Norton Hills Estates Recreation Association

Spring 2009 Newsletter

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

2009 Budget Includes Maintenance of Park Stairs

The stairs leading to our neighborhood park will be power-washed and resealed under the 2009 budget.

The Board budgeted $700 for the work on three sets of stairs: to the path south of the playground, from that path to Bellaire Court, and the small set from that path to Pleasant Hill Drive.

The Board also budgeted $300 to replace the older of the two basketball goals at the park. We replaced one a few years ago when an old one fell, and want to replace the other one before it falls.

Based on last year's experience, we've also budgeted nearly $700 for legal fees we may incur if homeowners don't pay their dues and we're forced to obtain more liens on property. We certainly hope to avoid that expense; if you have not paid your dues for 2009 yet, please pay promptly. If economic circumstances make it difficult or impossible for you to pay, please contact a board member so we can work with you to keep you in good standing and avoid unpleasant legal consequences.

Otherwise, the budget includes only ordinary expenses, including our block party and annual dinner, maintenance of common property, taxes, insurance, and administrative costs such as printing and postage. We are looking into costs to resurface the tennis court, but did not budget any money for it this year.

With annual dues reduced to $60 this year, Treasurer Tom Sanocki worked hard to produce a balanced budget for 2009; the budget includes no income to set aside for future major projects.

No 4-Way Stop for McCracken at Seminole, No Help on Landscape Maintenance Issues, but Hope for Sidewalks

Traffic engineers for the City of Norton Shores examined traffic volume, speeds, accident history and site lines at the intersection of McCracken Drive and Seminole Road and concluded that a four-way stop is not warranted there.

The study came after several residents complained to city officials at our annual meeting last fall about near-collisions at that intersection.

In a letter reporting the study's findings, City Administrator Mark Meyers wrote that the City is considering other alternatives to improve the intersection, including the possibility of adding flashing red lights to the stop signs.

Mr. Meyers and I also have talked about ways the City or the association could address landscape maintenance issues not involving tall grass and weeds. Discussions with Fire Chief David Purchase, whose department is currently responsible for enforcement of such ordinances, and with City Attorney XXX have not led to a solution, however.

"It's a tough one," Mr. Meyers said. "We haven't found any creative ways to address that. One of the standards we use (in judging possible new ordinances) is, 'If we applied this throughout the city, would it be reasonable?' In this case, probably not."

The Board will continue to pursue other remedies for landscape maintenance problems.

I'm happy to report some hope on the third issue I've been talking with Mr. Meyers about: sidewalks. Those conversations stemmed from concerns expressed at the annual meeting that at several points in the neighborhood, sidewalks do not reach the street; that's a particular concern in winter, when the lack of sidewalk "stubs" reaching the street can force kids to walk in the street – often behind snow banks taller than they are – to get to school bus stops.

Mr. Meyers said the City does not build sidewalks in front of homes except along routes to a school, but he said that our request for stubs across city right-of-ways where sidewalks currently dead-end in grass or stone seemed reasonable.

Mr. Meyers asked for a list of such places, and after allowing the snow to melt so I could provide an accurate list, I sent it to him in late March. Mr. Meyers and Public Works Director Jerrry Bartoszek plan to review the list to see where the city can help. Although there are no guarantees, it's possible that some of these spots will be addressed when Dunes Parkway is resurfaced this summer.

Street Repairs

Despite the utility flags and pavement markings that sprouted like flowers early this spring on parts of Dunes Parkway, resurfacing will not begin until at least July, city officials say.

Dunes will be among the first streets resurfaced with funds from the streets millage voters approved in November, but no firm schedule is in place yet. The work will be done sometime between July 1 and November 15, officials say. The city has promised to keep us informed.

Final 2008 Finances

Income	
Dues	$11,053.00
Directory Ad Sales	130.00
Interest	144.06
Total Income	**$11,327.06**
Expenses	
Annual Dinner	$ 813.99
Block Party	896.08
Bank Service Charges	22.10
Depreciation	1,140.00
Filing fees	25.00
Garage Sale Signs	99.64
Insurance	1,200.00
Licenses and Permits	-30.00
Laptop Computer	634.94
Lawn care	390.00
Maintenance	955.84
Office Supplies	4.01
Postage	266.45
Printing and Reproduction	636.40
Legal fees	2,164.02
Taxes	520.08
Web site	153.60
Total Expenses	**$ 9,502.15**
Net Income	**$ 1,824.91**
Cash Balance	**$ 9,263.09**

.

First Quarter 2009 Finances

Income	
Dues	$ 6,675.00
Interest	35.54
Total Income	**$ 6,710.54**
Expenses	
Depreciation	$ 285.00
Legal fees	-153.00
Post Office Box rental	42.00
Postage and Delivery	126.00
Total Expenses	**$ 300.00**
Net Income	**$ 6,410.54**
Cash Balance	**$15,990.63**

2008-09 Board of Directors

President
Stan Miller – 780-9219, pres@nhera.org

Vice President
Joe McNarland – 780-4394, veep@nhera.org

Secretary
Jennifer Christman – 747-7222, secy@nhera.org

Treasurer
Tom Sanocki – 780-5406, treas@nhera.org

Block Chairs
Bellaire: Brent McCarthy – 780-0476, Bellaire@nhera.org. **Blissfield:** Jenny Opfermann – 780-4786, Blissfield@nhera.org. **Bloomfield:** Rachael Ernvall – 780-0207, Bloomfield@nhera.org. **Dunecrest:** Barb Miesch – 780-4099, Dunecrest@nhera.org. **Dunes:** Sue Schuiteman – 780-5427, Dunes@nhera.org. **Lower Norcrest:** Herm Zuidema, 780-2012. **Upper Norcrest:** Deanna Vander Ploeg, 780-2072, UpperNorcrest @nhera.org. **North Hilltop:** Fern Anderegg – 780-5101, NorthHilltop@nhera.org. **Pleasant Hill:** Ken Taylor – 780-9482, PleasantHill@nhera.org. **South Hilltop:** Deb Minner – 780-1182, SouthHilltop@nhera.org

City Council Names NHERA Resident to Fill Vacant Seat

The Board notes with sadness the passing of Norton Shores Mayor Jerry Wiersma. We were pleased to have Mayor Wiersma as a guest at our annual meeting last year, and valued his leadership on the City Council. We will miss him, and we offer our condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

Mr. Wiersma's passing left a vacancy on the City Council, and in early April the Council named Don Martines, our neighbor at 2480 Norcrest, to fill the seat. Mr. Martines said he was planning to run for election to the council this fall anyway and will run as the incumbent in November.

The Board congratulates Mr. Martines on his selection, and we're confident he will represent the neighborhood and the entire district well.

✸ ✸ ✸ Briefly ✸ ✸ ✸

Late fees assessed soon. If you have not paid your annual dues by April 30, a 50 percent late fee will be assessed. In these tough economic times, it makes sense to pay the $60 dues on time and avoid the unnecessary additional expense. An additional late fee is assessed on dues still unpaid by May 30. If a job loss or other circumstance will make it difficult for you to pay, *please* contact a board member; we will work with you to make mutually satisfactory arrangements.

New to the neighborhood? Did you receive a welcome packet? If not, contact your block chair or Secretary Jennifer Christman at 747-7222 or secy@nhera.org.