



Greenbelt Homes, Inc.

COMMUNICATOR

Bi-Monthly Publication of the Communications Committee

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WANTED: LEADERS FOR A TIME OF VISION AND RENEWAL

By Kathleen Gallagher

Contracts, real estate taxes, plats, property management, big snow storms, financial audits, annual operating budgets, Greenbelt Development Corporation (GDC), policy, regulations, and requests for exceptions to rules. These are just a sampling of the important matters managed on behalf of members by the GHI Board of Directors, with recommendations from volunteer committees and oversight by the Audit Committee.

The leadership of GHI has significant responsibilities on its plate every year, but the upcoming years will require an especially capable and committed decision-making team to implement the Community Upgrade Program to replace and enhance various components of GHI’s housing stock in a fashion that will make us more comfortable, cost-efficient, and environmentally friendly.

In the last issue of the *Communicator*, Board Treasurer Sylvia Lewis stated that the 2015 upgrade “is the most important decision facing GHI in the next several decades.” The financial and programmatic decisions taken over the next several years will impact not only current members but much of the next generation, just as the work of GHI leadership in the early 1980s contributed to many aspects of what we think of today as a GHI home.

The 2011 elections will be held at the **GHI Annual Meeting, at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 18**, and the next day at the GHI offices. The Nominations & Elections (N&E) Committee needs your help in identifying the best possible candidates for the Board of Directors (five open seats, two-year terms), Audit Committee (three open seats, one-year terms), and N&E Committee (five open seats, one-year terms). Would you consider running for office? Do you know a family member, neighbor, or GHI volunteer you would like to nominate? Any GHI member in good standing who is at least 21 years of age and resides in GHI may run for office.

Much of what you need to know in order to run or nominate is included in this issue of the *Communicator*. The Election FAQ is an insert (post it on your fridge!), and the Election Schedule appears on page 4. Those documents, together with the necessary forms, also make up the Candidate Packet, which is available at the GHI management office or on line at www.ghi.coop (click on “Elections”).

How do you become a candidate? It’s easy – just fill out the candidate consent-to-serve form and return it to any member of N&E or to the GHI office by Friday, May 6 at 5 p.m.

For more information, contact a member of N&E: Kathleen Gallagher at 301-466-0774, Frank DeBernardo at FDeBernardo@aol.com, Robin Everly at robin.everly@verizon.net, or Ann Landry-Lombardi at 301-345-3077.

REMINDER

The 2011 GHI Community Beautification Program will begin on Monday, May 16th. Please refer to the insert in this issue of the *Communicator* for more details.



Have an idea for a story?
Send GHI your story ideas.
See page 8 for details.

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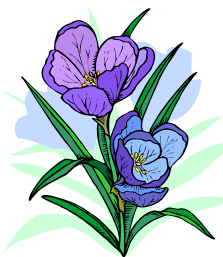
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152 or blewis@greenbelthomes.net



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY SUZETTE AGANS

Dear Fellow Members,

Happy renewal season to you!

As I am writing this article, I am looking outside, and it is cold and dreary, but I know spring is coming, which is when you will receive this *Communicator*. So looking ahead to spring, my thoughts turn away from a cold winter to hopes of seeing the early bulbs that will be coming up soon in my yard and my neighbors'. The crocuses are always a delight and remind me that vibrant colors are part of the changing seasons after the faded greens, browns, and tans of winter.

Speaking of renewal, our homes need renewal too. Our homes are no longer as young as they used to be, and they need some maintenance to keep them usable and hold their value into the future. Many of you may have been at the Community Upgrade Townhall meeting on January 23 at the Community Center where the Buildings Committee and friends shared lots of information on the Community Upgrade and its Pilot Program. If not, please visit www.ghi.coop and click on Pilot Program for a copy of the agenda. The event was also recorded by GATE.

Over 350 people attended the event, which greatly exceeded our expectations and was very well received. I am amazed yet again at the knowledge and level of commitment by our fellow members and volunteers. It really does blow me away. And I feel fortunate that they are asking the questions and doing the research and sharing this information with the rest of us. If you think you would like to consider a small contribution to our community through volunteering in some event or activity in the coming year, please contact me at suzflower@yahoo.com or 202-460-1532.

Cooperatively yours with a spring in my step,

Suzette Agans



Photo credit: Rachel Channon

COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING

On October 23, nearly 20 Woodlands Committee members and other volunteers planted a mix of native trees and shrubs in a GHI common area near 8 Laurel Hill to create a new wildlife garden. To get involved as a volunteer, contact Matt Berres at

BOARD MEETINGS AND HIGHLIGHTS

The GHI Board meetings are held in the Board Room of the GHI Administration Building. Meetings are usually held twice a month on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m., except during the summer when meetings are held once a month. Please check the calendar on page 8 or the GHI website for details. With the exception of executive sessions, all meetings are open to the membership.

Board actions during November and December 2010:

COMMITTEE AFFAIRS

- Disbanded the Marketing Committee and the Member Activities Committee.
- Reconstituted the Communications Committee as the *Communicator* Task Force.
- Asked the Architectural Review Committee to conduct a review of GHI rules for sheds, focusing in particular on rules regarding vinyl (resin) sheds.

EXPENDITURES

- Approved using \$10,000 from unallocated funds for 2009 to supplement the funding of the redesign of GHI's website, bringing the total allocated for this project to \$30,000.
- Accepted the proposal of Wegner LLP, of Madison, Wisconsin to perform the 2010 consolidated audit for GHI and GDC, and for the preparation of 2010 state and federal tax returns at a cost not to exceed \$16,000.
- Authorized the purchase of a used Caterpillar or John Deere backhoe loader at a cost not to exceed \$65,000.

CONTRACTS ENTERED INTO

- For repairs to garage doors at 35/37 Ridge Road (Greenbelt Builders, \$22,238).
- Three-year Contracts (2011-2013) :
 - For custodial services at the GHI Administration Building (Altro Janitorial and Maintenance Services (first year, \$19,740; second year \$20,727; third year \$21,763).
 - For pruning trees, removing trees, and trimming branches from roofs (Care of Trees, in accordance with the company's pricing schedule, and specifying a 3 percent price increase each year for the second and third years).
 - For pest control services (Atek Pest Management, in accordance with the company's pricing schedule, and specifying no escalation in prices the second and third years).
 - For landscape maintenance services to GHI common areas (Trugreen Landcare, \$42,634 per year).

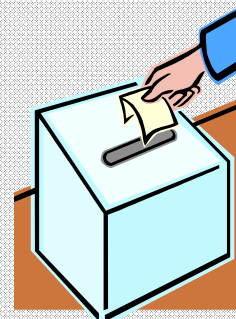
OTHER ITEMS

- Approved an operating budget of \$8,987,911 for 2011, with member depreciation charges of \$586,285.
- Approved a 3% increase in staff salaries for 2011.
- Elected Laura Moore to fill the Board seat vacated by Director Ed Hickey.
- Authorized soliciting turnkey proposals for solar photovoltaic electrical systems (PVES) for the GHI Administration Building and the GDC-owned Parkway Apartments.
- Granted an exception for an existing oversize vinyl shed at 16R Ridge Road.
- Granted an exception for an existing over-height shed with an asymmetric roof at 10A Plateau Place.
- Approved yard plats for 11 Court Southway and 6 Court Plateau Place.

Nominations & Elections Committee

GHI ELECTION SCHEDULE

Annual Meeting and Election: Wednesday, May 18, 2011, 7:30 p.m.
Voting Continues: Thursday, May 19, 7-10 a.m. and 5-8 p.m.



Sunday, April 3	Members place items to censor or remove a member of the Board or an elected committee on the annual meeting agenda by petition submitted to Board Secretary Ed James at the GHI management office by 5 p.m. Thursday, March 31 or at 56D Crescent Road by April 3. (GHI offices are closed on Friday, April 1.)
Wednesday April 13	Members place items for a specific proposition on the agenda by petition submitted to Board Secretary Ed James at the GHI management office or 56D Crescent Road.
Thursday, April 28 through Sunday, May 8	GHI management office mails annual meeting notice and agenda to all GHI members, including any proposed actions received in petitions, as well as the rationale for proposed actions.
Friday, May 6 by 5 p.m.	To run for office, candidates file consent-to-serve forms ("consent forms") with GHI management office or an N&E Committee member.
Friday, May 6	N&E Committee submits a list of nominated candidates for all elective offices to the Board secretary for immediate publication/posting.
Monday, May 9 by 12 noon	Candidates who filed by May 6 without submitting a biographical sketch (150-word maximum) for publication by GHI in the <i>Greenbelt News Review</i> may submit it to the GHI management office or an N&E member.
Tuesday, May 10 7:30 p.m.	Candidate Forum: All candidates for Board or Audit Committee give statements and answer questions posed by GHI members in the City Council Room of the Greenbelt Municipal Building.
Wednesday, May 11 by 5 p.m.	For additional candidates to have their names placed on the official ballot, nomination must be made by written petition with at least 10 member signatures, together with a consent form executed by the nominee, to be filed at the GHI management office or submitted to Board Secretary Ed James (56D Crescent Road).
Friday, May 13	Members submit official proxy forms to GHI management office by 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 12, or to Board Secretary Ed James (56D Crescent Road) by Friday, May 13. (GHI offices are closed on May 13.)
Noon, Thursday, May 12 until noon, Tuesday, May 17	Pick up applications for absentee ballots from GHI Director of Member Services Joan Krob at GHI management office.
Tuesday, May 17 by 5 p.m.	Return absentee ballots to Director of Member Services Joan Krob at GHI.
Wednesday, May 18 7:30 p.m.	Annual Membership Meeting, Community Center gym. Check-in starts at 7 p.m. Attendees elect new N&E Committee during the meeting.
Wednesday, May 18 after meeting recess	Members begin casting ballots for Board of Directors and Audit Committee candidates immediately after annual meeting is recessed.
Thursday, May 19 7-10 a.m. & 5-8 p.m.	Polls are open at GHI Board room to vote for Board and Audit Committee candidates.
Thursday night after the count is completed.	Election results will be posted at the GHI management office and on the Greenbelters Yahoo group late Thursday evening and as early as possible at the Co-op supermarket and on the GHI website.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY IN GHI: PREVENTION IS KEY

By Matt Berres

In 2003, the GHI Board of Directors authorized a preventative maintenance program to inspect circuit panels, receptacles, and other electrical components in GHI houses. Staff have inspected approximately 95 percent of GHI houses and in most cases found no obvious significant deficiencies. (For the remaining five percent of uninspected units, members have denied access to staff inspectors).

For all inspected units, staff installed new Ground Fault Circuit Interrupted (GFCI) receptacles in kitchens and bathrooms and corrected any observed deficiencies. The few observed cases of significant deficiencies stemmed primarily from inappropriate electrical modifications made by members or their contractors. All such observed instances have been corrected.

These facts serve as a good reminder that any electrical modifications within the GHI community should be done properly, according to GHI rules and the Prince George's County Code. GHI rules state that any electrical work "...shall be done by licensed electricians, and detailed drawings for all electric work must be included in the working drawings submitted to the Technical Services Office. All electrical work done at GHI will require a county permit."

Electrical work requiring a county permit, as defined by the Prince George's County Guide to Permits, includes, but is not limited to:

- Replacing or adding new electrical wiring
- Relocating or adding switches, outlets, lighting fixtures, and subpanels
- Replacing or adding new circuit breakers

The purpose of having such rules and procedures is to ensure that GHI staff has an opportunity to review the proposed work and that qualified individuals perform the work. Please help us insure the safety of our homes by following these procedures.

Member observations are also very important in identifying and correcting deficient wiring conditions before they become a problem.

A few things to be on the look out for:

- Crackling or "sizzling" noises at switches;
- Excessive heat at electrical components (switches, outlets, light fixtures, panel box, etc);
- Flickering or intermittent power;
- Breakers tripping.

If you observe anything out of the ordinary with your lights, receptacles, or electrical components, call the GHI Maintenance line at 301-474-6011.

IMPORTANT REMINDER:

Members should not paint over electrical outlets as it is a code violation and can be a fire hazard.



GHI ELECTRICAL FAQs

Q- How can I confirm that the wiring in my house has been checked?

A- GHI maintains a record of completed inspections. The Maintenance Department can confirm for you if your home has been inspected.

Q- I'm still a bit worried. Can I get a new inspection? Will this cost me?

A- Yes you can have your home re-inspected. There is no cost for this service.

Q- I'm concerned about trees hanging over or really close to power lines. What should I do?

A- PEPCO is responsible for pruning trees near all high power lines. GHI is responsible for trees near some lower lines. Call the Maintenance Department and GHI will inspect the situation and follow up with PEPCO as necessary.

Q- I have circuits in my house that keep tripping. Does this mean I have a wiring problem?

A- Often this indicates that too much demand is being placed on a particular circuit. You can have the GHI Maintenance Department inspect the problem.

Remember the first lines of defense against a fire are smoke detectors. Be sure to test them regularly and change the batteries once a year.



GHI RECYCLING PAYS OFF!

In 2010 GHI gave added emphasis to its recycling program by implementing construction debris recycling. This new effort allows GHI to divert debris generated from routine maintenance operations on members' homes. In its first year more than 32 tons of debris such as wood scraps, drywall/plaster, concrete and other building materials were kept out of the landfill.

GHI now recycles more than 73 percent (by weight) of all refuse generated by internal operations. This represents a 44 percent increase in recycling volume by weight from 2009 levels and a more than 2,100 percent increase in recycling from 2006 levels when we began tracking data.

Expenditures for trash disposal in 2010 are also down nearly 25 percent (\$2,136), while recycling costs are down 59 percent (\$1,098). The primary reasons for the decrease in trash disposal costs can be attributed to the new construction debris recycling program and a change of vendors for trash disposal services. The primary reason for the decrease in recycling costs is the significant increase in scrap metal prices by pound which greatly offsets other recycling costs. Staff is to be commended on a job well done!

HOME FIRES-ARE YOU PROTECTED?

By Gretchen Overdurff

Over the past six months, GHI experienced two serious fires. A total of ten households sustained damage and the residents were forced to seek emergency housing during the time their houses were being restored. Luckily, most of these members had a homeowners' HO6 insurance policy which helped offset their out-of-pocket costs. In the case of one family, their HO6 insurance paid for them to stay in a motel while a relocation service researched short-term rentals. GHI does not provide alternative housing for members who may lose the use of their home through no fault of their own. However, the operating portion of their co-op fee is waived during this time. Finding a place to stay temporarily is only one such expense members would have when faced with the loss of the use of their home. Replacing household contents such as appliances and furniture and personal effects can be a huge expense. For less than \$200 per year, members can buy protection in the event disaster strikes.

A homeowner's insurance policy should be the HO6 type, which covers household and personal contents, and improvements and betterments to the dwelling. A number of insurance companies offer HO6 policies, with varying levels of coverage. GHI requires members to pay the \$5,000 deductible in the event a claim is deemed to have been caused by negligence. Be sure your HO6 covers you should you be assessed this charge.

GHI's agent, Polkes & Goldberg, for the Cooperative's master policy offers GHI members a basic HO6 policy at a discounted rate. Please refer to the flyer included in this issue of The Communicator for details on this offer. Now is a good time to assess your risk in the event of a disaster. Will you be prepared?



Know What Goes in Your Recycling Bin!

Check this link for the City of Greenbelt recycling guidelines:

www.greenbeltmd.gov/public_works/yes_no_flyer.pdf

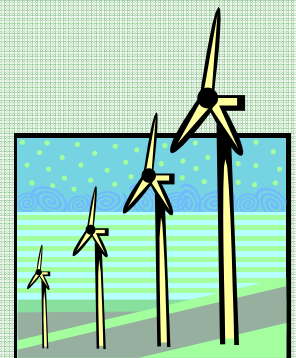
GHI to Power Administrative Buildings on Hamilton Place with Wind

By Diana E. McFadden

On October 21, 2010, the GHI Board voted to accept a 24-month (two-year) contract with Clean Currents to supply the GHI Administration Buildings with 100 percent wind power.

Other options considered included a one-year contract with Clean Currents, and "hybrid" plans that combined varying percentages of wind power with "traditional" non-renewable sources, such as coal and nuclear.

The two-year contract offered lower rates than did the one-year contract – and it locked in the rate for two years, protecting us from rate increases. After the two-year contract is completed, the Board will re-evaluate the options.





REACHING MEMBERS IN NEW WAYS!

The challenge of informing and engaging members in an effective, timely manner has been one that GHI has struggled with for some time. Up until now the bi-monthly *Communicator* and individual ads in the *Greenbelt News Review* have been used to connect the cooperative with all of its members and the surrounding community. This will continue to be the case, but in a slightly different fashion. The *Communicator* will now be printed four times a year – spring, summer, fall and winter, and a GHI page will now be printed periodically in the *Greenbelt News Review*. This change will allow GHI to connect with members and the wider community more frequently.

NAME THAT PAGE!

The first edition of the GHI *Greenbelt News Review* page is planned for March 24th and you can help name it! Watch the *Greenbelt News Review* for more information. The winner of the “Name the GHI Page Competition” may be profiled in a future edition of the *Communicator* and/or GNR page.

WHO’S WHO: BRYAN CRICK

By Brenda C. Lewis



There are lots of considerations and things to do when you close out a 30-year career. When Bryan retired in December, he left many fond memories and many well wishers. Bryan had been an exceptional presence since June 1980, when he started working at GHI as an electrician. During his many years here, he had several positions, eventually becoming the Maintenance Team Manager in January 1998, with responsibility for the Structures and Mechanical Teams. He continued to serve as GHI’s master electrician. After a major illness a few years ago, he returned and worked as a special projects manager until the end of last year.

Bryan was known for his many philosophical musings. Ask him a question about a subject and he would use an allegory to illustrate just about any circumstance—never hesitating to share a parable or two. Long after others would have given up, Bryan still came to work early and left late and even carried a cell phone on the weekends just in case someone needed his advice.

It’s just not possible to replace someone like Bryan, and one certainly cannot forget him. So GHI just wants him to know how much his service for over 30 years was appreciated. Bryan left quite a legacy, and he will be missed in the GHI workplace.

SAVE THE DATE!

The City of Greenbelt Assistance in Living Program is sponsoring the Baby Boomers and Beyond Expo on May 21, 2011, from 11-3 p.m. in the Greenbelt Community Center.

SEEKING GREENBELT PIONEER DESCENDANTS

The City of Greenbelt 75th Anniversary Committee is seeking names of people living in GHI who are descendants of Greenbelt pioneer families. If you or someone you know is a descendant of this group, please contact Joan Krob, Member Services Director, in the GHI main office.

It's a Date: March/April 2011



Mar 8	Yard Line Ad Hoc Committee Nominations & Elections Committee	8:30 am 7:00 pm
Mar 9	Architectural Review Committee	7:30 pm
Mar 10	Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 pm
Mar 16	Woodlands Committee	7:00 pm
Mar 17	Investment Committee Finance Committee	6:45 pm 7:30 pm
Mar 21	Communicator Task Force	7:00 pm
Mar 22	Yard Line Ad Hoc Committee	8:30 am
Mar 23	Buildings Committee	7:00 pm
Mar 24	Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 pm
Mar 30	Companion Animal Committee	7:30 pm
Apr 12	Nominations & Elections	7:00 pm
Apr 13	Architectural Review Committee	7:30 pm
Apr 14	Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 pm
Apr 18	Communicator Task Force	7:00 pm
Apr 19	Yard Line Ad Hoc Committee	8:30 am
Apr 20	Woodlands Committee	7:00 pm
Apr 21	Finance Committee	7:00 pm
Apr 27	Buildings Committee Companion Animal Committee	7:00 pm 7:30 pm
Apr 28	Board of Directors Meeting	7:30 pm

Please note: Information is subject to change.

FEE-FOR-SERVICE INCREASE EFFECTIVE MARCH 31, 2011

Many fee-for-service charges to members were instituted in 2006 and no longer cover the cost of labor incurred. On January 27, 2011 the Board approved the following changes to the fee-for-service structure. The costs shown are per hour or portion of an hour.

- Structural, electrical, mechanical work performed by skilled employees – \$55 per hour
- Landscape maintenance and handyman work – \$45 per hour
- Correction of yard violations during Community Beautification Program – \$60 per hour
- Responding to member lock-out calls after business hours (no change) – \$50 per hour
- Opening crawl spaces for members on weekends (no change) – \$50 per hour

Members are welcome to arrange for this work to be done by qualified outside vendors if they wish.

2011 GHI Maintenance Schedule

Tentative	WSSC Water Line Replacement
May-Sept	Community Beautification Inspections
May-Aug	Trim Painting
May-Aug	Replace Frame Home Porches
May-June	Spring Gutter Cleaning
May-June	Spring Concrete Repairs
June-July	Addition Roof Repairs
June-Sept	Slate Roofs/Copper Gutters & Downspouts
July-Aug	Underground Utility Repairs
July-Sept	Parking Lot Repairs (CR60, HI13)
Oct-Nov	Fall Concrete Repairs
Oct-Nov	GDC Garage Door Replacement
Oct-Nov	Rental Garage Rood Repairs
Nov-Dec	Fall Gutter Cleaning

FROM THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT



Maintenance reception desk is **CLOSED** for lunch between noon and 1 p.m. daily. You can reach the main front desk reception for emergency service during that time.

ADDRESS UPDATE REQUEST

All GHI members are asked to update their telephone number and email addresses. Call Shawnta in the maintenance Office at 301-474-4161, ext. 127 or email maintaa@greenbelthomes.net.

COMMUNICATOR SUBMISSIONS

Please submit information for the next issue to Brenda Lewis at blewis@greenbelthomes.net (do not submit to individual committee members). Articles are due April 25.