Norton Hills Estates Recreation Association

June 2007 Newsletter

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

City Approves Process for Getting Speed Humps But Won't Help Pay; Board Defers Effort For Now

The Norton Shores City Council adopted a procedure for requesting traffic calming devices such as the speed hump we've sought for Dunes Parkway near South Hilltop.

The procedure sets criteria for the streets and traffic conditions on which such devices can be installed. Dunes Parkway meets the qualifications.

The procedure requires a petition signed by at least 70 percent of the property owners within 200 feet off the device.

The procedure also requires the City Council to approve each request individually.

Unfortunately, the procedure requires the residents requesting the device to pay the total cost of installation. That's disappointing; we had offered to split the cost 50-50 with the city and still believe the city should share the expenses. Councilman Lowell Kinney agreed, saying, "If there's a problem, it's our responsibility to solve it, and it's our responsibility to pay for it."

Because the cost to the association under this procedure is six times our initial estimate, your association board voted to table efforts to obtain a speed hump until after the beach deck and stairs are replaced this summer. We will reconsider the issue later this year after our financial picture is more certain.

Mayor Jerry Wiersma and council members Annoesjka Steinman, Vicki Broge, Edgar Hunt and Lyle Smith voted to approve the procedure. Mr. Kinney and Councilman Dick Dolack voted against it. Council members Kay Beecham and Henry Waldo were absent.

Be Good Neighbors

Some of our neighbors along the driveway leading to our beach access report that a few teenagers have been parking in that driveway, and that some left sections of telephone pole there for a bonfire.

That is a private drive on which Norton Hills Estates residents are welcome to walk, ride bicycles, push strollers, and so on – but driving and parking are not allowed. And just last year we had to repair the stairs after some logs were dumped down them. So please, talk to your kids about being good neighbors and respecting association and private property.

2nd Garage Sale in August

Your neighborhood association will sponsor a second garage sale this year, on Saturday, Aug. 4.

Several teachers in the neighborhood say that our annual sale on the third Saturday in May comes at a difficult time of year for them, because preparations for the end of the school year mean they don't have enough time to prepare for a garage sale.

The Board debated moving the sale to June or July, but we were concerned that summer vacations and conflicts with local events would reduce participation. So we decided to try a second one this year; if participation is strong, we'll make that a tradition.

At least 21 homes participated in the sale this spring. For the spring sale, your association bought and placed some professionally made garage sale signs, and we will continue buying those signs a few at a time until all the handmade signs have been replaced.

Block Party is July 21

The third annual Norton Hills Estates neighborhood block party is set for Saturday, July 21, at 11 a.m.

We've hired a clown to entertain kids; she'll do a magic show and balloon sculpting, too.

In recognition of Muskegon Bike Week, we're asking all motorcycle owners in the neighborhood to lead this year's bike parade. If you ride, please call Rachael Ernvall at 780-0207 or Stacy Sewick at 780-0256. We'll also have face painting, a sidewalk chalk art contest, a free throw contest, and pot luck lunch. We'll have a dunk tank, too, and apparently I've been elected First Sitter. Didn't know I was running for that office!

The parties the last two years have been fun for kids and grown-ups alike, but attendance was down a little last year. Turnout this year will help determine whether we hold this party annually or switch to every other year.

If you have questions or suggestions, or are willing to help, please contact Rachael, Stacy, Kim Taylor at 780-9482, or Barb Miller at 780-9219.

New Blissfield Block Chair

Jenny Opfermann is the new block chair for Blissfield Court, replacing Brenda McCarl, who resigned in early May after serving for about a year.

Jenny and her husband, Mark, live at 2261 Blissfield; they have two children. You can reach Jenny at 780-4786 or by e-mail at Blissfield@nhera.org.

The Board thanks Jenny for stepping up to fill this position.

Board Adopts Procedures for Handling Rules Complaints

After a modest but notable increase in complaints from residents about rules violations, your association Board has adopted procedures for handling such complaints.

Association Bylaws empower the Board to adopt and enforce rules and regulations but do not specify how to respond to complaints. To ensure that all residents are treated fairly and equitably under the rules, we felt it was important to establish formal procedures.

The resolution requires a written and signed complaint from a shareholder in good standing before any compliance proceeding begins, and sets out timetables for responding. It formalizes certain rights for the neighbors involved in the complaint and establishes terms for publicizing any Board actions.

It also notes that compliance proceedings should be a last resort, and says, "We encourage residents concerned about a possible violation of the Rules and Regulations to realize that your neighbor may have made an honest mistake; may be unable to correct a problem due to physical, financial or other constraints; or may be unaware of the problem."

And the resolution says that in all compliance proceedings, the Board "will consider neighborhood harmony and goodwill, and not merely conformity to the Rules and Regulations, to be important to the quality of life in Norton Hills Estates."

The Board will enforce the rules and regulations, and may suspend voting rights, levy fines, initiate legal action or take other action it deems necessary.

An overview of the procedure is included with this newsletter. The full formal resolution is available in the Documents section at www.nhera.org or from Secretary Barb Miller at secy@nhera.org or 780-9219.

The rules and regulations also are available in the Documents section of the Web site or from Barb.

Consumers Energy Sorry for Delay Repairing Lawns

Consumers Energy apologizes for the delay in repairing lawns along Norcrest Drive and Dunes Parkway damaged by utility work earlier this spring.

"Our contractor made some repairs, but it still wasn't up to our standards," said Steve Whitney, field leader for Consumers in Muskegon. "By contract we had to give them the first shot."

When the contractor didn't make satisfactory repairs, Consumers hired Seaver's Lawn Care of Montague to fix the problems, Mr. Whitney said. Seaver's worked in the neighborhood May 16-17 and did a very nice job.

The utility work involved adding and replacing underground electrical lines and was intended to improve the reliability of electrical service in the neighborhood.

Finances: Jan. 1-May 16, 2007

Income	
Association Dues	9,900.00
Lot Sales Fees	250.00
Interest Income	189.51
Total Income	**$10,339.51**
Expenses	
Depreciation	380.00
Filing Fees	20.00
Post Office Box	40.00
Postage & Delivery	69.81
Printing & Reprod.	18.10
Taxes	172.54
Total Expenses	**$ 700.45**
Net Income	**$ 9,639.06**
Cash Balance 5/16/07	**$23,498.09**

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Treasurer needed for 2007-08. Stacy Sewick has decided that her fifth year as treasurer will be her last, so your neighborhood association will need a volunteer to replace her beginning with the annual meeting Sept. 25. If you're interested, you can nominate yourself at the annual meeting, but please contact Stacy at treas@nhera.org or 780-0256, or me at pres@nhera.org or 780-9219, to let us know. Stacy can tell you more abuot the job, and if I don't know that anyone's interested, I'll be trying to recruit someone.

No one responded to questions in the last newsletter about participating in a neighborhood golf or tennis tourney or in a soapbox derby, so those ideas have been shelved. If you have other ideas for neighborhood activities, please contact your block chair or any association officer.

Thanks to Joe McNarland for getting the tennis net up again this year, as always.

Thanks to Barb Miesch for planting flowers at the entrance signs on Norcrest Drive again, as she does every year.

Park cleanup. Coleman's Lawn Care did another excellent job cleaning our neighborhood park this spring. They'll be tending to the park and walkways this summer and fall.

New to the neighborhood? Did you receive a welcome packet? If not, contact your block chair or Secretary Barb Miller at 780-9219 or secy@nhera.org.