Norton Hills Estates Recreation Association

October 2009 Newsletter

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

2009 Annual Meeting

Three Residents Volunteer as Committee Organizers

Three residents volunteered to organize committees to oversee regular association activities that currently aren't part of any board member's official duties.

Joe McNarland, Barb Miller and Deanna Vander Ploeg agreed during the 2009 annual meeting to set up the first meetings of three committees approved by residents.

Facilities Committee. Joe will set up the first meeting of this committee, which will be responsible for arranging a park cleanup each spring, securing a contract to mow the park and paths regularly each year, and bringing other issues involving the association's property to the board's attention. If you'd like to help on the Facilities Committee, contact Joe at veep@nhera.org or 780-4394.

Shareholders Committee. Barb will arrange the first meeting of this committee, which will ensure that new residents are welcomed to the neighborhood and get copies of our bylaws, rules and regulations and directory and that we get their contact information. The committee also will arrange a location for the annual meeting each year. If you'd like to help on the Shareholders Committee, contact Barb at 780-9219 or barb@qtandthegeek.com.

Activities Committee. This committee, with its first meeting to be arranged by Deanna, will plan and execute the annual block party and may recommend other social activities the association should sponsor. The committee also will place ads for our two annual garage sales, place and pick up the sale signs, and arrange for charity pickups after the sales. If you'd like to help on the Activities Committee, contact Deanna at UpperNorcrest@nhera.org or 780-2072.

Each committee will choose a chairperson at its first meeting. The chair will be expected to attend quarterly board meetings and to arrange for further committee meetings as necessary.

I hope you'll take this opportunity to get involved in your neighborhood! It's a great way to get to know your neighbors and contribute to the neighborhood with a smaller commitment than serving on the board entails.

I also hope the committees are so successful that they allow us to restructure the board next year into a leaner and more efficient "government".

2009 Annual Meeting

Residents Re-Elect Officers, Raise Dues to $70 for 2010

All four of your neighborhood association officers were re-elected to fresh one-year terms at the 2009 annual meeting on Sept. 30.

The largest crowd in years – 54 residents – re-elected Secretary Jennifer Christman to her second term, Treasurer Tom Sanocki to his second full term, Vice President Joe McNarland to his ninth term, and me to my sixth year as president.

Shareholders in attendance also voted to raise the annual dues for 2010 to $70, up from $60 the last two years. The additional income will help us save money for future long-term projects, possibly including resurfacing or replacement of the tennis and basketball court, additional playground upgrades, or other plans.

Remember that late fees for unpaid dues will kick in March 1 next year, two months earlier than in the past.

Bloomfield Stairs. Residents also voted to spend up to $3,500 to build steps on the association's path at the end of Bloomfield Court. We spent almost $600 on that path just four years ago, and despite regular volunteer maintenance, it has been badly overgrown for the last two summers; the Board and residents judged it would be more sensible to spend more now on a permanent structure instead of spending $600 or more every few years to keep the path open and attractively maintained. I hope the new Facilities Committee will solicit bids for this project, and I hope the bids come in well below the $3,500 maximum.

New Block Chair. There were not enough residents from North Hilltop Drive to elect a new block chair, so the Board appointed Diane Jones, who volunteered to fill the vacancy left by Fern Anderegg's resignation this spring. Diane and her husband, Tom, have been married for 34 years and have lived at 2311 North Hilltop for eight. They have two grown daughters who live and work in the Baltimore area. Tom works in Whitehall for Alcoa Howmet Castings Research Corp. in technical services; Diane is a registered nurse working part-time at North Ottawa Community Health System as a diabetes educator. Diane says when they moved here from Maryland, they were looking for a neighborhood like the one they left – "a safe and close community where your next-door neighbor knew you by name and cared about you and your children. ... We found it in this wonderful lakeshore setting!" You can reach Diane at 780-0273 or NorthHilltop@nhera.org. Thanks for volunteering, Diane!

3rd Quarter 2009 Finances

Income	
Dues	$ 8,535.00
Directory Ad Sales	180.00
Interest	95.87
Total Income	**$ 8,810.87**
Expenses	
Advertising	$ 40.55
Depreciation	855.00
Garage sale ads & signs	138.54
Insurance	1,364.00
Legal fees	-96.00
Maintenance	529.91
Post Office Box rental	42.00
Postage and Delivery	126.00
Printing and Reproduction	274.64
Taxes	568.44
Total Expenses	**$ 3,843.08**
Net Income	**$ 4,967.79**
Cash Balance	**$13,671.81**

2009-10 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:** Diane Jones, 780-0273, NorthHilltop@nhera.org. **Pleasant Hill:** Ken Taylor – 780-9482, PleasantHill@nhera.org. **South Hilltop:** Deb Minner – 780-1182, SouthHilltop@nhera.org.

Briefly

Garbage, Part 1. The City of Norton Shores has sent a letter to Sunset/Allied Waste about their garbage truck with loudly squealing brakes, and promises to issue citations for noise violations if the problem is not corrected. The action came after I called the company three separate times to complain over six weeks, even providing the truck number, and after another resident also made three different calls; all six calls resulted in unkept promises to fix the problem, and one resulted in a promise that the operations manager would call me back. When that didn't happen, I called the city to ask for help, and they came through for us.

Garbage, Part 2. Garry VanDenBerg and Paul DeHorn have formed an ad hoc committee to try again to get residents to agree on a single trash hauler for the neighborhood. Although some residents have strong preferences, certainly no one likes having trucks from four different companies on four different days each week, and a significant majority of residents have chosen Ames. The ad hoc committee will report on numbers of residents using each company, and may encourage residents to switch; the Board will not require anyone to switch, but strongly favors consolidating trash service throughout the neighborhood.

Trees. A certified arborist tells the city that the flowering plum trees lining Pleasant Hill, Dunecrest and upper Norcrest are infected with an insect, and recommends treatment at a total cost of about $2,400 a year for two or three years. The city asked whether the association would split that cost to attempt to save the trees; sentiment at the annual meeting was opposed, largely because there's no guarantee that the trees would be saved and because many are nearing their natural life expectancy anyway. No motions were offered, and the Board will not spend any money on this.

Dunes Road Work. I want to thank the city, and Engineer Jim Murphy in particular, for keeping in close contact with the association during the repaving work on Dunes Parkway. Thanks also to Mark Meyers for his support for the new curb cuts and sidewalk ramps, which are terrific additions. (We hope to remove the names thoughtlessly etched into one of them while it was drying.)

Certificates of Deposit. At Treasurer Tom Sanocki's suggestion, the Board has invested $7,000 from our checking account in two 13-month certificates of deposit at Port City Federal Credit Union. The transfer will allow us to earn a little more interest on the money; buying two small CDs will allow us to tap into one if we need the money sooner without paying early-withdrawal penalties on the entire amount. I appreciate Tom's idea for enhancing the association's finances in a safe, responsible way, and he deserves thanks for the legwork in tracking down the best local deal. Thanks, Tom!

New to the neighborhood? Contact the secretary or your block chair for a welcome packet.

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.