



Condominium Association

Newsletter

Jan / Feb 2021

"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."

NEW MAILBOXES ON ORDER



With the weather expected to warm up with the approaching spring, work will begin on the various capital improvements slated for 2021. Among those is the replacement of the aged, weather-worn and sometimes damaged community cluster mailboxes.

This process was started as a pilot-project in 2020 with the mailboxes on Haley Court and, due to the positive reception, will now be rolled out to the remainder of the community.

In summary, these new boxes have many features that make them not only more attractive, but also more functional, and are fully USPS compliant:

- Bronze pedestal units, USPS approved for multiple-dwelling complexes
- Access for postal employees will be easier as it is entirely from the front, which will eliminate the need for clearing snow behind them
- Offers improved curb-appeal as appearance is much improved over the existing boxes
- Unit numbers will be engraved on the individual boxes so that ownership will be clear
- A slot is dedicated for outgoing mail
- Small, shared parcel lockers are included in each cluster unit which will be used for USPS-based package deliveries

As part of this project, many of the mailboxes will be relocated into smaller clusters, closer to individual buildings and, in most cases, onto the side of the building that they serve rather than on the opposite side of the road. This is being done in an effort to reduce the negative effects of residents temporarily stopping near the mailboxes to pick up their mail, which has been observed to cause traffic issues as well as unsafe conditions for residents. With the updated locations, no one should be stopping their car in front of the mailboxes to pick up their mail; new positioning will instead encourage foot traffic.

Anticipated delivery of the mailboxes is mid-March, with installation to begin by late March. Several new concrete pads will be installed and in some cases walkways accessing them will be installed as well.

VERIZON FIOS UPDATE



The Verizon (sometimes sporadic) initial build-out performed in the community appears to be winding down. With the installation of the exterior cable infrastructure seemingly done, the next phase of the availability of FiOS in Birch Pointe will then be up to Verizon to start discussions regarding a time frame, etc. As a reminder, Birch Pointe will not be entering in any bulk agreements with Verizon and all services will have to be procured at the individual discretion of each unit owner or occupant.

BIRCH AND DIANA SKYLIGHT REPLACEMENTS



As was noted in the last newsletter of December outlining the 2021 budget, another of the projects in the 2021 capital expenditure plan is the replacement of about 24 skylights in buildings on Birch Circle and Diana Drive. At the time of the last newsletter in December 2020, the Board had been in the vendor sourcing phase. The Board is pleased to announce that Fedale has been selected as the contractor to perform this job.

Specifically, the following buildings will be impacted by this:

- 4500 - 4700 Birch Circle and • 4800 - 5000 Diana Drive

Procurement of associated materials for the project – including matching any roofing shingles which need to be replaced – will be done shortly. It is essential that the ordering process for these takes place as early as possible since there may be fulfillment issues for the slate color necessary to match the current style at Birch Pointe.

Because there was a significant savings in the cost per skylight, it was decided that all the buildings of Claremont be addressed in light of our favorable financial standing, in part the result of several postponed improvement projects in 2020. Timing and progress will be made available when available and needed.

DENNIS RETIRED / WAYNE NEW IN MAINTENANCE



Dennis Kennedy, after more than a decade of dedicated service to Birch Pointe, has officially retired at the end of 2020. Dennis has seen many changes in the community during his tenure, including many major projects completed, work with many of our contractors and landscapers, big and small emergency situations, and the day-to-day tasks that keep Birch Pointe running smoothly. The Board, on behalf of all residents, would like to wish him all the best and thank him for the time he has spent helping to make Birch Pointe a desirable place to live.

As had been communicated in several previous newsletters, our parking enforcement officer, Wayne Lee, has also joined the maintenance team on a part-time, as-needed basis starting in 2021. You will see more of Wayne throughout the community, working alongside and with Jules and Eric to keep Birch Pointe going.

MARCH VIRTUAL OPEN ANNUAL MEETING



Considering the continuing uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation as it relates to group gatherings and with the welfare of the community's health in mind, the Board has decided to hold the annual open community meeting in a virtual-only format. Though everyone certainly hoped that such a scenario wouldn't be needed several months into the new year, the realities of vaccination progress as well as state mandates on gatherings necessitate this move.

The Board at its most recent meeting – held virtually – voted unanimously to conduct the 2021 version in a virtual, Zoom-powered environment. While perhaps not the most desirable method for some residents, it was deemed the best solution to finally getting residents "together" in some fashion and to restore full by-law compliance.

This year's open meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 30th, 6:00pm Eastern Time.

The Zoom Meeting ID and password are:

Meeting ID: **974 7063 8332**

Passcode: **bp2021**

If you are subscribed to the newsletter electronically, you will also be receiving a calendar invite with this information for easy, one-click joining. It is strongly recommended that Zoom be installed and tested prior to the meeting. If unable to attend, you may still submit your ballot ahead of the meeting date.

The primary purpose of this meeting is to communicate to the community an update on the past year as well as to discuss the planned actions of the Association. This includes a review of what happened during the previous year, a brief discussion of the current 2021 budget, election of Board members, and to transact other such business as may come before the unit owners. Due to the virtual format this year, we will forego any outside guest speakers – such as our District Rep. Mike Ramone – this year. An agenda for the meeting is being drafted.

Important notice for election ballots this year:

Due to the meeting being conducted virtually, all ballots must be submitted either to the maintenance building dropbox or via ordinary mail to our mailing address:

Birch Pointe Condominium Association
P.O. Box 1195
Hockessin, DE 19707

- **All ballots must be received or postmarked by March 30th, 2021 to be valid and counted.**
- **All ballots must be submitted in an exterior envelope indicating the unit number for which it is being submitted, the name of the person submitting as well as their signature.**
- **If you wish for your vote to be anonymous, please then place your ballot inside another, unmarked envelope, seal it, and place that inside the exterior, marked envelope.**

This notice also serves as an invitation for new/additional owners to petition for candidacy to join the all-volunteer Board. Persons interested in serving and helping out Birch Pointe should complete the attached form and submit to the Association by Friday, March 26, 2021 via e-mail or post. There is always a need for individuals to donate some time and effort to keep the community running smoothly. We welcome new ideas and encourage participation as 2021 promises to be a busy one with respect to maintaining and improving Birch Pointe.

In preparation for the upcoming annual meeting, some candidates already known to be running for Board positions have, once again, submitted brief biographies for review. These outline why they are seeking office and any special interests, qualifications, and/or experience they have which might help in the management of the community.

My name is **Manuel Harnisch** and I've lived in Birch Pointe since 2009 and have served on the Board since 2010. I've been a member-at-large; have served as the Treasurer; filled in as the acting President; and most recently served the community as President. I will continue to serve this community to the best of my abilities as long as I am asked to do so.

I am an ardent believer in technology and modernization, both of which I know continue to help solve some of the many challenges we face. Lastly, I believe that driving property values and quality of life in Birch Pointe are first and foremost the result of constantly finding new avenues of creating value for all of us, while keeping

costs at reasonable levels.

Hi...I'm **Monica Rieder** and have been on the Birch Pointe Board since 2012, as Treasurer since 2014. As such I am responsible for pretty much all aspects of the community's finances: collections, deposits, payments, budgets, ACH, insurance, taxes, among others. I have also been a major composer of most of the monthly newsletters.

I have lived here on Diana for over 30 years and, as a result, have witnessed many changes during that time, from management companies to property values to maintenance issues. Like others on the Board, I really like this community and notice the progress and many improvements that have been made during the past several decades, especially since our transition to self-management. Birch Pointe has become a well maintained, respected, and desirable place to live in Pike Creek as a result of hard work and dedication of our volunteer Boards. I believe I can continue to be of value to the Board and would like to continue in my role as Treasurer. Our Board is dedicated to Birch Pointe's near and long term interests, of which I would like to remain an integral part.

My name is **Susan Yeatman** and I have lived in Birch Pointe for over 20 years. I am retired and have been a Board member for over 3 years. I have been welcoming new buyers into our community by distributing welcome packets with all the info they need about our community. My intention is to help, in the best ways I can, to keep this community running smoothly and maintained for not just for the present but also for the future. It is imperative that we look not only at the present but for what lies ahead of us.

My name is **Steve Papparazzo** and I have been a member of the Board since 2017 and hold the position of Vice President. It has been quite the experience working for the community and listening to my neighbors about all things Birch Pointe.

I would like to continue my work with the Board because we are all working very hard to modernize Birch Pointe. From updated by-laws, development of the Three Little Bakers Golf Course, and the ever-changing State of Delaware, I will work hard to make sure that we stay current. It is imperative that we continue to be responsive and leaders within the area so that the best possible outcomes for all Birch Pointe residents are kept in mind. Thank you for the opportunity to serve and I hope that you will allow me to continue.

My name is **Cheryl McDonough**. I have owned my condo on Haley Court since 2015. I became a Board member in 2015 because I felt my extensive public/private sector experience could be of assistance to Birch Pointe. Being self-managed requires a lot of work and I feel the current Board has worked very hard and the results have enabled the much needed maintenance/up-keep to be completed. I'm running again this year because I feel Birch Pointe is a great place to call home and I want to continue to help the Board maintain this community.

BIRCH POINTE DIRECTORY / IMPORTANT NUMBERS

➤ GENERAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS

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

➤ MAINTENANCE ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

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

➤ ACCOUNT STATEMENTS / HOA FEE /OR ACH QUESTIONS

Monica Rieder – e-mail: rieder@birchpointe.net



➤ **BIRCH POINTE MAINTENANCE EMERGENCIES**

phone: 1-267-474-2907; e-mail: maintenance@birchpointe

February 2021 Board Meeting

Held virtually on 2-16-2021 via Google Meet



- Reports
 - Financials
 - Collections
 - Real Estate Outlook
- Capital Improvement Projects
 - Mailboxes replacements and concrete pads
 - Bids / costs
 - Anticipated starting dates
 - Claremont skylight replacements
 - Review of contractor bids
 - Vote for approval
- Open Annual Meeting
 - Possibility of in person or virtual?
 - Select a suitable date
 - Candidates running
 - Proxies and ballot
- Adjournment

Real Estate Status: Online resources such as Realtor.com, Trulia, Zillow, Estately, etc. (since the last newsletter and info as of 2-21-2021)



(1) Units on market now:	1 on Birch Circle 2 on Diana Drive 2 on Haley Court	1 new listing under contract 1 new listing; other is short sale; both under contract both new listings and under contract
(2) Units recently sold:	2 on Birch Circle 1 on Diana Drive	on 12-30-2020 and on 1-12-2021 on 12-20-2020

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 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, payable PRIOR to issue of said documents.**

(2) Major expenditures for January: (other than normal utilities)	\$ 10,064	for	regular hallway cleaning services plus additional deep COVID treatment
	\$ 3,047		maintenance supplies
	\$ 3,019		waste removal plus X-mass tree dumpster
	\$ 1,248		quarterly fire alarm inspection/maintenance
	\$ 1,020		plumbing contractor for drain back-up
	\$ 4,467		taxes (federal, state, Medicare, Social Security, DE, FUTA, training fund)

AMEX discount/rebate posted = \$200

(3) Capital improvement expenses for January:	\$ 14,752	1 balcony rebuild
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Current Operating Fund (as of 2-22-2021) stands at \$172,564

December / Year-end 2020 Financials

▶ Operating Account

Beginning Balance:		\$ 143,308.90
Inflow – Operating Income:	\$	93,686.46
Inflow – One-time Transfers (from ORA*):	\$	0.00
Outflow – Operating Expenditure:	\$	69,213.80
Outflow – Capital Expenditure:	\$	28,454.00
Outflow – One-Time Transfer (to ORA*):	\$	0.00
Ending Balance:		\$ <u>139,327.56</u>

▶ Operational Reserve Account (ORA)

Beginning Balance:		\$ 105,438.67
Inflow – Periodic Transfers:	\$	0.00
Inflow – Interest:	\$	3.38
Outflow – Periodic Transfers*:	\$	0.00
Ending Balance:		\$ <u>105,442.05</u>

▶ Reserve Account

Beginning Balance:		\$ 260,396.50
Inflow – Periodic Transfers:	\$	0.00
Inflow – Interest:	\$	11.06
Outflow – Periodic Transfers:	\$	0.00
Outflow – One-time Transfers:	\$	0.00
Ending Balance:		\$ <u>260,407.56</u>

(and starting balances for 2021)

January 2021 Financials

▶ Operating Account

Beginning Balance:		\$ 139,327.56
Inflow – Operating Income:	\$	120,431.92
Inflow – One-time Transfers (from ORA*):	\$	0.00
Outflow – Operating Expenditure:	\$	44,013.53
Outflow – Capital Expenditure:	\$	14,752.00
Outflow – One-Time Transfer (to ORA*):	\$	0.00
Ending Balance:		\$ <u>200,993.95</u>

▶ Operational Reserve Account (ORA)

Beginning Balance:		\$ 105,442.05
Inflow – Periodic Transfers:	\$	0.00
Inflow – Interest:	\$	3.04
Outflow – Periodic Transfers*:	\$	0.00
Ending Balance:		\$ <u>105,445.09</u>

▶ Reserve Account

Beginning Balance:		\$ 260,407.56
Inflow – Periodic Transfers:	\$	0.00
Inflow – Interest:	\$	7.49
Outflow – Periodic Transfers:	\$	0.00
Outflow – One-time Transfers:	\$	0.00
Ending Balance:		\$ <u>260,415.05</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 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

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)** 1st of month 11th of month 21st of month
(ONLY these dates are available)

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