Norton Hills Estates Recreation Association

Winter 2006 Newsletter

Deck, Stairs Replacement Possible This Year

Contractors who examined the deck and beach stairs this fall expressed concerns about the structure's safety and encouraged us to replace it this year.

Thanks to regular maintenance over the years paid for by your dues, the current deck and stairs have stood for more than 25 years. But now the ground supports have begun to rot, and the entire structure has shifted somewhat.

Bids for replacing the structure are not yet official, but the early estimates are less than your NHERA Board had feared.

A committee chaired by Vice President Joe McNarland continues to explore options, including the use of alternative building materials, changing the design of the stairs to make them less steep, and even moving the stairs slightly to the south – which, among other possible benefits, could allow continuous access to the beach during construction.

The Hathaway Court Recreation Association, which shares ownership of the deck and stairs with NHERA, will help approve the design and is expected to pay a share of the reconstruction costs proportional to the numbers of homes in the two associations; that works out to about 9 percent.

Using that same formula, the Hathaway Court association is expected to pay NHERA just over $200 to cover its share of maintenance expenses from 2002-2005; we spent about $2,250 on the deck and stairs during that period.

2006 Block Party Aims to Repeat Last Year's Success

Last year's resurrection of the traditional neighborhood block party was such a success that we're going to do it again this year.

A bike parade, games, a magician and a bounce house drew almost half of the neighborhood children 15 and under, and food and conversation lured a good crowd of adults, too.

Planning is already under way for the 2006 party, led this year by Bloomfield Court block chair Rachael Ernvall. If you have ideas for this year's party or want to help, please contact her at ChairBloomfield@nhera.org or 780-0207. And watch for more details in the next newsletter.

2006 NHERA Dues

It's time to pay your annual dues for 2006. You'll find a statement and directory update form attached to this newsletter.

If you have not yet paid your $10 special assessment for 2005, you'll also find a reminder about that attached. If you owned your home on Nov. 1, 2005, you are responsible for that fee.

We've held the dues steady at $50 again this year. If you owned your home on Feb. 1, 2006, you are responsible for the entire amount.

Your dues help pay for maintenance, improvements, taxes and insurance on common property; for the annual dinner; and for other neighborhood activities.

The special assessment will help pay for replacement of the beach deck and stairs; see the story on this page.

Please pay your dues promptly to avoid late fees and save your volunteer board members the time, trouble and expense of following up.

Bidding Opens Jan. 28 on City-owned lots

There's so much interest in the city-owned lots at the corner of Dunes Parkway and Norcrest Drive that the city will put them up for competitive bid starting Jan. 28.

Bids will be accepted through 5 p.m. Feb. 28, said Dick Maher, community development director for the City of Norton Shores.

The minimum bid for the 13,600-square-foot lot at 2364 Norcrest is $45,000. For the 24,318-square-foot lot at 2378 Norcrest, the minimum bid is $49,000. And for 3702 Dunes, which has 14,393 square feet, the minimum bid is $45,000. The city will pay NHERA $250 from the sale of each lot.

All lots are in a critical dune area and will require permitting for construction. Also, $5,050 per lot must be paid to the city for sewer hookups.

Interested parties can obtain bid forms from Mr. Maher's office in the City Building, 4814 Henry St.

Development on the three lots is restricted by the same covenants that governed the neighborhood when the first homes were constructed. Only single-family homes are allowed; houses must be no more than two stories from street level and must meet other criteria for

size, setbacks and more. The complete covenants are available at www.nhera.org/docs.

Single Trash Hauler Depends on You

With rising fuel prices, only one trash hauler would offer a discount to become our only hauler. To get that discount, NHERA would have to pay everyone's fees, which residents voted against at the annual meeting.

The table below shows the companies offering service in the neighborhood, annual costs for trash and yard waste (with cart), limits on yard waste, recycling fee, and pickup day.

Co.	Trash	Yard	Yd. Limit	Recycle	Day
Allied	$204[1]	$76	5 Bags	$60[2]	Mon
Ames	$174	$65[3]	None	Free	Fri.
Kuerth	$186	$70	10 Bags[4]	Free	Fri.
RMS	$186	$75	None	Free[2]	Weds.

[1] Includes variable "fuel recovery fee" currently $6/mo.
[2] Picked up every two weeks; others haulers weekly
[3] Available for $50 a year without a cart.
[4] Limit waived in the fall.

If you'd like one hauler for your block, please contact your block chair. If there's a clear choice on your block, we'll work with your neighbors to consolidate service.

Bellaire: Brent McCarthy, 780-0476.
Blissfield: LeeAnn White, 780-2200.
Bloomfield: Rachael Ernvall, 780-0207.
Dunecrest: Barb Miesch, 780-4099.
Dunes: Sue Schuiteman, 780-5427.
Lower Norcrest: Herm Zuidema, 780-2012.
Upper Norcrest: Patty Robinson, 780-3328.
North Hilltop: Fern Anderegg, 780-5101.
Pleasant Hill: Ken Taylor, 780-9482.
South Hilltop: Deb Minner, 780-1182.

Final 2005 Finances

Income	
Association Dues*	7,685.00
Special Assessment	1,190.00
Directory Ad Sales	130.00
Interest Income	261.17
Total Income	**9,266.17**
Expenses	
Advertising	$ 30.00
Activities	1,959.91
Bank Charges	42.10
Depreciation	1,140.00
Filing Fees	220.00
Improvements	190.79
Insurance	756.00
Maintenance	1,602.44
Office Supplies	168.23
Post Office Box	38.00
Postage & Delivery	283.20
Printing & Reprod.	305.07
Professional Fees	462.50
Taxes	486.90
Web site	144.14
Total Expenses	**$7,829.28**
Net Income	**$1,436.89**

* Includes $210 in 2004 dues collected in 2005

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New to the neighborhood? If you haven't received your new resident packet – including a welcome letter, neighborhood directory, directory update form and more – please contact NHERA Secretary Barb Miller at 780-9219 or secretary@nhera.org.

New block chair for Lower Norcrest. Betty Zuidema has turned over her job as block chair for Lower Norcrest to her husband, Herm. Herm has done tremendous work for the NHERA for decades, ensuring that the deck and stairs were properly maintained and, most recently, landscaping the area along Norton Hills Road where utility crews clear-cut trees last year. We're pleased to welcome him back to the board. Herm lives at 2501 Norcrest; you can reach him at 780-2012.

Winter's still here, so please remember to dig fire hydrants out after snowstorms and, if necessary, after your street is plowed. The home and life you save could be your own!

2nd basketball goal to be replaced. We replaced one of the two basketball goals in our park last year after the old goal collapsed. Your NHERA Board voted at its January meeting to replace the other old goal *before* it collapses. We'll buy and install another new goal this spring to match the one we installed last year.

Spring events. Mark your calendars for the neighborhood garage sale on Saturday, May 20, and the annual Goodwill pickup drive on Monday, May 22. And remember, residents voted not to rent trash bins this year. Most of the trash haulers serving the neighborhood will pick up pretty much anything you can get to the curb.

Baby sitting services. Meredith Hekkema, 780-3504. References available.

Hey kids! Do you shovel snow, rake leaves, mow grass, baby sit, or do other services for your neighbors to earn money for gas, college or fun? You can list it here free, space permitting. Just contact President Stan Miller at 780-9219 or president@nhera.org.

Stay-at-home parents group. If you're a full- or part-time stay-at-home mom or dad interested in getting

together for group play dates and adult conversation, contact Barb Miller at 780-9219.