

# BIRCH POINTE CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

October 2016



### MISSION STATEMENT

**"A self-managed and run community composed of a volunteer board that works to keep costs low while striving to enhance property values and provide efficient leadership through open and honest communication."**

### **FREE RECYCLING EVENT!**

The Delaware Solid Waste Authority is sponsoring a FREE recycling and paper shredding event on Saturday November 5 at the University of Delaware STAR Campus, located at 550 S. College Avenue in Newark.

The event - held rain or shine - will take place between 8 AM and 2 PM. Delaware residents can drop off their household hazardous waste and old electronic goods to be recycled. Participants can also have up to two boxes of personal confidential papers shredded for free.

You are encouraged to keep such items out of landfills by not placing them in our dumpsters and take advantage of this opportunity!

Household Hazardous Waste: product containers marked with words, "Warning: Hazardous," "Flammable," "Poisonous," "Corrosive" or "Explosive." For example; household cleaners, garden pesticides, oil-based paints only (no latex paint will be accepted), nail polish, fluorescent bulbs, or antifreeze.

Electronic Goods: Electronic equipment such as, old computers, printers, CD players, microwaves, telephones, televisions, game boys, fax machines, answering machines, and VCRs.

### **REMINDER: UPCOMING IN 2017 – INCREASED CONDO FEES (and discounts) !**

As was announced in last month's newsletter, the Birch Pointe Board has voted to increase the HOA fees to \$350 per month effective January 1, 2017. This decision was deemed necessary for many reasons including an ongoing rise in utility expenses, especially water usage and trash removal, which have risen with increased consumption. The Board works hard to counter increases in costs by finding competitive vendors wherever possible. However, quasi-monopolies for some services, such as those provided by Artesian, Delmarva and Comcast make this difficult.

In addition, payment processing costs associated with the various forms of payment currently accepted by Birch Pointe have also been evaluated. It was determined that residents paying by ACH pose the lowest costs to process and those paying either by paper check (regardless of delivery method) or cash pose the highest costs, consistent with the overall payment processing industry assessment.

As a countermeasure to this and what was felt as an acceptable compromise, the Board, in conjunction with the new monthly fee of \$350 starting at the beginning of next year, will institute a perpetual \$20 per month processing discount for those residents that sign up or are already signed up for ACH. (This covers only the type of ACH where Birch Pointe pulls funds directly from each respective resident's bank account and does not apply to any other payment method above and beyond this mode). This will provide additional efficiency gains around payment processing.

***If already signed up for ACH, nothing will change in 2017 for you. If not yet signed up, but proceed to do so by January 1, 2017, the net HOA monthly fees due will remain at \$330.***

ACH enrollment can also begin any time after January 1, 2017, and the same perpetual \$20 per month discount will be applied thereafter for every full month the ACH program remains in place and the owner is in good standing.

10/21/2016



## **NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME DETERRENT EFFORTS**

Through strong community participation, such as with the Birch Pointe Block Watch program, we can keep an eye on each other and our property, hopefully promoting safety and heightened awareness. We are always looking for more participants! All residents are welcome to take part in the program without any other committee obligation.

However, as we are sad to report, these efforts sometimes don't seem to be enough. With the recent acts of vandalism and theft in Birch Pointe and neighboring developments, it is obvious that crime is everywhere and we are probably not going to stop it alone.



To this end, stronger and more visible deterrents are being considered for the community. Under review – and a likely line item for the 2017 budget – is the installation of security camera(s). Although this will be a significant investment, it will likely prove a good deterrent. We will also be consulting with our NCC Police community liaison, Officer Sorrels, to offer his expertise in determining the optimal use of such resources.

**Also in conjunction with persuading additional preventive measures, the Board will be hiring a NCC Police officer to patrol Birch Pointe for several hours on random days and times in November to help curb unwelcome visitors and discourage or prevent criminal activity.**

*Hopefully the word will go out and these troublemakers will choose not to enter Birch Pointe!*

## **SNOW REMOVAL – yep, winter is around the corner!**



After consulting with several companies regarding this coming winter's snow removal, Birch Pointe contracted with Green Side Up, also our current landscaper. Tami Cooper and the maintenance team met with Bill Mellen and discussed all the various challenges that a community like ours can present. In a concerted effort not to repeat the unfortunate circumstances precipitated by this past January's record snowfall, Paul Petschelt of ProTech lent his expertise and guidance regarding needed equipment, supplies and manpower. It was reassuring that ProTech offered its assistance should we, again, be subject to a "one for the history books" event! Salt delivery will be scheduled for next month and, before long, those white buckets full of ice melt will be seen by your building front doors!

## **STATUS OF BOARD'S ACTIONS TOWARDS DELINQUENCIES**

The Board continues its proactive stance in pursuing delinquent accounts. There have been several rounds of HOA funded services being suspended as well as the retention of legal counsel to partner on our behalf to collect debt for our community. More delinquent owners who have not responded to e-mail and/or US mail correspondence, not offered reasonable payment plans or have broken their agreements have been referred to our attorney.

Significant progress has been made but our effects are still ongoing. The fiscal health of the community is taken seriously as it is directly reflected in the value of our property and the desire for people to buy in Birch Pointe.

To each and every one of you who consistently make timely payments, we sincerely **thank you**. And for those who prefer to pre-pay, don't forget that the Board has also approved a \$60 discount for owners who pay six months in advance via a single ACH withdrawal of \$1920. Remember.....

**"Unit Owners delinquent with their HOA fees constitute a hardship to the community as a whole, and impede and impair the ability of Council to manage the affairs of the Association."**

**Contact Monica at [MRieder@BirchPointe.net](mailto:MRieder@BirchPointe.net) for more information about the ACH program.**

The enrollment form can be found on – and downloaded from – our website [www.BirchPointe.net](http://www.BirchPointe.net) .

***A one-time \$15 credit will be applied when enrolling in 2016.***

# Birch Pointe Directory/Important Numbers

## ➤ GENERAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS

Eric Kennedy – phone: (302) 685-4310; e-mail: [ekennedy@birchpointe.net](mailto:ekennedy@birchpointe.net)

## ➤ MAINTENANCE ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Maintenance staff (Dennis, Eric) – e-mail: [maintenance@birchpointe.net](mailto:maintenance@birchpointe.net)

## ➤ ACCOUNT STATEMENTS / CONDO FEE QUESTIONS / ACH PAYMENT SIGN-UP

Monica Rieder – e-mail: [mrieder@birchpointe.net](mailto:mrieder@birchpointe.net)

## ➤ BIRCH POINTE MAINTENANCE EMERGENCIES

phone: 1-267-474-2907; e-mail: [maintenance@birchpointe.net](mailto:maintenance@birchpointe.net)

## ➤ CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS

Tami Cooper, President

[TCooper@BirchPointe.net](mailto:TCooper@BirchPointe.net)

Monica Rieder, Treasurer

[MRieder@BirchPointe.net](mailto:MRieder@BirchPointe.net)

Susan Yeatman, Secretary

[SYeatman@BirchPointe.net](mailto:SYeatman@BirchPointe.net)

Manuel Harnisch, MAL/Treasury Advisor

[treasurerbp@gmail.com](mailto:treasurerbp@gmail.com)

Jim Coll, MAL

[JColl@BirchPointe.net](mailto:JColl@BirchPointe.net)

Cheryl McDonaugh, MAL

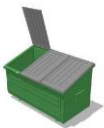
[CMcdonaugh@birchpointe.net](mailto:CMcdonaugh@birchpointe.net)

## **Community Reminders and Reference Information**

### **REPLACEMENT WINDOWS: Information Sharing Only – not an endorsement.**



A resident has found a vendor – [KBower@northamericanwindow.com](mailto:KBower@northamericanwindow.com) – who carries replacements of the vacuum sealed glass units in the original Kolby & Kolby window assembly used in the community. The company is located in West Chester, PA with Kirk Bower the contact person there. The serial number on each window assembly located between the glass panes is needed in order to price and reorder the units.



### **DUMPSTERS ARE FOR HOUSEHOLD TRASH AND RECYCLING...ONLY!**

**Do Not leave trash on the outside of the dumpsters.**

**Do Not put mattresses, furniture, carpets, appliances, etc. in or beside the dumpsters.**

If the dumpster closest to you is full, please be courteous and take it to the next closest bin. If you have large items to be removed, you will need to have a pick up by a private source as our waste removal company is NOT contracted to remove large items or overflow.

If you DO see a resident disregarding these by-laws, e-mail [maintenance@birchpointe.net](mailto:maintenance@birchpointe.net); your identity will be kept confidential. Once an offender is identified, the resulting special pick up fee [**currently \$175.00**] will be charged to their account, along with an additional fine. **For owners who have rental units, this cost will be invoiced to YOUR account** so please communicate this regulation directly to them. Everyone's cooperation and assistance is appreciated. Please let's all work together! **This type of extra service for special pick-ups can impact our budget.**

**If items are in reasonable shape, consider donating them to a charitable organization – which will often come on-site – and possibly even receive a tax deduction!**



## **FIREPLACE SAFETY (especially for new owners)**

**Unless your fireplace has been repaired/rebuilt and undergone a level 2 inspection** (by order of the state Fire Marshall), it is **NOT** safe to use. Due to crucial safety concerns, ALL chimneys were capped! Maintenance will uncap them **ONLY** if documentation is provided indicating the fireplace has passed inspection.



## **PET WASTE and PET LEASHING**

Cleaning up after your pet is not only the polite thing to do, it is expected. The Board has received a number of complaints in the past few months, some with pictures! Please consider this newsletter your gentle reminder. All future complaints will be followed through with a \$50 per occurrence fine. This includes loose or bagged pet waste left on the property and not properly disposed. For your convenience pet waste baskets have been installed on Claremont Court and Diana Drive open space areas and also between 3700 and 3800 Haley Court. **All pets are to be leashed at all times.**



## **FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS (important!)**

The fire alarm systems in the buildings (with the exception of 3300 and 3400 Haley Court) **DO NOT** automatically contact 911. It is an ALARM only, alerting you to check your immediate area and VACATE the building until cleared by Fire Department. Do not assume it is a FALSE ALARM!



## **SAFETY: FRONT SECURITY DOORS ARE TO BE KEPT SHUT**

They *may* be propped open **ONLY** for a short time while moving heavy objects in and out of the building. This is for everyone's safety!



## **BUILDING LIGHTS**

Please contact [maintenance@birchpointe.net](mailto:maintenance@birchpointe.net) or the Building Captain if a light is out in your building, on your bridge or at the security door. Once notified the maintenance team will replace ASAP.



## **TRAFFIC**

**SLOW YOUR ROLL!!!** There is new signage to remind everyone to come to complete STOP where indicated. This is especially important now as the landscaping crew is often on site and it is getting darker earlier. Note that the speed limit in the community is **10 MPH**. **Don't forget to let any guests know this as well!** Have consideration for your neighbors, especially at the Birch Circle curve.



## **HANDICAPPED PARKING**

Observe the handicapped parking spots located throughout the community! They are to be used **only** by vehicles with the appropriate state handicapped license plates or hang-tags. **Birch Pointe reserves the right to remove vehicles not in compliance at the vehicle owner's expense.**



## **PARKING**

Residents are NOT permitted to park their commercial vehicles in the community per the Birch Pointe Code of Conduct. Also, please have regard for your neighbor by asking guests to park in the overflow areas, leaving spaces in front of the building for owners/tenants. Any unregistered and/or abandoned motor vehicles present for more than seven consecutive days may be removed/towed at the unit owner's expense.



## **SMOKING POLICIES**

**Smoking is prohibited in all building common areas** including hallways and staircases; light up only once outside. In addition, do not toss butts onto property; please dispose of them safely and properly.

# Board Meeting of October 2016

*Held at Hockessin Public Library*

## Board Attendees

- Tami Cooper – President.....tcooper@birchpointe.net
- Monica Rieder – Treasurer.....mrieder@birchpointe.net
- Susan Yeatman – Secretary.....syeatman@birchpointe.net
- Manuel Harnisch – MAL/Treas. Advisor..... treasurerbp@gmail.com

## Board Agenda/Discussions

- Financial report and updates
- Building Captains Committee – updating Welcome Packs
- Real Estate report and review
- Delinquent accounts – updates, legal correspondence, delinquency collections, Comcast shut off's
- 2017 Snow removal contract
- Resident issues – complaints, break in's, vandalism
- Security camera – budget into 2017, consultation with NCC police
- NCC Police security patrol – costs, frequency, scheduling
- Review of potential maintenance projects for 2017
- Review of potential landscaping projects for 2017
- Preliminary 2017 budget – work up for next meeting
- Board member recruitment



## Meeting Details

**Real Estate Status:** Online resources such as Realtor.com, Trulia, Zillow, Estate.com and others



(1) Units on market:	4 on Birch Circle:	regular	2 new listings; 1 sale pending; 1 with a price drop
	[0 on Haley Court]		
	1 on Diana Drive:	regular	sale pending
	1 on Claremont Court:	regular	new listing with sale pending
(2) Unit(s) sold:	1 on Haley	Sheriff's Sale	10-11-2016 (bank buy-back)

## Notes:

- Let a member of the Board know if you are aware of a new listing in Birch Pointe, or if YOU are moving and planning to sell your *own* condo.
- Eric is the Birch Pointe real estate liaison and can provide many of the essential documents, forms, and certifications needed for property transfer for a \$25 fee.
- Birch Pointe has been recertified by HUD allowing them to obtain FHA insured mortgages.
- **Birch Pointe has a policy regarding investors to protect the interests of ALL owners which must be disclosed to potential buyers, either directly by the seller or by his/her realtor. The document outlining this policy – which was established in 2013 – is clearly outlined on our website.**

## Collections Report:



(1) Total collected in HOA fees for the month of September:	\$108,450		
	\$ 25		DUCIOA re-certification fees
(2) Large(r) payments received for the month:	\$1,650		for pre-payment of remaining 2016
	\$1,320, \$1,000 and \$830		for partial payments of back HOA fees
	\$805		for full payment of back HOA fees
	5 at \$660; 1 at \$500		

## Notes:

- Owners in financial difficulty should speak with a Board member to discuss their situation and arrange a payment plan/schedule to address ways of clearing up past balances.
- Consider signing up for Birch Pointe's ACH program now! It is an automatic and convenient way to pay monthly dues. A one-time \$15 credit will be applied when enrolling. See our website to download the necessary form – or – contact Monica for more info at [mrieder@birchpointe.net](mailto:mrieder@birchpointe.net).
- **As stated in the last newsletter, HOA fees will increase to \$350 in January 2017. To keep these at \$330/month, ACH enrollment will be necessary starting in 2017 to receive a \$20 discount. Any other forms of payment (including bill pays) will NOT be eligible for the discount.**

**Cable service will be disconnected after a 90 day delinquency unless a Board-approved payment plan is in place.**

## Treasurer's Report:



(1) Total operating costs for the September:	\$71,700		
(2) Major expenses: (other than normal utilities)	\$7,245	for	landscaping bills
(3) Capital improvement expenditures:	\$30,740	for	2 balcony rebuilds: 4905 and 4907 Birch Circle
	\$900	for	1 intercom replacement at 4400 Birch Circle
(4) Status of Birch Pointe accounts:	Operational Reserve	=	\$ 15,305
(see financial summary at end)	Reserve	=	\$254,455

# September 2016 Financials

## – Operating Account

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>		\$ 54,614.11
<b>Inflow – Operating Income:</b>	\$ 108,475.00	
<b>Inflow – One-time Transfers (from ORA*):</b>	\$ 0.00	
<b>Outflow – Operating Expenditure:</b>	\$ 71,690.37	
<b>Outflow – Capital Expenditure:</b>	\$ 31,640.00	
<b>Outflow – to Operational Reserve*:</b>	\$ 0.00	
<b>Ending Balance:</b>		\$ 59,758.74
<b>Target Ending Balance:</b>		\$ 50,000.00
<b>Surplus / Deficit:</b>		<u>\$ 9,758.74</u>

## – Operational Reserve Account

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>		\$ 15,304.56
<b>Inflow – Periodic Transfers:</b>	\$ 0.00	
<b>Inflow – Interest:</b>	\$ 0.63	
<b>Outflow – Periodic Transfers*:</b>	\$ 0.00	
<b>Ending Balance:</b>		<u>\$ 15,305.19</u>

\* monies are transferred into/out of Operational Reserve Account (ORA) as needed to cover expenditures, maximizing earned interest

## – Reserve Account

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>		\$ 254, 434.54
<b>Inflow – Periodic Transfers:</b>	\$ 0.00	
<b>Inflow – Interest:</b>	\$ 20.91	
<b>Outflow – Periodic Transfers:</b>	\$ 0.00	
<b>Outflow – One-time Transfers:</b>	\$ 0.00	
<b>Ending Balance:</b>		\$ 254,455.45
<b>Target Ending Balance:</b>		\$ 250,000.00
<b>Surplus / Deficit:</b>		<u>\$ 4,455.45</u>

# BIRCH POINTE CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION CENSUS FORM

P.O. Box 1195 Hockessin, DE 19707

Unit Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Persons Residing in Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Owner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Owner's Mortgage Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Owner's Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Owner's Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Work / Mobile

If Non-Resident, Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tenant(s) Full Name(s) and Phone Numbers:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Home Number Work / Mobile

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Home Number Work / Mobile

Emergency Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Phone

Vehicle(s) Owned by Occupant(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Year Make / Model / Color State & License Plate Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Year Make / Model / Color State & License Plate Number

Pet(s) in Unit: \_\_\_\_\_  
Size / Breed

Are you currently in possession of the Rules and Regulations of the Birch Pointe Condominiums? Yes / No

I understand that the above information is for the sole use of Birch Pointe Condominiums Association and its authorized agents in maintaining the community and providing emergency services. I also acknowledge that I must notify Birch Pointe Management if there are any changes in this information and/or if my unit is rented or sold.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Owner Date

**Census: 4-21-2016**

10/21/2016