



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

COMMUNICATOR

Monthly Publication of the Communications Committee



Rain Barrels: A Good Way to Manage Water Runoff & Care for Your Garden *By Susan Walker*



Installed rain barrel. GHI photo.

A rain barrel is a vessel for collecting roof water runoff so that it is diverted from storm drains and our stream systems. The water it collects contains no chlorine, lime or calcium making it excellent for our gardens.

GHI has selected two rain barrel styles that meet its specifications. A Type IV permit request form (<http://ghi.coop/content/type-iv-improvement-permit-request>) needs to be submitted to the Technical Services Department prior to installation. Once the permit is approved, you can install the rain barrel according to GHI's rules (<http://ghi.coop/content/xxiii-rainbarrels>). GHI's Fee-for-service can also install the rain barrel for a fee. Rain barrels are purchased by GHI staff in bulk. Sometimes there is a wait to place an order until enough members have indicated interest.

I have the RiverSafe model that has a 132-gallon capacity. The rain that comes off my roof is channeled through the gutters to my rain barrel. Just one rainstorm can fill it to capacity. There is a spout to attach a hose and sprinkler or drip irrigation hose to water my yard. The rain barrel is sealed so that I do not have to worry about mosquitoes.

It does require some attention because leaves and debris can clog the gutter and the sieve that goes into the rain barrel. I check after a storm to be sure everything is running freely. I also check the water level by either pressing on the barrel to check the height of the water or removing the sieve and checking with a flashlight. When the water level is high, I make sure the bypass valve diverts the water past the rain barrel. If the water level gets too high, it can flood back out of the barrel and into crawl spaces. When I need more water in the rain barrel, I just turn the bypass valve to let the water flow into the rain barrel again. If you share a downspout with a neighbor, you need that neighbor's consent to install the rain barrel. There are also some rules about removal of rain barrels.

In the late fall, I drain most of the water out of the rain barrel to prevent the brass spigot and the PVC plumbing from cracking during cold snaps. It is good to leave a little water in the bottom for ballast, so that heavy winds don't blow it over. Then in the spring, I reset the bypass for a rainstorm and I am ready to garden again.

2015/2016 BOARD of DIRECTORS OFFICERS

Steve Skolnik, President
sdskolnik@gmail.com
301-503-0815

Susan Ready, Vice Pres.
suready@verizon.net
301-345-1612

Chuck Hess, Treasurer
Chuckhess1040@netzero.com
301-474-3670

Ed James, Secretary
edward.james@gmail.com
301-345-8479



"Like" us on
Facebook
"Greenbelt
Homes"

Subscribe to our E-Newsletter for the most up-to-date information! Visit www.ghi.coop and click on "I Want To...Subscribe to GHI E-News"

Follow us on
Twitter:
"GHImgmt"



Renovation Idea: Create an Upstairs Laundry

By Elizabeth Jay, member since 1999

When I bought my three bedroom brick home in 1999 I asked my contractor, who knows all about GHI houses, if it was possible to put the washer and dryer upstairs. He said it could be done by combining a bedroom closet* and the linen closet to make space for a laundry so I told him to go ahead. I love the results.



Photo by: Lauren Cummings

You will need a GHI permit, a County and City electrical permit and a WSSC permit for plumbing work. If you plan to put it on an outside wall it might be easier (mine is in the center of the house) but you would likely have to make sure the pipes won't freeze. You'll need to exhaust the dryer to the outside and the unit itself has to sit in a special metal pan in case there is any water overflow. The biggest challenge was adding the required overflow pipe for the water because the contractor had to tear out half of my kitchen ceiling and wall to route the overflow pipe outside.

My washer/dryer units are not individually stacked; they are all just one unit. It was very difficult to get it upstairs so think carefully about what you purchase to ensure it can fit up the stairs and appropriately into the new space. The original installation had rubber hoses but I got worried a few years later and had those hoses replaced with more reliable metal mesh. I had the inside of the closet painted a beautiful tropical ocean blue-green and it makes me feel good every time I look at it. It was a heck of a job to do but I don't regret one penny of it.

****Staff Note:** Real estate and GHI regulations have a standard that all bedrooms must have a closet. GHI would permit the use of a closet to install laundry appliances in a bedroom if the closet is still available to serve as a closet or if a new closet is created in the bedroom. Be sure to get permission from GHI staff before beginning work. In cases where members have altered their floor plan configuration without permission, they are required to return the configuration to its original state.*

GHI Election Results

2015-16 Board members:

Steve Skolnik, * President
Sue Ready, Vice President
Ed James, Secretary
Chuck Hess, * Treasurer
Frank DeBernardo
Bill Jones*
Aaron Marcavitch*
Diana McFadden
Patricia Novinski*

Audit Committee:

Ben Fischler
Leann Irwin

N&E Committee:

Stefan Brodd
Theresa Henderson
Tom Jones

*Re-elected on May 14th.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held at the GHI Administration Offices on Hamilton Place, and are open to all GHI members. Dates are subject to change.

June		
1	7:00 pm	Communications Committee
1	7:00 pm	(MOC) Parade Task Force
5	--	OFFICE CLOSED*
8	7:00 pm	Member Outreach Committee
8	7:00 pm	Pre Purchase Orientation
8	7:30 pm	Marketing Committee
9	7:30 pm	Historic Preservation Taskforce
10	7:30 pm	Architectural Review Committee
11	7:30 pm	Board Meeting
16	7:30 pm	Companion Animal Committee
17	7:00 pm	Woodlands Committee
19	--	OFFICE CLOSED
22	7:00 pm	Communications Committee
24	7:00 pm	Buildings Committee
25	7:30 pm	Board Meeting
27	11:00 am	Pre Purchase Orientation
* Emergency maintenance service is available outside of normal hours or when GHI is closed. Call 301-474-6011.		

Member Announcements

Homes Improvement Program Financing

The following motions were approved by the membership at the May 14th Annual Meeting:

Motion #1 - The GHI membership authorizes the GHI Board of Directors to borrow up to \$3.0 million for a period of 10 to 15 years, at the most advantageous terms available, in order to fund insulation and moisture control in the crawlspaces of homes within the frame and masonry groups. This loan shall be repaid by members through their monthly co-op payments.

Motion #2 - The GHI membership authorizes the GHI Board of Directors to borrow up to \$7.0 million, for a period of up to 10 to 15 years, at the most advantageous terms available, in order to fund board-approved member options during the 2016-2020 Homes Improvement Program. This loan is to be repaid by individual members in accordance with the options they choose (at no cost to those members who do not use this loan) with their monthly co-op payments or through partial or full-payments up front.

GHI in the Labor Day Parade

We need creative ideas and helping hands.

Join the Member Outreach Committee on June 1st at 7pm to find out how you can help. For additional information, contact Frank DeBernardo at: fdebernardo@aol.com.