

Dunbarton Pines Homeowners' Association
April 2023 Newsletter

The Board-Homeowner Connection

Our new Board members are transitioning to their responsibilities with commitment and energy. We want to keep them engaged and encourage other homeowners to volunteer as well. Homeowners who behave badly or communicate poorly with Board members have the opposite effect. It behooves us, as homeowners, to remember the following:

Board members are volunteers! Any time they spend on behalf of the Association is their own and often away from family. When you reach out to a Board member – consider that while they are there to serve, they are not Association servants. Please be polite in your communications. We don't want to lose good, qualified members because of bad behavior!

Board members are homeowners! They are your neighbors. They work selflessly to ensure the work they do and the decisions they make are in the best interests of all homeowners. I know they feel the same about their interaction with you, the homeowners.

Board members are people! They use the Association email dunbartonpines@outlook.com as the primary means of communication. Why? To provide a consistent, common means of contact for homeowners (and some prefer that they do not have to publish their private phone numbers). Designated members scan for incoming emails multiple times a day. Responses to homeowner concerns frequently involve third party vendors. That means time spent getting in touch with a vendor to discuss the homeowner issue, agree on a solution, and schedule work. Your patience is appreciated. Remember, Board members are not expected to perform Association maintenance!

In the past, Board members have received heartfelt thanks, compliments, and praise from homeowners for the hard work they do. Those rare moments are a welcome pat-on-the-back for your Board volunteers. It keeps them motivated and coming back for more!

The Aging of the Subdivision (and all of us in it)!

Step outside your house and look around. The subdivision was established in 1979, with most homes built shortly thereafter. So, the homes you are looking at are over 42 years old! No doubt many of you have seen visible evidence of that aging: contractors popping up here and there to refresh a kitchen, build out a bathroom, or replace a deck. Frankly, that's a good thing (not the aging, the updating)! But that means homeowners in our subdivision should expect to incur some expenses if they are to maintain their 40 plus-year-old homes in great condition.

Your board has seen signs of the aging of our subdivision as well. We've seen steadily increasing costs of landscaping maintenance – primarily in trimming of our maturing trees in the subdivisions and cul-de-sacs. The recent ice, snow, and wind storms have been especially harsh (and expensive). But that's what we want in a mature subdivision – streets shaded by large, leafy trees that provide the look and feel of a great subdivision you want to live in.

Subdivision storm sewer maintenance is another area that needs to be addressed as the subdivision ages. Our storm sewers drain precipitation out of the subdivision into our detention basins and from there into the Rouge River basin. They carry all kinds of water and detritus which, over time, can begin to accumulate. If not maintained, that accumulated material can slow or block the drainage of precipitation out of the subdivision. Our covenants look to the Association to maintain our storm

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sewers. That said, our storm sewers have required limited (if any) maintenance over the years. Recently, however, we investigated a subdivision storm sewer drain that had accumulated quite a bit of detritus, but not yet sufficient to block water drainage. That inspection highlighted how fortunate we've been over the last 40 years to not encounter major storm sewer issues, but time is running out. It now appears we need to begin performing selective "deep cleaning" of our subdivision storm sewers. As an aside – you may want to proactively check your sump pump line that runs from your house to the street or storm sewer; that line can clog as easily (if not more easily) than our industrial-strength storm sewers.

As you might expect – storm sewer maintenance is expensive, and not something that can (or should) be done in one year. We've found most subdivisions prepare a multi-year plan with a contractor to clean out a subset of targeted drains each year – such that the entire set of storm drains is addressed over a period of several years. Your board will be investigating contractors, obtaining cost estimates, and preparing such a plan in the coming months. But the result is our maintenance costs will go up accordingly.

A final thought. If you are one of the original homeowners that have been with us from the start – over some 40 years – fair warning: you may find yourself in need of maintenance and upkeep as well! Hopefully nothing serious! Wink wink!

Managing Your HOA Account – new software?

The Association is always looking to reduce operating costs to homeowners. One of the areas we are actively investigating is reducing the cost of software we use to support the subdivision. We've used TOPS for over three years, and we're finding that in the software business, that's a long time. There are some very good candidates that have emerged that are cheaper and appear to offer more functionality! As you know, any software we use must support homeowner communications and payments as well as Association back-office operations. If we find a software package that meets our stringent criteria but provides annual cost savings to homeowners, we will likely migrate to it before our annual dues process begins this summer. If we do change software, homeowners that paid using electronic payments (either through the ACH Pull process or directly with ACH or credit card) will need to register again on the new software. We would be able to send a registration email to you to get things going if we make the switch. Stay tuned for the results of our evaluation!

Financial Report – Karen Harris & Alan Lach

First of all, I would like to introduce Alan Lach, a newly elected member of the HOA Board of Directors who is quickly learning the ins and outs of financial responsibilities for Dunbarton Pines HOA. He is doing a wonderful job.

Dues have been collected from all 341 homeowners for 2023. Thank you to all for your timely payments. This saves us time and money, not having to collect late payments and engage a lawyer to assist in collections. Invoices for 2024 will be mailed in early August with payment due September 1.

Already this year we have encountered some unexpected landscaping expenses due to our recent snow and ice storms. Many trees were affected in the commons areas and required cutting and removal of branches to make the areas safe and free of debris. In addition, we have incurred unexpected additional expenses for the maintenance of a storm sewer segment within the subdivision. As stated in an earlier article, this is an expense we will be budgeting for over the next several years. These two unexpected

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events incurred an expense of \$7,900 of which will more than likely affect the reserves balance at the end of 2023.

To help offset these unexpected expenses, we are looking into other cost-cutting measures such as changing the software used for conducting HOA business (in a previous article). Any additional maintenance and rejuvenation to entrances and islands will be delayed until we are certain there are funds to cover the expenses. By providing us with your email address, we can also cut expenses by sending all HOA communications via email. Postage alone for one mailing is ~\$250.

And like everything else, inflation has an impact on the cost of the services we are required to contract out for landscape maintenance (4 entrances, 11 cul-de-sacs, common areas in the center of the subdivision, detention basins, and grass along Taft Road and Nine Mile Road). Utility expenses have increased as well. We are hopeful our dues for this year will cover our expected budgeted items along with the unexpected. We started the year with a healthy reserves amount and expected to add \$532 to the balance at the end of the year. Now with the new expenses, will try to preserve it as best we can.

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Income Statement
As of March 31, 2023**

	2023		2022
	Actual YTD	Annual Budget	Full Year Actuals
Income			
6010 Dues and Other Receipts	\$64,790.00	\$64,790.00	\$65,336.00
6200 Interest Income	\$9.50	\$40.00	\$25.11
Dues and Receipts Total	\$64,799.50	\$64,830.00	\$171.00
	\$64,799.50	\$64,830.00	\$65,532.11
Expenses			
7010 Landscaping	\$12,649.00	\$51,158.00	\$47,614.83
8010 Fees and Insurance	\$0.00	\$4,137.00	\$5,275.20
8020 Water	\$0.00	\$2,224.00	\$2,224.40
8030 Electric	\$369.00	\$1,066.00	\$1,066.88
8040 Communications	\$710.19	\$1,261.00	\$1,386.54
8050 Enterprise Software	\$1,484.00	\$4,452.00	\$4,452.00
	\$15,212.19	\$64,298.00	\$62,019.85
Contribution to Reserves	\$49,587.31	\$532.00	\$3,512.26

HOA Dues Increase Notice and Comparison with Neighboring HOA's – Karen Harris & Alan Lach

The HOA Board has agreed to increase dues \$20 per year with the next billing, this August. Our vendor expenses are increasing as well as the cost to maintain an aging subdivision. Inflation is also a factor. Dunbarton Pines is not alone – our neighboring subdivisions have raised their annual dues since 2021 as well. Even with our increase, Dunbarton Pines is still one of the lowest HOA dues payment in the area.

Subdivision	Annual Dues		
	2021	2023	Increase

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Dunbarton Pines	\$190	\$210	\$20
Addington Park	325	500	175
Autumn Park	340	475	135
Barclay	400	600	200
Bradford	325	350	25
Mystic Forest	365	395	30
Royal Crown	225	295	70

Subdivision Annual Garage Sale – Karen Harris

The Annual Subdivision Garage Sale will be Friday and Saturday, May 19 & 20 from 9 AM – 5 PM. Post your sales information and items for free at www.garagesalefinder.com; www.yardsalesearch.com; www.garagesaletracker.com; www.nextdoor.com and Craig's List. These are just a few sites that we are aware of. You may know of others. Posting your own ad allows you to enter your street address and specific items you have for sale, bringing a potential customer directly to your house. The HOA will post a general advertisement for the subdivision on these sites as well as put up signs at the entrances. Good luck with your sale!

Annual Meeting Scheduled for Sunday, September 17th, at 7:00 PM. – Fred Schlemmer

We have scheduled the Annual Meeting for the DPHA for Sunday, September 17th, at 7:00 PM. Currently the meeting is to be a Zoom Webinar. Please feel free to send any questions or concerns you want addressed at the meeting to dunbartonpines@outlook.com. Questions can also be posted during the webinar presentation. More information will be provided with the Annual Dues Invoice.

RV Camper, Trailer, Boat and Commercial Vehicle Restrictions - Karen Harris

We know – you have been cooped up inside all spring and it is time to get out! Please remember as you prepare for your summer activities that parking boats, campers and trailers within the subdivision is prohibited! City of Novi Ordinances separately restrict loading and unloading of such vehicles to 72 hours and does not allow parking of same on streets near residences. The City of Novi Ordinances as well as our By-laws also address the parking of commercial vehicles within the subdivision. Any questions regarding these ordinances should be directed to the City of Novi Compliance department.

Garbage Cans

Per city ordinance, you should not put out waste or recycling bins earlier than 24 hours prior to the scheduled collection day. It is the responsibility of both the property owner and the property occupant to place refuse at the designated collection site within a refuse bin, sealed container or plastic bag to prevent objectionable odors, or spillage of refuse upon any public or private site. All receptacles must be removed from such areas no later than 12 hours following the actual collection. Trash receptacles must be placed within a totally enclosed building or placed upon an area of the rear yard of the occupant's property so as not to create a nuisance to surrounding residents.

Signs in Yards

To keep our subdivision a welcoming and inviting location for homeowners, visitors and potential new homeowners, please remove any commercial signs in your yard after the contractor has completed his work. All signs posted in entryways, cul-de-sac islands and commons areas will be removed. Political signs are to be removed in a timely manner after an election. This is also a City regulation.

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Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

Summer brings everyone out to enjoy the weather. Because we do not have sidewalks within the subdivision, to ensure your safety when walking or riding your bicycles in the sub, consider the following:

- Pedestrians should walk facing oncoming traffic.
- Pedestrians should make eye-contact with drivers before crossing roadways.
- Bicyclists ride on the same side of the road as traffic and obey all traffic signs and traffic lights.
- Bicyclists, if riding on a sidewalk (Taft Rd & Nine Mile), shall give right-of-way to pedestrians as well as use a bell to alert pedestrians of their approach.
- Be visible - both pedestrians and bicyclists should wear reflective clothing and have lights at night and wear bright colors during the day.

Please be SAFE!

Walking and Cleaning up After Pets

Our pets enjoy walking outside as much as we do, if not more. Several homeowners have requested we remind pet owners to clean-up after their pets and remind you there is a City ordinance regarding the walking of animals on a leash. Not all people are dog lovers and prefer that your dog is restrained and kept under control.

City of Novi Ordinance Enforcement – for more information please visit the site below.

<https://cityofnovi.org/services/community-development/ordinance-enforcement-resources>

Dunbarton Pines Commons Usage and Rules

The common areas are for all residents to enjoy. If you would like to hold an event on the commons, please contact the HOA for rules and to ensure that the space is available for your use. Commons rules can also be found on www.dunbartonpinesofnovi.com under the Documentation link. Take time to sit on the new benches and enjoy the day.

Requesting Homeowners Email for HOA Communications

We are requesting an email address from you so that you can receive HOA communications electronically. The majority of our communications are now electronic, and we want to make sure you are kept abreast of what is happening in Dunbarton Pines. This also helps us to reduce the cost of postage and printing, a savings of approximately \$550 per mailing. If you only received this newsletter via USPS mail, chances are we do NOT have a current or correct email address for you. Please send an updated email address with your name and address to: dunbartonpines@outlook.com and we will update our records. We don't want you missing out! Thank you.

LOST Street Sign

The northern most street sign at the corner Courtview Trail and Waycroft is missing. It was blown off during one of our wind storms, landed on the ground, and then disappeared. Please, if you have it, leave it at the corner where it fell so that it can be reattached by the City of Novi Public Works Department. Thank you!

HOA Contact Information

Email: dunbartonpines@outlook.com – monitored daily

USPS: Dunbarton Pines Homeowners' Association, PO Box 470, Novi, MI 48376

Website: <http://www.dunbartonpinesofnovi.com>

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