# Norton Hills Estates Recreation Association

# Winter 2007 Newsletter

By Stan Miller – pres@nhera.org – 780-9219

## City Withdraws Request for Sewer Easement in Park

Citing conditions one official called "unreasonable", the city withdrew its request for an easement through our park for construction of a gravity-fed sewer.

Such a sewer line would have allowed the city to remove the lift station on upper Norcrest Drive. The city sought to save the expense of operating that lift station, especially during power outages, when a crew and generator must be dispatched to keep it running.

The association membership voted at the annual meeting to approve the easement subject to several conditions. Those conditions included replacing the park sidewalk and tennis court, which would have been demolished during construction, planting trees to replace those that would have been removed west of the tennis court, restoring the park to its pre-construction condition, and agreeing to complete the work within a specified period or pay the association a fee to compensate for loss of use. We also asked that in exchange for the easement, the city agree to our request to build a speed hump on Dunes Parkway south of South Hilltop Drive.

David Geyer, water and sewer superintendent, said he was "very disappointed" in the conditions. Director of Public Works Gary Bartoszek called them "unreasonable" and said together they would cost the city almost $30,000.

Earlier, however, Mr. Geyer had agreed to parts or all of more than half of the conditions, including replacing half the tennis court. The shareholders at the annual meeting felt strongly that the entire tennis court should be replaced, and the association cannot afford to pay for half of that cost in the same year we must replace the beach deck and stairs.

In his letter withdrawing the easement request, Mr. Geyer mentioned for the first time the possibility that the sewer line would have led to lower sewer rates for residents. I've told Mr. Geyer that if the city can offer specifics on those savings, we will reconsider the request. I've also told him that when NHERA is able to pay for half of the tennis court resurfacing, we will ask whether the city is still interested in the sewer project.

## *Consumers Energy Works To Improve Reliability*

The utility work under way on Dunes Parkway and Norcrest Drive will improve reliability of electrical service in the neighborhood, Consumers Energy says.

Consumers is adding and replacing underground wiring along the two streets, said Roger Morgenstern, community services area manager for Consumers in Muskegon Heights.

It's the second phase of work that began on Treeline Drive south of the neighborhood last year.

"It's designed to keep the lights on more often," Mr. Morgenstern said.

Crews will be working on and off until about mid-March, he said. No power outages are expected because of the work, and Mr. Morgenstern promised that customers would be notified if that changes.

## Annual Dues Time

Annual dues notices have been sent to all residents.

Dues for 2007 are $75, representing the first increase in dues since at least 1991. The extra money, approved by shareholders at the annual meeting, is needed to ensure the association can afford to replace the beach deck and stairs this spring and stay solvent.

The increase also accounts for at least 15 years of inflation, during which the formerly $50 dues bought less each year.

If you owned your Norton Hills Estates home on Feb. 1, you are responsible for the 2007 annual dues.

Dues are payable by March 2. After May 1, late fees kick in and dues will total $112.50; after May 31, dues will be $150.

Please pay your dues promptly to save your volunteer board members the time and expense of following up with late payers.

## Golf or Tennis Tourney? Soapbox Derby, Anyone?

Would you play in a neighborhood golf tournament or tennis tournament? Would your children enter a neighborhood soapbox derby?

If so, please contact me at pres@nhera.org or 780-9219 to express your interest.

If you like any of the ideas enough to help organize them, let me know that, too.

Dates, tournament formats, prizes and other details will be announced in a future newsletter if there's sufficient interest in any of these events.

# *City Pays for Lot Sale*

As promised, the City of Norton Shores has paid the association $250 for the sale of the lot on the southeast corner of Dunes Parkway and Norcrest Drive.

Neighborhood residents Phil & Sue Schuiteman purchased the lot and plan eventually to build a new home there. Sue is the block chair for Dunes Parkway.

The two lots on the northwest corner of the same intersection are still for sale. Two potential buyers have expressed interest in those lots, said Community Development Director Dick Maher. If the lots are not under contract by spring, the city plans to put for-sale signs on them, Mr. Maher said.

The association will get $250 from the sale of each of those lots as well.

# Deck, Stairs Replacement Set for This Spring

The dates are not yet firm, but we do plan to have the beach deck and stairs replaced this spring.

This is a major financial undertaking for the association, representing the largest single-year project in memory. It's important to pay your annual dues promptly this year so that we have sufficient funds to cover the costs of demolition and reconstruction.

As desired by the shareholders at the annual meeting, we plan to use composite materials for the decking rather than wood. That will add to the initial cost of construction but will save money in the long run due to lower maintenance costs.

Construction could begin before the next newsletter, so watch your e-mail for updates. If you don't have an e-mail address on file with the association, add it to the directory information form at the bottom of your dues notice or contact Secretary Barb Miller at 780-9219 or secy@nhera.org.

# Finances: Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2006

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| **Income** | |
| Association Dues | 7,115.00 |
| Directory Ad Sales | 360.00 |
| Interest Income | 417.96 |
| **Total Income** | **7,892.96** |
| **Expenses** | |
| Advertising | 39.80 |
| Assoc. Activities | 1,888.81 |
| Depreciation | 1,140.00 |
| Insurance | 763.00 |
| Maintenance | 1,135.86 |
| Office Supplies | 53.41 |
| Post Office Box | 53.60 |
| Postage & Delivery | 7.80 |
| Printing & Reprod. | 294.07 |
| Taxes | 501.21 |
| Web site | 8.95 |
| **Total Expenses** | **$5,886.51** |
| **Net Income** | **$2,006.45** |
| **Cash Balance 12/31/06** | **$13,441.98** |

# 2006-07 Officers

All association officers were re-elected by acclamation at the 2006 annual meeting:

- **President: Stan Miller – 780-9219**
- **Vice President: Joe McNarland – 780-4394**
- **Treasurer: Stacy Sewick – 780-0256**
- **Secretary: Barb Miller – 780-9219**

Check your 2006 directory to find your block chair. If you don't have a directory, please contact the secretary.

Stacy announced at the annual meeting that this will be her last year as treasurer. If you're interested in serving next year, start honing those checkbook-balancing skills and be sure to come to the annual meeting on Sept. 25.

# ✸ ✸ ✸ Briefly ✸ ✸ ✸

**Speed hump update.** The City Council has yet to rule on our request for a speed hump on Dunes Parkway to slow traffic through the neighborhood. Shareholders at the annual meeting voted to contribute up to $1,000 for construction.

**Block party.** Your NHERA Board is working on plans for the third annual block party. If you have an idea for entertainment or an activity we should include, let me know and I'll pass your suggestions on to the committee.

**Garage sale and Goodwill pickup.** Remember, the annual neighborhood garage sale is scheduled May 19 beginning at 8 a.m. As always, the association will advertise in the Chronicle and put up signs to attract buyers. The neighborhood sale attracts more buyers than individual sales ever could and helps limit congestion on other spring and summer weekends, so if you plan to have a garage sale this year, take advantage of the date! Goodwill will pick up what you can't sell the following Tuesday, May 22; just put the items at your curb, and the driver will leave a receipt.

**Keep those sidewalks and hydrants clear.** Please keep your public sidewalk clear of snow to give neighborhood kids a safe place to walk to the school bus. (The Chronicle carrier will appreciate it, too!) Also, please shovel out the fire hydrant closest to you to ensure quick access in case of emergency. And remember, on many neighborhood streets this is most important after the streets are plowed.

**New e-mail addresses.** To reduce spam we've been receiving, all neighborhood association board members have new e-mail addreses. Please see www.nhera.org/contact.html for the new addresses.

Questions or Comments? Contact President Stan Miller at 780-9219 or pres@nhera.org,
or see your neighborhood directory or www.nhera.org to reach other officers or your block chair.