



# SOMERSET NEWS

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### Board of Directors

President - Willis McCloud  
 Vice President - Earl Burton  
 Treasurer - Patrina Kandul  
 Secretary - Charlotte Jordan  
 At Large - Susan Nettinga

## President's Corner

By Willis McCloud



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The Board of Directors and management would like to say that we hope this year has gotten off to a great start for you and your family! We look forward to big things for you and for Somerset.

The good news for the community is that we start the year in solid financial shape. With most residents paying their assessments on time we continue to fully fund our reserves. Funding our reserves enables us to maintain and improve our infrastructure which positively impacts our property values and quality of life. Over the last decade, we've invested a few million dollars in Somerset. Projects funded have included new roofs, siding, fencing, and landscaping - all without significantly increasing your assessment levels. What this demonstrates is there is a direct relationship between paying assessments and our ability to maintain our good grounds and facilities.

Thanks to your efforts we continue to reduce our number of overdue accounts. Although the number isn't as low as we would like it to be, we continue to make progress. Most residents can and do pay their assessments on time. However, we understand circumstances could impact your financial situation. If you are currently facing a financial challenge or think you may be soon, contact our Community Manager Stacy Panuzio, at 703-707-6404 or [spanuzio@capitalcorp.com](mailto:spanuzio@capitalcorp.com) as soon as possible. The best solution is to be as proactive as possible to ensure your account and Somerset's financial status remain in good standing.

With a so far warmer than normal winter, many of our thoughts have already turned to spring. Even if the weather turns colder the end of winter is firmly in our sights. As you may have noticed, our landscapers have already trimmed many of our shrubs and edged our beds in preparation for mulching. We will continue to replace dead and missing plants as well as trim and remove

trees during February and March. As the weather warms we would ask that you water our landscaping, to include lawns, as needed. Even though we contract for watering services for our new plantings we don't normally water our foliage unless conditions warrant. We've invested heavily in our landscaping so your efforts in helping maintain it will be appreciated.

Although the holidays have come and gone and most of us have long since packed the lights away I would ask you to continue to keep at least one light on. Turning on your porch light is a small step that each of us can take to increase security within the community. Installing a porch light with an automatic sensor that turns on/off at dusk will also ensure your home has that lived-in look even when you are away. So, let's light up the night and help keep our community as safe as possible!

Also, get out and walk around the community. It's a good way to get some exercise, meet your neighbors, and keep an eye out for anything that needs to be brought to the attention of management. Stacy or other members of the management team are frequently on the property. However, they can never catch everything. As the saying goes if you see something, particularly involving one of our vacant homes, say something by contacting our management office.

In closing please remember that your suggestions, comments, and questions are encouraged and welcomed. If you have a better idea, please share it! We look forward to hearing from you soon.

All the best! ✨

## Manager's Message



*By Stacy Panuzio,  
CMCA, AMS, PCAM*

### **Covenants and ALC Inspections –**

The management company will be performing inspections of the property for covenants violations beginning this spring. Please voluntarily bring any violations into compliance as soon as possible. We recommend you look at the following areas that typically require attention.

- Rusted or leaning chimney stacks above your unit's roof line
- Garbage cans and recycle bins left outside in plain view. These items are to be stored in your shed or garage
- Drapes/blinds with non-white backing that are visible from outside the unit
- Items (including satellite dishes) secured to the decks/posts/fences with nails/screws/penetrating fasteners
- Trash, toys or other items being stored on the patio/driveway/deck
- Broken or missing window grids/mullions
- Items stored on common property

Please refer to the association's Standards for Appearance & Use policy for more information. You will find this document on our website at <http://somerstatwestridge.org/somerset/> in the Resources/Documents section. ✨

## From the ALC

By Greg Hodgson



We hope all of our residents enjoyed a wonderful holiday season and are enjoying the unseasonably warm winter! But just because winter is upon us doesn't mean the ALC has gone into hibernation.

In December, the Westridge Architectural Review Board approved our request to re-landscape the hill near the Somerset sign. This work also included modifying/extending the existing irrigation system to accommodate the new plantings. Kudos go out to the Board, management and our contractors for getting this large project completed before the end of 2016. We believe this re-designed area will give a much needed facelift to the front of our property.

As mentioned in the November newsletter, the parking lot island trees are the next big project to tackle. After a couple of expert evaluations and much discussion, all island trees will be removed in the first half of this year. The type of large trees (oaks, elms, and maples) planted in these islands many years ago were not appropriate for their locations. Most of them are already in decline due to the lack of space for the roots to grow, and in some cases the roots have caused damage to the parking lot or curbs. Once these trees are removed, a determination will be made as to whether new, more appropriately sized trees will be planted, and when. A period time will also be needed to allow the soil to rest before any new trees can be planted. In a few areas, it's likely nothing will be replanted because there is just not enough room.

Additionally, there are other extremely large trees directly in front of units which will be removed, as they, too, are not appropriate for their locations. A number of the other larger trees are ear-

marked for trimming – to elevate the canopies and to thin out dead branches.

As we do each year, the ALC will walk the property in early spring and summer to identify unit landscaping in need of attention (i.e. replacements shrubs/plants). There are only two of us to cover this large property, so we don't always catch everything! If you know of an area requiring attention, please report it to our manager, Stacy Panuzio, at 703-707-6404 or [spanuzio@capitalcorp.com](mailto:spanuzio@capitalcorp.com), and we will check it out and make recommendations as needed. We always appreciate input from the community and also have additional openings on the ALC if anyone is inclined to join us. ✨

## Vice President's Podium

By Earl Burton

### Making Exceptions to Rules

You know we have rules to preserve the appearance of the community, protect the value of our common property and our individual homes, and make our neighborhood more harmonious for all. What you may not know is that in some rare instances, the association will waive some rules and regulations.

It's not a decision the board takes lightly. There's a fine line between upholding the rules and being flexible as times change and individual issues arise.

If an owner comes to the board and asks us to waive a rule, we consider the individual circumstances, the priorities of fellow owners, whether a precedent is being set and how we'll document the waiver. The board will carefully review how the rules and restrictions are written and whether there's any flexibility. The association has to be very careful about granting waivers so that they don't set off a domino effect.

Some things, like assessments, will never be up for negotiation. The board may approve payment plans or waive late fees and interest depending on the circumstances, but owners must always pay their share of common expenses.

In general, though, we understand the need to be flexible when circumstances warrant. We all live in this living, breathing, changing community, and issues aren't always black and white. If you think the association should waive or relax a rule, come and chat with board members or the manager. We'll let you know whether it's something we'll consider. ✧

## Secretary's Minutes

By *Charlotte Jordan*



We're always talking about the association's governing documents, but what are they?

### State Law

Almost every state has statutes governing condominiums and homeowner associations. In addition, most associations are subject to the state corporations' code.

### Declaration, Master Deed, or Proprietary Lease and Their Covenants and Restrictions

Planned communities are created by declarations (also known as master deeds). Cooperatives are created with proprietary leases (also called occupancy agreement). These contain the restrictions that regulate residents' behavior, they define owner's rights and obligations, and establish the association's responsibilities.

### Articles of Incorporation

Most associations, and all cooperatives, incorporate and have articles of incorporation that define

their purposes and powers. They may specify such things as the number of directors and their terms of office.

### Bylaws

Bylaws address association operations such as procedures for meetings and elections and specifying the general duties of the board.

### Resolutions—Rules and Regulations

Board members adopt rules and regulations, and sometimes members have to approve them. Rules and regulations are recorded as board resolutions. Resolutions must be consistent with the declaration or proprietary lease, the bylaws and state law.

Association governing documents are almost always trumped by state law. When association documents conflict among themselves, the declaration or proprietary lease carries the greatest weight – followed by the bylaws and then the rules and regulations. ✧

## Treasurer's Notes

By *Patrina Kandul*



### Board Responsibility

Our community is more than just a neighborhood. In many ways, it's a lot like a business. Collectively, our regular annual assessments amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars that need to be budgeted carefully and spent wisely. And our neighbors who have volunteered and been elected to serve on the association's board are responsible for making critical decisions – on our behalf – about managing the community and our money.

Our board also maintains long-range plans – like when the parking lot will need to be repaved, roofing needs replacing, etc. – concerning the parts of the community that are shared property. The board must set aside funds so that these

kinds of projects can be accomplished on schedule, or even ahead of schedule, in the event there's an unexpected breakdown.

The board also sends out requests for bids and contracts with vendors to do the work necessary to maintain our shared amenities. Board members decide who will do the best job of replacing the roof at the best price or who will be the most reliable company to hire to mow the grass and remove dead tree limbs.

The board's decisions can have a significant impact on the community's appearance and, consequently, on our property values. Regardless of our professional manager, the board ultimately is responsible for overseeing association operations. Be sure to communicate with the board regularly, observe board meetings, and attend annual meetings to elect responsible board members and to participate in the conversations about significant community issues. ✨

## Neighborhood Watch

*By Willis McCloud*

### Keep an Eye on What You Fry

Nearly two-thirds of all kitchen fires start on the range or cook top. To prevent fires in your kitchen, don't leave food unattended on burners or the stove top, especially if you are frying food. If you have to step away from the stove or leave the kitchen, turn off the heat or flame and remove the pan from the burner. Keep food packaging, wooden spoons and dish towels, mitts and other fabrics – including your clothing – away from the cooking surface.

If food on the stove does ignite, cover the pan with a lid and turn off the stove. Never try to extinguish a kitchen fire with water. If the flames

are unmanageable, leave the kitchen and call 911 immediately.

Grease and food particles that collect in range hoods and stove vents also can be a kitchen fire hazard. The National Air Duct Cleaners Association (NADCA) recommends inspecting and cleaning residential kitchen exhausts twice a year. Shared vent ducts in condominiums should be inspected by a professional. For more information, visit <http://nadca.com>.

For more information on kitchen fires and how to prevent them, visit the National Fire Protection Association at <http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/causes/cooking/safety-messages-about-cooking>. ✨

## Board Minutes

*By Greg Hodgson*

Did you know that as a Somerset unit owner, you can read our association's Board meeting minutes on our website? While the meeting minutes are not intended to record every discussion and debate word-for-word, they do include all actions voted on by the Board. In addition to reading the quarterly newsletter, reading the meeting minutes is a good way to stay informed about what's going on in our association!

Accessing the minutes is easy: Just sign in to your Somerset account at [www.somersetatwestridge.org](http://www.somersetatwestridge.org) and go to Resources>Board Minutes. If you have any questions, please contact Stacy Panuzio at [spanuzio@capitolcorp.com](mailto:spanuzio@capitolcorp.com) at 703-707-6404. ✨



## **Upcoming Board Meetings**

**February 14**

**March 14**

**May 9**

Residents are welcomed and encouraged to attend Board meetings, which are held at the Westridge Clubhouse and begin 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: 703-481-1918.  
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; [HOA@Westridgeva.org](mailto:HOA@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