



# Condominium Association

## Newsletter

December 2020

*"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."*



The Board wishes  
everyone a  
**SAFE** holiday season



### **FRAUD WARNING**



As several residents in the community have noticed, there has been some recent activity by a group of people in Birch Pointe, along with other area neighborhoods, either looking to gain access under the guise of working for Delmarva Power, or looking to get individuals to switch to alternative energy providers. In both cases, they have tried to gain access to the buildings.

It is the Association's understanding that neither of these groups are associated with Delmarva Power, are sanctioned by them, and most importantly, are not pursuing legitimate interests. All residents are urged to exhibit vigilance and to not let anyone into their respective buildings who can not furnish proper Delmarva identification.

If anyone feels threatened or otherwise intimidated by these individuals, it is recommended that 911 be called to report the incidents.

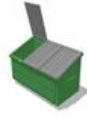
### **VERIZON FIOS UPDATE**



Construction for the Verizon FIOS buildout is continuing throughout parts of the community. Unfortunately, the Board does not have a definitive date for when this will be completed nor when individual service will subsequently become available for purchase. The Board is aware that the Verizon crews have not always been the best stewards of our landscaping and keeping work areas tidy. In addition, we are also aware of Verizon's equipment consuming valuable parking spaces, albeit often temporarily.

With this in mind, this build-out is being performed at no cost to the community and as a result, gives Birch Pointe limited leverage over the way the work is being performed. Once the current work is completed, the Board will review and any permanent, unresolved, damage caused by this work and work with Verizon's contractors will be addressed and/or a mutually acceptable resolution found.

## DUMPSTER / TRASH REMINDER



As a general reminder, if a dumpster looking to be utilized is full or nearly full, please consider taking trash to a different, nearby, dumpster. Birch Pointe has ample dumpster capacity throughout the community and efforts to manually balance the dumpster load levels are continuously being made by the maintenance team, which spends 4-6 hours per week on this task. It is asked that everyone does his/her part in ensuring that no dumpster is overflowing. The community is penalized by Waste Management for overfilled dumpsters, even if the overall capacity throughout the community as a whole is not fully utilized.

If renovations are being done on a unit, either by a professional contractor or are conducting them by an owner, construction debris should **NEVER** be disposed of in the community dumpsters; this is strictly forbidden. It is the responsibility of the contractor to do this through HIS company. It is also possible – but only after receiving approval from the maintenance team – a small, temporary construction dumpster *may* be placed in the community (details of this can be obtained by contacting Eric Kennedy). However, in no event may any one dumpster of this type consume more than one unmarked parking space.

## 2021 BUDGET



The Board is pleased to announce that a 2021 budget has been passed in its first reading during our December 15th ordinary Board meeting, held virtually due to COVID-19. The detailed budget is attached to this newsletter for review, with no surprises from prior year budgets.

Notably, our fiscal prudence will continue into 2021, setting aside an ongoing allocation of funds for capital reserve projects as well as contributing to our Reserve Fund for future, large scale projects. With Birch Pointe's loan fully paid off as of this past June, the community is now in a position to both accelerate projects in 2021, as well as begin building sizable reserves to address future large ticket projects like roofs, siding, bridges and much more when they will inevitably become due for repair.


Most notable 2021 capital projects that will be addressed are:

- Complete mailbox replacements and relocations throughout the community
- 12 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor balcony rebuildings, in accordance with the ongoing engineering report
- 10 Building carpet replacements (Phase 4 of 5; 2022 will see the finalization of this project)
- Various concrete / walkway repairs as needed throughout the community
- Seal-coating of Haley Court
- ~24 Skylight replacements (this is a new project and currently in the vendor sourcing phase)
- ~5-10 Building entrance replacements (similarly, vendors are being determined here; exact cost per entrance is not yet known. The goal is to install modern, RFID controlled, secure doors to the buildings and roll these out over the next 4-5 years)
- Foundation / sealing work on some buildings which have had repeated water intrusion or have experienced erosion from the elements over the past 35+ years and require some stabilization work.

Other capital expense projects may be added based on need throughout 2021 and currently prioritized projects may be augmented.

## WINTER SEASON IN BIRCH POINTE



PLEASE be mindful of **speed** when driving in Birch Pointe. As a reminder to members of the community – owners, renters and guests alike – always be cautious, especially during the winter months when snow piles may obstruct views and road surfaces may be slippery. This is particularly important at the Birch Circle curve and the Birch/Haley intersection stop. For the safety of both you and your neighbors, PLEASE observe all signage! 

The Board would also like to remind residents of the **ice-melt** buckets which are located by all building entrances. These are meant for residents to use whenever there is a particularly slippery entrance or bridge, or in the rare instances where the snow removal crew has not yet serviced a particular building.

In regards to **fireplace** usage, remember that **unless it 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 many years ago! Maintenance will uncapped them ONLY if documentation is provided indicating that the fireplace has passed inspection. Use of such capped chimneys will result in almost immediate smoke build up in the unit which, no doubt, will lead to a 911 fire call. New owners, especially, are cautioned and should be made aware of their units' status by the previous owners.

## 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, Jules) – e-mail: [maintenance@birchpointe.net](mailto:maintenance@birchpointe.net)

### ➤ **ACCOUNT STATEMENTS / HOA FEE / OR ACH QUESTIONS**

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)

# December 2020 Board Meeting

Held virtually on 12-15-2020 via Google Meet



- Reports
  - Financials
  - Collections
  - Real Estate Outlook
- Discussions
  - Additional COVID cleaning
  - Verizon build-out
  - Parking enforcement / part-time maintenance work 2021
  - Possible other projects
    - Front door cleaning
- Budget for 2021
  - Review of draft
  - Adjust/modify as needed
  - Vote for approval
- Adjournment

**Real Estate Status:** Online resources such as Realtor.com, Trulia, Zillow, Estately, etc. (since the last newsletter and info as of 12-21-2020)



(1) Units on market now:	2 on Birch Circle 2 on Diana Drive	1 new listing; other under contract 1 new listing; both under contract
(2) Units recently sold:	3 on Birch Circle 1 on Claremont Court	on 11-20-2020, 11-30-2020, 12-18-2020 on 12-11-2020

When moving, PLEASE inform Treasurer Monica Rieder if you are on Birch Pointe's ACH program so that future automatic bank debits can be cancelled. Once DUCIOA forms are requested, any scheduled ACH draws should be discontinued if possible. Current owner monthly payments can be made at closing by check, still at the \$300 ACH discounted rate. Contact [mrieder@birchpointe.net](mailto:mrieder@birchpointe.net) if there are any questions or concerns.

Note also that **parking hang tags for units being sold are to be returned to Eric**, not handed to new owners directly or to real estate agents. Tag numbers are associated with specific vehicles for security and tracking purposes. If the existing protocol is not followed, confusion may well result regarding undocumented cars and their actual owners if the new information is not provided. **This procedure applies to units which are rentals: tenants moving out should do like-wise and turn over their tags.** Remember that replacement fees for reissue of a hang tag is \$50. Your cooperation is most appreciated!

## **Notes:**

- Eric Kennedy is the Birch Pointe real estate liaison and can provide many of the essential information and documents needed for property transfer – including completion of DUCIOA forms. **The current fee for re-certification is \$50.**
- **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 – established in 2013 – is available on our website.**

## Collections Report:



(1) Total operating income posted in November:     \$ 82,326                             in HOA fees  
   \$     150                                     3 DUCIOA re-certification fees

(2) Three check bank deposits were made during the month which totaled \$9,556 of the above number. In addition, there were credit card payments during the month of \$5,200 (11 transactions).

A few larger payment amounts were received in these two months: 1 each at \$450 and \$400. An owner in arrears cleared out his balance with check and credit card payments totalling \$3,500.

## **THE BIRCH POINTE BOARD TAKES LONG TERM DELINQUENCIES SERIOUSLY AND ARE REFERRING THEM TO OUR LEGAL COUNSEL!**

**REMINDER: – MONTHLY HOA FEES ARE \$320 STARTING JULY IF PAYING BY CHECK**  
**– ONLY OWNERS WHO ARE ENROLLED IN ACH (OR OTHER E-FUND TRANSFER) RECEIVE A \$20/MONTH DISCOUNT**  
**– PAYMENTS MADE BY CREDIT CARD RECEIVE A \$10 DISCOUNT**

ACH/FIS enrollment currently stands at 82.7% (243 units)

### 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.
- A Birch Pointe ACH enrollment form is attached for convenience. Sign up and receive a \$20 discount on your monthly dues. Contact Monica for more info at [mrieder@birchpointe.net](mailto:mrieder@birchpointe.net).

## Treasurer's Report:



(1) Total operating costs for November:     \$ 39,025     in     utilities; maintenance/trash; professional, payroll, and office expenses

(2) Major expenditures for November:     \$ 4,100     for     monthly landscaping installment  
      (other than normal utilities)         \$ 3,897                     maintenance supplies  
   \$ 2,450                     Reserve Fund analysis  
   \$ 2,450                     hallway cleaning services  
   \$     630                     plumbing contractor for sewer back-up

   \$ 2,610                     taxes (federal, state, Medicare, social Security, DE)

AMEX discount/rebate posted = \$246

(3) Capital improvement expenses for November:     \$ 13,937     1 balcony rebuild

# November 2020 Financials

## ▶ Operating Account

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>		<b>\$ 210,680.18</b>
<b>Inflow – Operating Income:</b>	\$	85,590.22
<b>Inflow – One-time Transfers (from ORA*):</b>	\$	0.00
<b>Outflow – Operating Expenditure:</b>	\$	39,024.50
<b>Outflow – Capital Expenditure:</b>	\$	13,937.00
<b>Outflow – One-Time Transfer (to ORA*):</b>	\$	100,000.00
<b>Ending Balance:</b>		<b>\$ <u>143,308.90</u></b>

## ▶ Operational Reserve Account (ORA)

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>		<b>\$ 5,438.45</b>
<b>Inflow – Periodic Transfers:</b>	\$	100,000.00
<b>Inflow – Interest:</b>	\$	0.22
<b>Outflow – Periodic Transfers*:</b>	\$	0.00
<b>Ending Balance:</b>		<b>\$ <u>105,438.67</u></b>

## ▶ Reserve Account

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>		<b>\$ 260,385.80</b>
<b>Inflow – Periodic Transfers:</b>	\$	0.00
<b>Inflow – Interest:</b>	\$	10.70
<b>Outflow – Periodic Transfers:</b>	\$	0.00
<b>Outflow – One-time Transfers:</b>	\$	0.00
<b>Ending Balance:</b>		<b>\$ <u>260,396.50</u></b>

# 2021 BUDGET DRAFT

✓ approved and passed 12-15-2020

## 2021 DRAFT BUDGET

### Operating Income

Condo Fees (Jan to Jun)	\$1,128,960.00
Condo Fees (Jul to Dec)	
Delinquencies	-\$17,000.00
ACH Enrollment Discount	-\$63,000.00
Back HOA + Legal Fee recovery	\$7,500.00
Dryer Vent Reimbursement	-\$7,000.00
Condo Fee Total	<b>\$1,049,460.00</b>
Interest Income	\$150.00
Re-certifications income	\$1,500.00
Investor Fee Income	\$0.00
Comcast Revenue Share	\$8,000.00
<b>TOTAL OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>\$1,059,110.00</b>

### Expenses

Employee Salaries	\$144,500.00
Employee Benefits	\$12,000.00
Professional Development	\$0.00
Employer FICA	\$12,500.00
Income Taxes (federal)	\$1,000.00
Professional Fees	
Accountant	\$16,300.00
Lawyer / Legal for Collections / Consults etc.	\$15,000.00
Auditors	\$1,350.00
Bank Fees / Credit Card Fees	\$2,500.00
Payroll Fees	\$150.00
Utilities	
Insurance	\$90,000.00
Water	\$78,500.00
Sewer	\$48,500.00
Electric	\$29,000.00
Waste Removal	\$31,000.00
Advanced Security	\$1,000.00
Water (3300/3400 Haley Sprinkler)	\$3,000.00
Maintenance	
Snow Removal	\$40,000.00
Maintenance Supplies	\$36,000.00
Landscaping	\$55,000.00
Cleaning	\$30,000.00
Carpet Cleaning	\$0.00
Pest Control - Monthly	\$6,800.00
Pest Control - Spring/Incidental	\$5,100.00
Snow Salt and Ice Melt Delivery	\$1,000.00
Fire System Maintenance / Cell Communicators	\$10,000.00
Miscellaneous Contractors	\$15,000.00
Summer Equipment Rental (Cherry Picker)	\$5,000.00
Amex Cash Discount	-\$2,500.00



<b>Office Expenses</b>	Phone	\$3,000.00
	Mileage Reimbursements	\$200.00
	Accounting Software / Dues / Subscriptions / Promotional / Advertising / Contributions	\$4,000.00
<b>Petty Cash</b>	Office Supplies, Postage, Printing, & Misc	\$500.00
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>		<b>\$695,400.00</b>
<b>Operating Profit / Loss</b>		<b>\$363,710.00</b>
<b>Capital Expenses</b>	10 Balcony Rebuilds / Permits	\$180,000.00
	Seal Coating (Haley)	\$15,000.00
	10 Carpet Replacements	\$25,000.00
	Concrete Repair Work	\$15,000.00
	Unplanned Work: Water Intrusion, Water Lines	\$30,000.00
	Mailbox Replacement and Concrete Pads	\$60,000.00
	10 Building Entrance replacements (Phase 1)	\$50,000.00
	Skylight Replacements (Claremont)	tbd
	Soil Errosion/Underpinning (3800HC)	tbd
	Foundation Sealing (4800-5000DD, 4900BC)	tbd
<b>Total CAP Expenses</b>		<b>\$375,000.00</b>
<b>Net Profit/Loss</b>		<b>-\$11,290.00</b>
	Operational Reserve Starting Balance/Carry-Over	<b>\$105,500.00</b>
	Operating Fund Starting Balance/Carry-Over	<b>~ \$80,000.00</b>
<b>Contributions</b>		<b>~ \$185,500.00</b>
Additional Capital Expenses to be approved throughout the year		
	Annual contribution to Operational Reserve Fund from Operating Fund	\$120,000.00
<b>Available CapEx budget for 2021:</b> \$360,000 in net profit plus \$105,000 from OR and ~ \$80,000 from OF starting figure		
<b>Allocated CapEx budget for 2021:</b> \$400,000		



# 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 Vehicle Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Owner's Condo/Home 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
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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

**\*\* NOTE: Renters are NOT permitted to have pets/animals while residing in Birch Pointe \*\***

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

**If a unit is a rental, it is the duty and responsibility of the owner/landlord to notify the Management/Board and advise all tenants of the Rules, Regulations and Code of Conduct of Birch Pointe Condominiums**

I understand that the above information is for the sole use of Birch Pointe Condominium 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

# Direct Payment Plan Overview

## A smart and easy way to automate your payment with Direct Payment.

Direct Payment is a repetitive payment between businesses and consumers that enables the service provider to deduct scheduled payments from the customer's checking or savings account. It's a dependable, flexible, and convenient process that does not require the consumer to use a computer or access the internet.

### With Direct Payment, you will:

- Save time by having one less check to write
- Reduce postage costs with one less bill to mail
- Eliminate late fees or charges by making payment(s) automatically

### How does Direct Payment work?

You (the customer) will authorize regularly scheduled payments to be deducted from your checking or savings account by completing and submitting an authorization form. Payments are originated one business day before the specified day that they are due. Direct Payment is usually a repetitive payment that will remain in effect until the customer terminates the authorization. It's just that simple!

### What is ACH?

The Automated ClearingHouse (ACH) Network is a nationwide system that processes electronic payments on behalf of depository financial institutions. The ACH Network was established in the 1970s as an electronic substitute for recurring check disbursements and collections. The ACH system is designed to serve all depository financial institutions, regardless of size, on an equitable basis. The system uses batch processing which costs less than on-line, real time processing systems. This feature makes ACH payments less expensive than other electronic payment methods such as wire transfers, and allows many financial institutions to participate.

## Direct Payment Plan Authorization Form

1. Mark the box of the type of account from which payment will be deducted, either a checking or savings account.
2. Fill in your name, unit number/address, financial institution information, and date.
3. Indicate what day of the month funds should be withdrawn and if this is for a monthly or 6-month pre-pay draw.
4. Attach a voided check for verification of all financial institution information.
5. **Be sure to sign the form!**

### AUTHORIZATION FOR DIRECT PAYMENT

I authorize Birch Pointe Condominium Association to initiate electronic debit entries to my:

**(check ONE)**

checking account

OR

savings account

for payment of my condominium fee(s) on or about the day of the month selected below, as well as any late fees, fines or assessments that are assessed (returned ACH fee, census non-completion fine, general fines, etc.).

This authority will remain in effect until I have cancelled it *in writing*.

Processing date **(check ONE)**

(ONLY these dates are available)

1<sup>st</sup> of month

11<sup>th</sup> of month

21<sup>st</sup> of month

Processing schedule **(check ONE)**

monthly

6-month pre-pay

Starting month for regular HOA payments

Unit ID (e.g. 5001BC, 4005HC, 5203DD)

Financial Institution / Bank Name

**(Please Print Neatly!)**

Account Number at Financial Institution

Financial Institution Routing/Transit Number

Financial Institution City and State

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date

**PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THE AUTHORIZATION FOR YOUR RECORDS**

Please mail to: Birch Pointe Condominium Association, P.O. Box 1195, Hockessin, DE 19707

**Attach Voided Check Here**