



August/September 2015

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### Board of Directors

President ~ Willis McCloud  
Vice President ~ Earl Burton  
Treasurer ~ Patrina Kandul  
Secretary ~ Charlotte Jordan  
At Large ~ (vacant)

# Somerset News

## President's Corner

By Willis McCloud



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Another great summer has almost gone. I hope everyone spent as many hours outside as possible enjoying the Westridge pool, tennis courts, and long walking trails. As we approach the fall, I hope you continue to take advantage of all the great recreational resources offered in Westridge and the greater Prince William County area. The Prince William County Parks and Recreation website contains great information on all types of local activities from sports, aquatics, children's programs, fitness, dance, and much more and can be accessed at [www.pwcparks.org](http://www.pwcparks.org). Fall is a perfect time to get outside and enjoy the brisk air and colorful foliage in one of the 50 county parks.

While taking time between enjoying the great outdoors, I encourage you to refresh yourself on the Somerset Unit Owners Association governing documents. I know that reading them isn't as exciting as reading the new edition of the Hunger Games, but they definitely have a much greater impact on your daily life. The documents consist of the Declaration, By-Laws, Rules and Regulations, and Policies, which can

be accessed on our website at [www.somersetatwestridge.org](http://www.somersetatwestridge.org).

They contain key information every owner should be aware of regarding their responsibilities and those of the Association. Unfortunately, many owners are unaware of these policies until they run into an issue involving them. All owners are strongly encouraged to empower themselves with the knowledge contained in these documents. After reviewing them, please contact our community manager, Stacy Panuzio, at [spanuzio@capitolcorp.com](mailto:spanuzio@capitolcorp.com) or at 703-707-6404 if you have any questions.

While everyone was enjoying the summer, your Association was continuing to make progress toward completing several projects in the community. The status of some planned or upcoming projects are below.

- The paved walk adjacent to the benches in front of the community will be extended to cover the area under the benches to eliminate turf erosion. A garbage can will also be installed in the area this November.
- Pavement resealing and parking lane restriping will be completed in October.
- The 3 year siding project is in its last stages and should be complete by the end of September. The overflow parking lot will reopen

as soon as the fenced area is cleared.

- Trim painting for all units with new siding is already ongoing and should be complete in October.
- Missing/dead shrub replacements around units will occur this fall.

Regarding the siding, please remember to take care not to damage it by drilling, nailing, stacking wood, or using abrasive cleaners on or in it. Careful handling of this \$1.5M investment will help ensure the siding reaches its expected 30 year lifecycle. Please contact the community manager, Stacy Panuzio, at 703-707-6404, if you have any questions related to proper siding care.

As many of you are aware, in the spring the Association performed a review of options to improve the overall heating and cooling of our homes. These options included partnering with owners to conduct an energy analysis of their homes at a reduced cost. Several owners took advantage of this program and were provided valuable information they can use to increase the energy efficiency of their homes from an

individual perspective. From the Association’s perspective, we are currently soliciting bids from vendors to seal the attics in all 21 buildings. The attic is usually where you can find some of the largest opportunities to save energy in your home. By air sealing your attic, we can stop many major air leaks and help to maintain the desired temperature throughout your home. Combined with new attic insulation we may add at a later point, air sealing can help to alleviate the formation of dangerous ice dams in the winter. This project is tentatively scheduled to start in 2016 but the start date will depend on the cost. More information will be provided as we go forward.

The Board of Directors (BOD) approved the annual budget for 2016 at the September BOD meeting. You will receive the entire budget shortly. I am pleased to announce that the monthly assessment will remain at \$309.

Last, but certainly not least, we will hold our Annual Meeting in October. This is one of the most important events of the year and we strongly encourage your

participation. We will be holding elections for four open seats on the board. You should have received the Call for Candidates by now and I would ask that you strongly consider volunteering to join the board by submitting your name for consideration. However, in order to hold elections we have to achieve quorum. According to Section II, Article 12 of our By-laws, quorum is the presence either in person or by proxy (signed consent) of members representing at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the total votes of the condominium. This means we must have at least 55 members attend the annual meeting either in person or by proxy to conduct the meeting. **Please make an extra effort to attend the meeting or to return your proxy.** Again, without a quorum the Association cannot hold elections.

In closing, I hope everyone enjoys the remaining lazy days of summer, the coming school year, and the return of football! Continue to make an effort to meet your neighbors and take the time to spend time with your family and friends.

All the best! ☀

## Neighborhood Watch

By Willis McCloud



### Simple Safety Tips to Avoid House Fires

Most in-home fires are caused by ordinary things like a stove burner, candle, space heater or extension cord. Thankfully, by exercising good safety habits and taking simple prevention steps, we can cut down on deadly and damaging fire risks.

First, always be sure your smoke alarms are working. Test them monthly and replace those that are more than 10 years old.

#### Cooktops

Never leave the kitchen while something is cooking on the stove. Keep combustibles, such as curtains and wall hangings, at least three feet from the stove. Remember to never use water on a grease fire.

Space Heaters

Keep them at least three feet away from drapes and bedding, and plug them directly into outlets, not extension cords. Don't use space heaters while sleeping.

Fireplaces

Be sure your chimney is inspected and cleaned bi-annually. Keep any combustibles at least five feet away from the fireplace.

Electrical equipment

Replace undersized or frayed extension cords. Never run an extension cord under a rug. Call an electrician if circuit breakers regularly trip or if the electrical box has a warm cover. Don't use light bulbs that exceed a fixture's recommended maximum wattage.

Appliances

Ensure combustion chamber covers are in place on water heaters. Clean all lint from a dryer's back service panel and from the vent line. Replace vinyl vent lines with smooth, metal ducts.

Smoking

Don't smoke in bed. Use large ashtrays on tables. Soak ashtrays under the faucet before throwing cigarette butts in the trash.

Candles

Use tip-proof containers. Burn candles only while you're awake and in the same room. Keep candles at least three feet away from combustibles.

Matches and lighters

Store out of the reach of children.

Lastly, we encourage you to keep a fire extinguisher in the house. Make a fire evacuation plan and practice it with your family. Having an effective escape plan is a critical tool not just for fires but for any emergency situation. ☀

# Treasurer's Notes



*By Patrina Kandul*

Each year the BOD prepares the annual budget. A lot of work goes into this effort. It's a complex activity that has to start early so the budget can be finalized and approved prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year. Here's how we do it:

- The board and manager work together to gather all financial information we'll need to project expenses for the coming year. This could be a reserve analysis, bids for contracts, projections for utility or service increases, comparisons of past years' budget trends and many other details.
- The board and manager also examine all sources of income — assessments, interest on investments, proceeds from any income generating activities and other types of miscellaneous income.
- The board creates a working draft by adjusting the expenses and income until they balance. This may be accomplished by foregoing certain expenses to avoid raising assessments. Or it may be necessary to raise assessments to cover increased expenses such as utilities that the Board cannot control.
- When the board has developed the best possible draft budget, the association sends it to every member, if time permits, for review and comment. One of the reasons we attempt to start the process early is to allow you plenty of time to study the budget, ask questions and offer comments.
- Based on your comments, the Board revises the draft budget as needed.
- The Board then adopts the final budget. ☀

# Real Estate Beat



*By Willis McCloud*

## \*Prince William County Real Estate Market Information for July 2015.

- Units Sold: There was a decrease in total units sold in July, with 753 sold this month in Prince William

County Real Estate versus 768 last month, a decrease of 2%. This month's total units sold was higher than at this time last year, an increase of 17% versus July 2014.

- **Active Inventory:** Versus last year, the total number of homes available this month is lower by 29 units or 1%. The total number of active inventory this July was 2,260 compared to 2,289 in July 2014. This month's total of 2,260 is lower than the previous month's total supply of available inventory of 2,311, a decrease of 2%.
- **Median Sale Price:** Last July, the median sale price for Prince William County Homes was \$338,990. This July, the median sale price was \$330,000, a decrease of 3% or \$8,990 compared to last year. The current median sold price is 1% lower than in June. Median sale price is the middle sale price in a given month. The same number of properties are above & below the median.
- **New Listings:** 1,128 Current Contracts 743 Sold Vs. List Price 98.6% Months of Supply 3.0 Up 6% Vs. Year Ago Up 30% Vs. Year Ago No Change Vs. Year Ago Down -16% Vs. Year Ago.
- **Months of Supply:** In July, there was 3.0 months of supply available in Prince William County, compared to 3.6 in July 2014. That is a decrease of 16% versus a year ago. Months of supply is calculated by dividing current inventory by current sales. It indicates how many months would be needed to sell all of the inventory available at the current rate of demand.
- **New Listings & Current Contracts:** This month there were 1,128 homes newly listed for sale in Prince William County compared to 1,069 in July 2014, an increase of 6%. There were 743 current contracts pending sale this July compared to 572 a year ago. The number of current contracts is 30% higher than last July.
- **Sale Price to List Price Ratio:** In July, the average sale price in Prince William County was 98.6% of the average list price, which is similar compared to a year ago.
- **Days on Market:** This month, the average number of days on market was 36.

\*Information included in this report is based on data supplied by MRIS and its member Association(s) of REALTORS – who are not responsible for its accuracy – and does not reflect all activity in the marketplace. Information contained in this report is deemed reliable but not guaranteed, should be independently verified, and does not constitute an opinion of MRIS. ☀

## Manager’s Message

By Stacy Panuzio, CMCA, AMS, PCAM



**OMG**....now what?

The OMG referenced above can apply to any post casualty loss whether it is systems related, weather related, or in response to a natural disaster. The key is in the “now what?” part of the above, and knowing what to do *after* an emergency is equally important as knowing what to do *during* an emergency.

Hopefully an emergency preparedness plan exists for the community, or alternatively, that an emergency point of contact has been previously identified. In most cases this will be the community manager or a member of the Board and this person should spearhead the necessary initial response.

Immediately following, and if possible during an emergency, it is imperative to first identify all of the parties to the casualty. If the loss is limited to one household it is likely that the homeowners’ insurance held by the unit owner will cover the loss in its entirety, which is pretty straight forward. If the loss involves multiple units or is large or costly in nature, then things can get complicated fairly quickly and having the proper post loss management skills is imperative to a successful operation.

Next is the dispatch of necessary emergency services. Regardless of the type or size of the casualty, services must be provided in as timely a manner as possible. These can include fire or water clean-up, structure stabilization, engineering services, mold prevention, and the like. In extreme cases, help can also be sought from the American Red Cross or similar organization, if shelter or further assistance to residents is needed. Ideally these types of vendors are identified before a

loss, but they can also be identified through CAI or the good old fashioned phone book.

Now that the involved parties have been identified and the needed emergency services rendered, focus should shift to long term repairs, which is where post casualty loss management skills are essential to the successful outcome of the rebuild. *As with most situations in life, good communication is the key component to a successful outcome.*

There are a lot of moving parts to a post casualty loss and communications will vary depending on the party involved. Early on in the post casualty loss, a determination should be made regarding rough estimates of damages, as this will determine what insurance policies are invoked. In a larger scale loss, it is likely that the resident(s) will invoke their homeowners' coverage and the association will invoke the master insurance policy and the separate insurance adjusters will sort out what is covered under each policy. This also requires effective communications to the Board of Directors, so that they can make the necessary business decisions to move the process forward. Legal counsel may also have to be consulted if there are questions regarding ownership or responsibility, which cannot be gleaned from the governing documents.

Special consideration should always be given to communications with affected residents, as suffering a loss can be a traumatic event to begin with. Additionally, it is the residents who will be displaced or further inconvenienced with repairs, so maintaining an open avenue of communication is critical to the residents' sense that the association is acting responsibly and appropriately to the situation. Involving the residents in the repair process can also lend itself to a more favorable outcome, especially if they have preferred vendors or special concerns. Notifications should also be provided to neighboring residents who might be impacted by the loss or pending repairs, just as a measure of good business, management, and communication in general.

There is no such thing as a good or positive casualty loss, but the outcome can be favorable when common

sense, common courtesy and good communication are the order of the day.

Please also note that insurance will likely **not** cover the cost to repair the component which caused the loss, like a burst pipe. To that end, residents may wish to investigate home warranties, as an added layer of protection against potentially costly out of pocket repairs. ☀

## Inspections – A Necessary Evil

By Earl Burton



HOAs are a necessary evil, as they provide a modicum of normalcy that would not otherwise exist; purple shutters, pink flamingos, car repairs in the front yard and much, much more.

The two broad goals that HOA's are expected to attain are to maintain and increase property values within the constraints of the existing market and to ensure the quiet enjoyment of living in the community. HOAs are merely a microcosm of the community in which they exist. The intent is to have a Board and management company that are tuned-in to the needs and interests of the community, and apply the governing laws equally and fairly.

Somerset is very fortunate to have a very supportive management company with an outstanding property manager. Somerset is also very fortunate in that the current Board members have a genuine interest in our community, the maintenance/improvement of common facilities (all in an effort to live peacefully) and, if the market allows, to ensure an ever-increasing property value.

Please remember, the Board at Somerset are residents and owners just like you and we are equally beholden to the same rules and regulations as you are (as I was recently reminded when I received my "Violation Letter" from the management company).

Please feel free to join us as we meet on the second Tuesday of every month at the Westridge Clubhouse at 7:00 PM. Your involvement is strongly encouraged. We would really like to improve our website and its

capabilities. So if any of you are "web smart" and want to donate some of your time and talent, your Association would greatly appreciate it! Please contact our community manager, Stacy Panuzio, at [spanuzio@capitolcorp.com](mailto:spanuzio@capitolcorp.com) or at 703-707-6404 if you are interested in assisting. ☀

### Board Briefs

*The Board voted on following at the April through July meetings:*

#### April 2015

Approved Shenandoah Landscape’s contract for the Quarterhorse tree installation project.

Approved reallocation of capital improvements to zero out the special assessment line item.

Approved requests from two unit owners to replace windows and French doors and one owner’s request to replace patio doors.

Approved NVR’s contract for the third phase of the siding project.

Approved King Contracting’s contract for building painting.

Approved Triple State’s contract for sewer main repairs.

Approved partial waiver of dryer vent violation assessment on a unit. Owner to be informed that they have one last chance to have the vent cleaned before legal action commences.

Waived all late fees on a unit, but not the admin fees.

Waived late fees on a unit.

#### May 2015

Approved Creative Irrigation’s contract to extend the existing irrigation system to the new trees on Quarterhorse.

Approved partial waiver of dryer vent violation assessment on a unit. Owner to be informed that they have one last chance to have the vent cleaned before legal action commences.

Waived all late fees on a unit, but not the admin fees.

Waived late fees on a unit.

#### June 2015

Approved requests from two owners to replace windows and one owner to replace French door.

Approved the 2014 draft audit.

Waived late fee on a unit, but not the admin fees.

#### July 2015

Approved requests from two unit owners to replace windows.

Approved Environmental Enhancement’s contract to replace dead/missing shrubs around the community.

Approved owner’s request to permit a non-compliant front door to remain in place. When the door needs replacement again, a compliant door must be installed.

Approved an owner’s request to remove a violation notice. ☀

### Upcoming Board Meetings

October 13 (Annual Unit Owners Meeting)\*  
November 10  
December 8  
January 12

Residents are welcomed and encouraged to attend monthly Board meetings, which are held at the Westridge Clubhouse and begin at 7:00 PM.

\*Sign in for the Annual Unit Owners Meeting will begin at 6:30 PM, with the meeting beginning promptly at 7:00 PM.

**Somerset at Westridge, A Condominium**

Management Company: Capitol Property Management  
3914 Centreville Road, Suite 300, Chantilly, VA 20151  
Manager: Stacy Panuzio; 703-707-6404; [spanuzio@capitolcorp.com](mailto:spanuzio@capitolcorp.com)  
After Hours Emergency: 703-401-1918  
Somerset Website: [www.somersetatwestridge.org](http://www.somersetatwestridge.org)  
Board of Directors: [bod@somersetatwestridge.org](mailto:bod@somersetatwestridge.org)  
Architectural Landscape Committee: [alc@somersetatwestridge.org](mailto:alc@somersetatwestridge.org)

**Westridge Swim & Racquet Club**

Management Company: Legum & Norman  
12764 Quarterhorse Lane, Woodbridge, VA 22192  
General Manager: Debbie Carter; 703-590-1600; [GM@westridgeva.org](mailto:GM@westridgeva.org)  
Westridge Website: [www.westridgeva.org](http://www.westridgeva.org)

**Additional Contacts**

Emergency Police, Fire, Ambulance: 911  
Police Non-Emergency: 703-792-6500  
Washington Gas: Emergency, 703-750-1400; Non-Emergency, 703-750-1000  
Dominion Virginia Power: 1-888-667-3000  
Towing: Dominion Wrecker Service; 703-590-0994  
Trash: American Disposal Services; 703-368-0500