingham Place, \$594,5000

6364 Brampton Court \$585,000

6307 Chaucer Lane, \$519,000

Board Meeting Dates and Host

February 9, 7:00 p.m. at Bill Gaffney's home, 6317 Manchester Way.