



# Condominium Association

## Newsletter

April 2024

*"Birch Pointe is a self-managed and self-run community composed of an all-volunteer board that works to keep costs low, strives to enhance property values, and provides efficient leadership through honest and open communication."*

### **HOA ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of the Homeowners Association of Birch Pointe is set for April 27, 2024, and will be held at Skyline United Methodist Church at 10:30 AM (Lower parking lot and back entrance to the church meeting room). Please plan to attend this important gathering. Members of the Birch Pointe HOA are invited to nominate candidates to serve on the HOA Board of Directors. Bio-information on the present Board members and new candidates can be found in this Newsletter along with instructions for ballots for the 2024-2025 term of office. Ballots will be emailed on or about April 16th.

### **PETS**

From Article 2, Section 4 of the New Castle County Code:

The Delaware Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) enforces regulations regarding nuisance animals and animals that are mistreated. **All dogs over the age of 6 months are required to have a Delaware State Dog License and must display the license tag. Proof of current rabies vaccination is required to obtain a dog license.**

**All dogs are to be kept under restraint at all times.**

**Owners or persons responsible for dogs and/or cats are expected to prevent accumulation of animal excreta in the area where such animals are customarily kept. This regulation is enforced by the New Castle County Code Enforcement Division.** To file a complaint, call 395-5555.

**Owners of or persons responsibility for dogs or cats shall immediately remove, in a sanitary manner, any fecal matter deposited by such dog or cat upon any street, sidewalk or park or upon any property without the consent of the owner or tenant of such property.** It shall not be a violation if such fecal matter is removed within one (1) hour.

As noted many times in the past **"Residents who are renting their BIRCH POINTE Condo are not permitted to have pets according to the BY-laws of the Community. ALL PET OWNERS ARE REQUIRED TO CLEAN UP AFTER THEIR PETS AND TO KEEP DOGS ON LEASHES AT ALL TIME WHEN OUTSIDE YOUR RESIDENCE.**

**As this issue has become a matter of great concern, any observed failure to adhere to the above CODE will be reported to NCC Code Enforcement for further action.**

04-01-2024

## **SMOKING (ANYTHING) IN YOUR UNIT**

It has come to the attention of the Board from numerous complaints about smoking tobacco and other smoking materials (legal, recreational, medicinal, or otherwise) infiltrating common areas of buildings and other resident's units. Here is the quote from the Birch Pointe Code of Conduct:

### **Prohibited Conduct Is Defined As:**

1. Smoking anything in indoor common spaces.
2. Allowing smoke from your unit to enter a common area or another unit. Doing so may lead to fines and/or legal action by the board, or the affected owner(s).
3. Conducting illegal activities in your unit or on community premises. Violations can and should be reported to police by any owner or board member.

Although the Board has no authority to enforce the legal codes of Delaware and/or New Castle County, residents who are affected by any activities related to smoking or effects thereof, are encouraged to call New Castle County Police and request intervention. Although an individual has the right to smoke cigarettes or other tobacco-types in their unit, that does not preclude other individuals' right to "clean, and odor-free" air in their units. If nothing else, a sense of common courtesy should prevail at all times. Any Violations are subject to fines by the Birch Pointe Condominium Association.

## **MAINTENANCE ISSUES**

If you observe things like entryway lighting, parking lot lights, or common area lighting in buildings not working in the evenings, PLEASE let Jules know so that he can replace bulbs or fixtures as may be needed. Contact Jules at [jlitchfield@birchpointe.net](mailto:jlitchfield@birchpointe.net) or telephone 302-277-7978.

Owners who have interior projects underway and have a contractor needing access to the Utility Room of the building must schedule an appointment with Jules to have the door opened. Such appointments must be between 8am and 3pm - Monday through Friday. Please call Jules or email [jlitchfield@birchpointe.net](mailto:jlitchfield@birchpointe.net) to schedule an appointment for this service.

## **PARKING ISSUES**

Owners and Residents are reminded that Guests are to park in UNMARKED spaces only. There continue to be concerns about evening and weekend visitors parking in RESIDENT spaces. Please ask your guests to abide by this courtesy to your neighbors.

## **March 2024 Board Meeting**

Held virtually on 3-12-2024 via Zoom

- Reports
  - Financials
  - Collections
  - Real Estate outlook
- Updates
  - Reminders for newsletter
    - No pets for renters



04-01-2024

- No alterations of common elements
  - Concerns about damage & defacement of buildings
  - Security Camera Installations
- Capital Expenses for 2024
  - Building Entry Doors
  - New Intercom Systems
  - Deck Rebuilding
- Adjournment

**Real Estate Status:** Online resources such as Realtor.com, Trulia, Zillow, Estatefy, etc.

As of April 1, 2024:

One (1) Unit on Claremont is listed with Century 21 at \$250,000.00.

One unit was sold in February.

## **REMEMBER:**

When moving, PLEASE inform Don McFarland if you are on Birch Pointe's Direct Payment ACH program so that future automatic bank debits can be canceled. 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 \$320 ACH discounted rate. Contact [dmcfarland@birchpointe.net](mailto:dmcfarland@birchpointe.net) if there are any questions or concerns.

Note also that **parking hang tags for units being sold are to be returned to Jules**, 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 likewise and turn over their tags.**

Remember that replacement fees for reissue of a hang tag is \$50. Your cooperation is most appreciated!

### **Note:**

- **Requests for DUCIOA forms needed for property transfer should be directed to Donald McFarland - [dmcfarland@birchpointe.net](mailto:dmcfarland@birchpointe.net)**
- **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:**

In general, the collections for March were in the expected range, with the closing totals as of 3/31/2024 as follows:

91 or more days overdue - 28 accounts - \$31,727.00, and the total of delinquent accounts for Jan. and Feb. 2024 was \$34,816.00.

An audit of all 91 days or more overdue accounts is underway. Many of these accounts have carried balances for more than the last 18 months.

**Beginning April 1, 2024, any account that is found to be in arrears may have a penalty interest charge of 1.5% added to the balance due each month until the balance is paid in full. Accounts which are found to be delinquent for more than 5 months will be referred to Legal Counsel for collection.**

04-01-2024

# THE BIRCH POINTE BOARD TAKES SUCH LONG TERM DELINQUENCIES SERIOUSLY !

– **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**

**HOA FEES ARE NOW \$340.00 monthly. If you pay your fees via the website's "PAY NOW" feature, be sure to change the AMOUNT to \$330.00 for credit card payments.**

## Treasurer's Report:

### March 2024 Financials

#### ▶ Operating Account

**Beginning Balance: \$106,535.51**

<b>Inflow – Operating Income:</b>	\$	89,594.65
<b>Inflow – One-time Transfers (from ORA*):</b>	\$	0.00
<b>Outflow – Operating Expenditure:</b>	\$	68,724.56
<b>Outflow – Capital Expenditure:</b>	\$	0.00
<b>Outflow – One-Time Transfer (to RA*):</b>	\$	0.00

**Ending Balance: \$ 127,405.60**

#### ▶ Operational Reserve Account (ORA)

**Beginning Balance: \$ 5,491.14**

<b>Inflow – Periodic Transfers:</b>	\$	0.00
<b>Inflow – Interest:</b>	\$	0.10
<b>Outflow – Periodic Transfers*:</b>	\$	0.00

**Ending Balance: \$ 5,491.24**

#### ▶ Reserve Account (RA)

**Beginning Balance: \$ 567,793.55**

<b>Inflow – Periodic Transfers:</b>	\$	0.00
<b>Inflow – Interest:</b>	\$	1,932.12
<b>Outflow – Periodic Transfers:</b>	\$	0.00
<b>Outflow – One-time Transfers:</b>	\$	0.00

**Ending Balance: \$569,725.67**

04-01-2024

**IF YOU HAVE NOT YET COMPLETED THE CENSUS FORM, PLEASE DO SO AND MAIL TO P.O.Box 1195, HOCKESSIN, DE 19707. RENTERS ARE ENTITLED TO A RESIDENT PARKING TAG IF THEIR LANDLORD SUBMITS A COMPLETE CENSUS FORM WITH RENTER'S VEHICLE INFORMATION AND REQUESTS THE ASSIGNED TAG FOR THE UNIT THEY ARE LEASING OUT.**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CONVENIENT ACH METHOD FOR PAYING YOUR MONTHLY FEES, PLEASE SEE THE ACH FORM THAT FOLLOWS.**

## **BIRCH POINTE DIRECTORY / IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

### **➤ GENERAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS**

Jules Litchfield – phone: (302) 277-7978; e-mail: [jlitchfield@birchpointe.net](mailto:jlitchfield@birchpointe.net)

### **➤ MAINTENANCE ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

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

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

Don McFarland – e-mail: [dmcfarland@birchpointe.net](mailto:dmcfarland@birchpointe.net)

### **➤ BIRCH POINTE MAINTENANCE EMERGENCIES**

phone: 1-302-277-7978; e-mail: [maintenance@birchpointe.net](mailto:maintenance@birchpointe.net)

# 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/Homeowners 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
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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

04-01-2024

# 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)**                       1<sup>st</sup> of month                       11<sup>th</sup> of month                       21<sup>st</sup> 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

## Candidates for Election to the Birch Pointe Community Council (aka Board of Directors) for 2024-2025.

### Current Board Members are:

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 Point is a great place to call home and I want to continue to help the Board maintain this community

My name is **John Taylor** and I've lived in Birch Pointe since April 2020. I'm retired from both the Navy and the civilian sector, where I worked as a marine/industrial electrician. I joined the Board last year to help keep our community running smoothly, and to effect positive change. I look forward to continuing to do so for as long as possible.

My name is **Donald McFarland** and my wife and I purchased on Birch Circle and moved here in March of 2020. I am retired after a 44-year career in the business of selling, and installing church organs. Additionally, I spent five years with the Salvation Army in Delaware as Resource Development Manager for fund-raising, marketing, and public relations. We love it here in Birch Pointe and my hope is to help make our community a lovely and desirable place to live. I hope to have the privilege of continuing to serve our community as a member of the Board.

My name is **Debbie Hook** and my career has been in Bookkeeping, Accounts Payable, Receivables, and data entry for several businesses. Additionally, I was employed at the Post Office as a maintenance support clerk ordering and purchasing supplies and parts for the machines and other Maintenance Department needs. I look forward to serving our community. I live on Claremont Court and enjoy living here at Birch Pointe.

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 7 years. I have been welcoming new buyers to 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 **Lee Long**. I have lived in Birch Pointe for over 20 years. I became a Board member last year because after so many enjoyable years here I felt it was time to give back to the community. I bring to the board over 30 years' experience in the financial services industry and a willingness to dig in and help see Birch Pointe meet the needs of today and the years to come. Listening to the community and problem solving are key elements to a strong board and I feel the current board takes great pride in this place we call home. I look forward to getting to know more of my neighbors through service to the community.

My name is **Taylor Rapuano**, I am 29 years old, and I have lived in Birch Pointe for just over 2 years. As a relatively new member of the community, I strive to bring a fresh perspective and dynamic energy to the board. Leveraging my background in technology, marketing, and design, I aim to infuse creativity and strategic thinking into emerging community initiatives. My commitment lies in enhancing the quality of life in Birch Pointe, prioritizing safety, and ensuring that the voices of our community are acknowledged and heard.

**New Candidates are:**

My name is **Mary Sklar** and I live on Birch Circle. I work in leasing for a large residential property management company and am aware of housing issues and the challenges of dealing with a diverse set of customers. As I am now semi-retired, I have the time and desire to commit to serving our community on the Board.

My name is **Jaime Cutter** and I live on Birch Circle. I work in wealth management and connect with others easily. Although I don't have any experience being on an HOA Board, I have ideas and time to commit along with a desire to serve the community. I have truly loved living in Birch Pointe for the last 3 years.

My name is **Aase Southerland** and I live on Haley Court. I purchased my home here in 2005, went through a difficult time rebuilding but completed the project in 2008. I am now retired and would like to help increase the value of this beautiful place. I believe it is important that Board members are homeowners who can recommend policies and make decisions that will increase the value of our investments.

**2024-25 Ballot Instructions:**

The 2024-2025 Ballot will be attached to an email blast to the community on or about April 16, 2024.. Please complete and return by 7PM 4/26/2023 in one of the following ways:

1. Maintenance Building Drop Box
2. Email: [dmcfarland@birchpointe.net](mailto:dmcfarland@birchpointe.net)
3. USPS to Birch Pointe Condominiums HOA – P. O. Box 1195, Hockessin, DE 19707

**All Resident Owners are urged to complete a ballot for this election.**