

## July-August 2012 - Briarcliffe Lakes Manor Homes Homeowners' Association



### President's Message

Hello Briarcliffe Community. It has been a hot summer to this point. Hopefully this newsletter finds everybody in good spirits after riding out one of the longest stretches of heat Chicago has had in recent history.

If you have been keeping watch on the progress being made behind our property - if you can call a giant mud pit progress - and you have been attending our association meetings, you now know College of DuPage has backed off of some of its initiatives. For those that are unaware or unsure, here is a brief breakdown:

The proposed one-hundred twenty foot water tower is off the table. Additionally, the College has narrowed its focus from several building additions to just one – a maintenance building that will be built some three-hundred fifty feet from our property line. We have also received assurances from the President of the College that COD will take necessary steps to ensure our view of the college will be a green one with the planting of trees and other greenery along our property line. These developments mark a significant victory for the efforts put forth by members of our community, including several of our board members who took their own personal time to attend county board meetings and put our community's concerns into writing to both the college and county representatives. Hats off to the group of you who put in countless hours of your personal time to fight the college on their overly-ambitious project.

In addition to these changes, the College plans to move forward with the demolition of buildings K, M and L.

Although we have requested additional information on the progress of the pond in our back yard, we currently have no additional information to report other than the President of the College stating it would be done sometime "in 2012."

Any updates on the College's progress will continue to be made available to those attending association meetings.

---Sean La Fortune

### Management Report

**Direct Debit update:** owners will be able to start using the direct debit for their assessment accounts beginning with the October 1<sup>st</sup> assessment mailer. Management will be sending out the forms needed by owners to sign up for direct debt within the next few weeks. Forms will also be available at our office later in August or early in September.

**Landscaping/watering:** Due to the dry weather the Association is asking owners that are capable to water the trees and shrubs around their units. Please read the Landscaping Director's article on this subject.

This summer has been one of the hottest and driest in recorded history for this area; owners are asked to use caution when outside, if you are not able to physically be out in this heat please do not attempt to water your bushes. Your health, safety and life are not worth the cost of replacing a dead tree or bush.

Please note that the Association is only asking owners to help out with the watering of trees and bushes. We assume that watering will assist these plants which are stressed by the drought. However, doing so may not save the association any money nor have a bearing on future fees. In other words, we can't state the impact of this drought and watering on future association fees.

**August Association Meeting:** This was posted in the foyers because it was excluded from the recent mailings.

---Dave Grill

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**Watering Restrictions** The outside spigots are separately metered for association use; these are part of the common elements of the association. See the Landscaping Report for information. The City of Wheaton watering restrictions are in effect May 15-Sept. 15. Odd-numbered addresses may be watered on odd-numbered days and even-numbered addresses on even-numbered days. Watering is prohibited Noon to 6 pm.

# Briarcliffe Lakes Manor Homes Homeowners' Association

## Director Reports

### ❖ Treasurer's Report

It's summer and many projects are being done on the property. The money is flowing out of the coffers.

At this time the Board would like to thank all the unit owners who are paying their assessments or payment plans on time.

*--Sheryl Bailey, Treasurer*

### ❖ Welcoming

**Unit Sales:** There has been one sale since the last newsletter, bringing the total sales for 2012 to six (6) units sold. The real estate market continues to be sluggish for our area and complex.

**Hazards:** As you well know when stepping out your door, we are having a very hot, hot summer, with the temperatures breaking longstanding records. With this hot weather, and very little, if any, rain, we are in the midst of a severe drought, which experts are predicting could last well into October, and possibly November. All of the once green, luscious lawns of our complex, as well as the rest of the area, are now brown and brittle.

With these dry conditions, it is extremely important to be very vigilant when using anything that could ignite a fire. This would be discarded cigarettes, barbecue grills, and the like. We recently had an alleged arson incident near one of our buildings that resulted in a fire adjacent to a tree. Fortunately, a homeowner smelled the smoke and alerted authorities and the fire was extinguished. With the dry conditions that exist now, left unattended, the fire could have spread, with disastrous consequences. AS A REMINDER, PLEASE BE RESPONSIBLE AND CAREFUL WHEN USING ANYTHING THAT COULD BE A FIRE HAZARD.

Thank you. *--Sondra Seery, Welcoming Director*

### ❖ Architecture & Maintenance

We're well into the outdoor maintenance season for 2012. Projects outlined in previous newsletters are proceeding and work has begun on the driveways, roofs and related drainage improvements. Painting for 2012 has begun. Other smaller projects including several new benches have been installed. A decaying retaining wall has been replaced, and soil fill is proceeding in the vicinity of Waterfall #2 behind Thames to prepare for a new patio area. Sealcoating of driveways will begin soon, and repairs on North Lakecliffe lie ahead. This work is in accordance with the long term schedules and association maintenance programs.

A survey of all concrete patios will probably occur in mid- to late- August. The goal will be to assess the condition and develop a systematic approach to repairs and replacement of concrete patios.

Owner calls and letters are requested and encouraged as an aid to identifying problems and maintaining the property. Many work orders are the direct result of owner provided information.

Experts state that walking inspections are the best way to proactively observe and identify many potential maintenance issues. I am of the opinion that a systematic approach which develops consistent programs of maintenance on a large property such as ours is the best way to perform many reoccurring maintenance items and to control costs. Good cost controls and planning can result in lower fees while a board conducts itself responsibly and in accordance with the Illinois Condominium Act. Alternatively, the board can sit back and wait for owners to call with their problems or requests. However, using a "squeaky wheel gets the grease" approach is a questionable method for a board of fiduciaries to uphold their duties.

*--Norm Retzke, Vice President*

### ❖ Landscaping

Our Property has been hard pressed by the drought. Grass has gone dormant. The grass will recover as soon as enough water is present to wet the root system. Don't water grass unless you can do it every-other evening. If stopped it will kill the roots. Bushes can be watered every-other day for about 20 minutes.

Trees are a different matter. Growing periods with little water can lead to smaller diameters, heights, poor resistance to stresses and disruption of food absorption.

Some of the signs of drought on trees are:

- Wilting of leaves.
- Stomatal control loss. (Valves on the leaves that regulate water and gas exchanges).
- Early leaf shedding.
- Reduction of photosynthesis.
- Slow growth next season.
- Reduction in new leaf formation.
- Reduction in width of annual ring size.
- Root damage.
- New shoot deformation.
- Pest problems.
- Die back in tree crowns.
- Yellowing of pine trees.
- No fall colors.

Please water your trees. Twice a week for 30 minutes is probably sufficient. Turn outside faucet on low and let the water flow slowly through the hose. Make sure the hose is at the outer most tree limbs this is where the feeder roots are located.

Remember, grass will green next year without water but trees may never recover. Briarcliffe Lake Manor Homes have close to 900 trees on site. Lets not loose any of them.

**Note:** Please adhere to Wheaton watering restrictions. See page 1 of this newsletter.

*--John Scudder*

# Briarcliffe Lakes Manor Homes Homeowners' Association

## ❖ Budgeting and Our Reserves – An Update

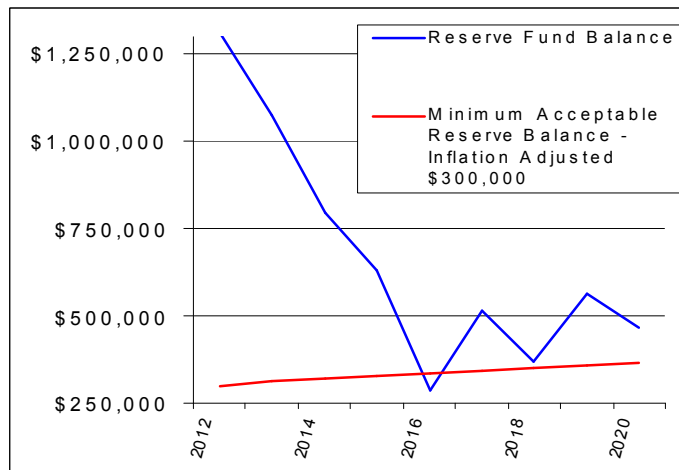
Our association is required by the Illinois Condominium Act to maintain a reserve fund for the purpose of major repair and replacement of all capital components of the common elements. Typical projects include the roofs, driveways and streets. Owners are required to make a contribution that is adequate to fund these major repairs and replacements. The reserve funds and interest earned on the funds must be held in segregated accounts and cannot be used for routine maintenance and operations. Currently, about 34% of the fees collected from owners are allocated to the reserve fund. The remainder is used for annual operations and routine maintenance. The following information on reserves is provided to owners as an assurance and an update on the present situation at BLMH.

Of particular concern to the board is your fees. To under-collect for reserves jeopardizes the association, your resale values and risks a special assessment or assessments. To over-collect places an unnecessary burden on current owners. Because of board concerns a professional firm was hired by the association in 2011 to assist the board in determining a proper reserve funding program. That firm provided a report spanning 30 years, ending in 2042. The report included a schedule of major projects, the projected expenditures to complete these projects and the anticipated and necessary annual fees to achieve these. The board and management has studied the report with particular scrutiny of the period 2012-2018. The board has identified projects and the funding necessary to accomplish them during that period, and has developed a projection of required fees and a schedule. However, this **does not include Operating and Routine Maintenance**, which will be separately funded and budgeted each year. The following information is provided to our owners and as an aid to the board of 2013.

As can be seen in the charts below, the association will be expending significant funds over the next 4 years to complete roofs, driveways and other important and necessary projects in **your** association. We are using the best estimates currently available, and do include a “contingency” for unexpected reserve expenditures.

The board has done its best to identify necessary projects, funding, and potential financial pitfalls. There can be no guarantees for the future, but it has been this board’s decision to avoid special assessments. Future boards may decide otherwise.

Year	Projected Annual Reserve Collection	Year Over Year Change
2012	\$440,000	
2013	\$420,000	-4.55%
2014	\$420,000	0.00%
2015	\$420,000	0.00%
2016	\$420,000	0.00%
2017	\$399,000	-5.00%
2018	\$399,998	0.25%



### A List of Capital Projects Included in the Reserve Study for the period 2012-2018

- Drainage, Front Yards, Remaining
  - Entrance Roofs, Reconfiguration, Remaining
  - Roofs, Asphalt Shingles, Remaining (including insulation)
  - Masonry Walls, Window Sill Replacement, Remaining
  - Floor Coverings, Carpet, Phased
  - Asphalt Pavement - Driveways, Total Replacement, Phased, Remaining
  - Concrete Garage Floors, Phased Replacement
  - Concrete Garage Floors, Phased Replacement
  - Concrete Ponds and Creeks, Phased
  - Concrete Stoops, Remaining
  - Lakes, Erosion Control, North, Remaining
  - Landscape, Partial Replacements, (Commence 2012)
- Special Projects:**
- Asphalt Pavement, partial replacement, North Lakecliffe, 2013-2014
  - Reserve Study Update, 2014?

*~Norm Retzke, Vice President*

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# Briarcliffe Lakes Manor Homes Homeowners' Association

## ❖ Monthly Association Meetings

The association board meets on the second Thursday of each month (except December) at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting date is listed on your monthly association fee payment stub. Alternatively, it will be posted in the foyer. Unforeseen circumstances may change this date, including weather issues. Check the official website BLMH.org for updates. Typical business includes:

- Reviewing status of current projects;
- Evaluating vendor performance;
- Discussion of and decision on any new projects;
- Monitoring financial status;
- Responding to homeowners' questions and concerns;
- Directing Management on specific assignments.

Board meetings are open to all owners of Briarcliffe Lakes Manor Homes, except when the board convenes into Executive Session to consider sensitive issues, such as delinquent accounts, legal issues or rules violations.

### **MEETING SCHEDULE as it currently exists, for the remainder of 2012:**

August 9, September 13, October 11 (Budget Workshop), November 8.

**Annual Meeting** – September, specific date to be announced.

### **BOARD MEETING LOCATION – Subject to Change**

Wheaton Community Center, 1777 S. Blanchard Road, Wheaton, Illinois

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## ❖ Forthcoming Election and Committees

The association has a volunteer Board of Directors/Managers comprised of owners who donate their time and talents to the betterment of your association. They agree to operate as fiduciaries, put aside personal agendas, and operate the association as a business in a fair and uniform manner in which all owners are equally represented.

This is without doubt a difficult task, made more difficult by the extreme economic situation which began with the recession in 2007. The board performs a variety of tasks, including the preparation of this newsletter and the association website, rules enforcement, welcoming, finance, landscaping and maintenance oversight. An understaffed board or one with individuals having no assigned duties and responsibilities will contribute to a failure to successfully complete the myriad of tasks before the board. To improve this, consider donating your time to your association.

Owners are encouraged to support the board in performing its fiduciary duties. Owners may also assist as members of committees, which include finance, welcoming, maintenance, landscaping, architecture and rules enforcement. Anyone wishing to join the committee, and make a contribution to the association and to your neighbors, please contact management or the President.

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## Board of Directors

### **Sean LaFortune**

*President*

1703-D Lakedcliffe

### **Sheryl Bailey**

*Treasurer*

1777-D Gloucester

### **Norman Retzke**

*Vice President, Architecture & Maintenance*

1733-B Harrow Court

NormAtBLMH@earthlink.net

### **Brian Collins**

*Rules and Regulations Director*

1773-A Gloucester

### **Sondra Seery**

*Welcoming Director*

1777-A Gloucester

### **John Scudder**

*Landscape Director*

1713-B Lakecliffe Drive

(630) 935-8489

johnnarrell@hotmail.com

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## Management

### **G&D Property Management**

Dave Grill, [dgrill@gd-pm.com](mailto:dgrill@gd-pm.com)

412 Eisenhower Lane North, Lombard, IL 60148-5706

**Phone:** (630) 495-4466 (Manager at extension 204)

**Fax:** (630) 495-4468

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## After-Hours Emergency Number

If serious conditions, such as water leaks in your unit or garage, warrant prompt attention after 5 p.m. on weekdays or during the weekend, you should call the after-hours emergency number:

**(847) 923-6060**

You may also call the management office number and stay on the line for the recorded message to give you the emergency number.