

**VILLAGE OF FOUNTAINVIEW CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION
MONTHLY COUNCIL MEETING
AT THE NEWARK SENIOR CENTER AND VIA ZOOM
JANUARY 10, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER: President Carrie Bolen called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Linda Malm, Carrie Bolen, Paula Kelly, William Anderson, Mary Ellen Fish (Zoom), Lisa Bolin (FSR)

ABSENT: Kelley Piel

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Renee Bensley from the City updated the community about Bldg. 3000. This past Friday, (Jan. 5th), the City did their first inspections on the interior reconstruction work which included the first and fourth floor units, and the rough wiring done in all units. All penetrations were sealed. Some minor framing repairs and missing nail plates were identified but those should be fixed quickly. Units on those floors where the exterior work has taken place are waiting for Falcon's verification that their portion of the work has the exterior water proofing before the City signs off on insulation for those units. All the other units on four and one have been cleared to begin insulation.

Regarding the exterior reconstruction, some additional water infiltration damage was found when the exterior facades were removed. Our reinforcement team is working with Falcon on how to address that.

Related to finance, City property tax refunds were issued for those in Bldg. 3000. New Castle County had come out and lowered the assessment for Bldg. 3000 since the building was uninhabitable. That lowered the assessment value from the cost of the building and the land to just the cost of the land. The City has eight outstanding checks that were returned as undelivered. Two of those units owners have been contacted. The other undelivered checks are for those owners in 209, 305, 403, 407, 409, and 414. If you are one of those owners or can help us contact them that would be helpful.

Calls also have been received about higher utility bills. One suggestion is to talk with ServPro about checking programmable thermostats in the units if it is cold. We want to be sure that the electric is not turning on automatically and costing residents more money. Also if your electric bills are higher than the average use from last year, contact your home owners insurance; sometimes they will reimburse you for the difference. If you are in arrears on the utility bills, please contact the payment and utility billing group – the number is on your bill. We have programs such as a partnership with Catholic Charities which can assist those in need. A letter will be sent later this month with an update. It also looks as if floors two and three will be scheduled for initial inspections this week.

Yuval (White Chapel) asked what's happening with the exterior work. Renee said when the cladding was removed from the outside particularly at the building corner, some additional damage was found to

the wood underneath. The City is working with Falcon to get their plan to address that. Yuval also asked about the other damaged sections of 3000. Renee said that portions of 3000 and 2000 were submitted for repairs, but not the building in its entirety – 3000 was two sides and 2000 was one side.

UTILITY CLOSETS: Bill Anderson said the sprinkler closets are finished; they were completed in December. All the locks are keyed alike. The closets will be painted when the weather is better.

BUILDING LIGHTS: Bill Anderson has replaced 90 – 95 percent of the carriage lights in Bldgs. 1000 and 2000. He replaced all of them in 3000 except for the north side of the building as the scaffolding was in the way, and the lights had been taken down. Bill asked if someone in the TH/V could let him know if they had any lights out, but he has not heard from anyone.

FOOD IN BLDG. 1000 HALLWAY: Bill said this is an ongoing problem in 1000. This is the fourth time since Thanksgiving that someone has left food in plastic bags or boxes. We have a mouse problem in 3000, and we don't want mice in 1000. If you have food, take it to a food pantry or throw it in the dumpster. If you know who it is, please tell them to put it in the appropriate place.

DUMPSTERS: If residents have large pieces of furniture that needs disposing, keep it in your unit until the day before trash pick up and have someone come and put it in the dumpster. The community really misses the Browns (who picked up trash) as there is much litter on the ground. Help each other out.

Lisa reminded everyone how much money Bill saves the community by doing all this work. If everyone could chip in, it would be helpful because he is pulling a lot of weight and trying to save a \$75/hr charge for a handyman.

WATER BILL REIMBURSEMENT FOR BLDG. 3000: Carrie said Council will be working on this. Lisa said Kelley Piel has asked for the December bills, and Lisa gave her what she had. We are waiting for the final December financials that won't be available until January 27th

UNDERAGE RESIDENTS IN COMMUNITY: There is a City of Newark law about this. Jerry Clifton said that anyone who is under 55 may reside in an over-55 age restricted condo for only 30 days. He added that there is a question about whose responsibility it is to remove them. The City Solicitor looked back on an issue in 3000 about 10 years ago as to how it was handled. Jerry thinks that a letter will be sent to the unit owner saying if there is someone under 55 living there, they need to vacate. Jerry said it's important to maintain the integrity of the community, and we need to remain diligent about that. He added that the Council could take action as well but that would lead to civil litigation. It is a violation of the criminal code in the City of Newark. So if someone is convicted in a court of having an underage person there, the convicted individual will have a criminal record. Nancy Balogh (TH) questioned what if that person is called a caregiver. Jerry said that would require physician involvement. If we do not put pressure on the offenders, then we deserve what we get.

NEW CITY OF NEWARK MAYOR

Carrie congratulated Jerry Clifton on his recent election to the position.

OPEN COUNCIL POSITION: There will be a special meeting at 6:15 before the monthly meeting at the Newark Senior Center on Feb. 14 to vote on filling the vacancy.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Kelly Piel is absent; the minutes will not be read this month.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Bill Scheper (bldg. 1000) said there was a request from a resident to go to a monthly bill paying system to help the people in 3000 in particular because some are paying mortgages, common charges, and rent.

Second, the engineer sent information about the fans that were built into the condos. They are not designed for dryer/vent service, and he made the suggestion for the proper fan. Bill sent a request to the Council and the engineer requesting a possible duct work design for the stone portion of the building. If any changes are made out there, then we will have to go through more restoration with the stone work, but Bill has not heard from Council. He also suggested that before the sheet rock is installed in 3000 that we replace the low grade pipe with a higher quality pipe. A lot of people are complaining about the insurance premiums we're having to pay, and if we show the insurance companies that we are upgrading our facilities it might help reduce our premiums. Bill also said that he has lived in Bldg. 1000 for almost 13 years and has heard the compressor several times a day. In Bldg. 2000, it runs several times a day. When he was on the advisory committee, he went into the fire sprinkler room and the compressors were starting every two hours. So if we have a problem with the dry system then we should correct it so as soon as we get done with 3000. He would recommend upgrading the pipe in bldg. 2000. Carrie said Council talked about this before the meeting, but the cause of the pipe break is still unknown. We still are seeking answers because we don't want to spend money on making corrections that are not the right thing to correct.

Jerry Clifton had a conversation with a friend who designs and certifies sprinkler systems. Jerry told him the story about the Fountainview flood, and that schedule 10 pipe had been installed here. Jerry's friend said that the schedule 10 pipe has a life expectancy of 15 - 20 years. While this could have been a catastrophic failure along the pipe seam, we still don't know if condensation had built up in it and caused a failure at its lowest point where there are threads and connection.

Jerry also spoke about an email about the budget that has been circulating through the community. Jerry's long-time government experience has shown him that no one comes on board of an organization as a budget expert unless that happens to be one's background. If the expertise isn't here, he said, then let's get an ad hoc committee started this summer to begin combing the budget making recommendations, verifying and cross checking the budget and get it to the residents by September or October. Then there is more time to discuss it. Jerry thinks this would be a prudent move going forward. Carrie said the budget would have remained very close to what it was last year if it wasn't for the insurance. The only reason our budget went up was because of the insurance. Lisa added that the one contract that went up by 3 percent was the fire sprinkler system because we had to add additional services. Jerry wants to see more transparency. Lisa said that if the community wants an ad hoc committee for finances then Kelley would be the one to start it. Lisa also added that having done community budgets for 20 years, there is usually a team involved. Kelley had assistance from Cam Vu and Jim Millin. It can be done depending on how much the community wants to take away from the management company. This year the insurance was the breaker. The community was fairly on target although there was some legal fees. In preparing the budget, the previous three years are examined.

Yuval (White Chapel): As in past meetings, Yuval brought up the sprinkler system issue as the the dry wall has not been installed. He said now is the time to take care of its replacement. We need an engineering firm to inspect it and give us a certification that the system is okay and that will help us with the insurance. When the insurance broker was here, Yuval asked him what was the main concern. He said as this was not the first time a pipe had burst; this was their main concern. Yuval said that if we address the problem and make corrections that it may lessen the insurance costs and that we should hire the best firm around. Lisa said she does not disagree with Yuval's concerns, but now there is the dryer issue (Carrie will address later in the meeting) that must be addressed. Lisa said she can get an estimate from the engineer if Council wants, but the funds are running slim and now there is a possibility of looking at another assessment on top of doubling the HOA fees. It could be another \$20,000 to have Falcon do the kind of inspection that Yuval suggests. Bill Anderson acknowledged Yuval s concerns and said maybe we could get an estimate on the schedule 40 pipe to run the horizontal length of the attic. But Yuval again said to hire an expert and get a certificate. Carrie questioned what are we paying Sobieski for; wouldn't they tell us if we needed a better pipe in the attic? Schedule 10 pipe has 15- 20 years life span, Bill said, and it is always under moisture inside because of condensation. We have an air compressor system that does not use nitrogen and doesn't use any dry air so the piping is constantly wet. And if it was installed with the seam down that moisture attacks the seam on a daily basis. Even though they come and do the testing, they never would have been able to get an inspector in there and feel underneath the pipe. The smart thing to do is to get a bid for all three buildings. To solve the problem, Bill said, the schedule 40 pipe is the answer. Lisa said she will want a scope of work from Yuval if he wants an engineer to look at. She also can ask Falcon, and have Jerry send the name of his friend.

Bill Scheper said in Bldg. 2000, the air compressor runs 4 – 5 times per day. Wayman went in and said it was an air leak but he couldn't hear it. He was told that the installing contractor in 2000 was careless in the way they rolled the grooves. In schedule 10 pipes they roll the grooves and if they roll it too deep, the gasket won't be able to sit properly and that's what happened there. The chances are we have the same problem elsewhere in 2000. In 2000, he said, two sets of air compressors have been worn out. Carries reminded Yuval that the community took specific actions at Brandon's recommendation beforehand to get insurance, and we still couldn't find it.

Audrey Mann said that in the TH/V they can call the City to take large pieces of trash and asked if the condos cannot do the same. Residents have been educated numerous times, Carrie said, but still do not follow procedure. Bill Scheper had a recliner to dispose of and called the City. He was told to put it out Sunday night and it would be picked up Monday but wasn't. Jerry said that was probably a breakdown in communication.

NEW BUSINESS

PAINTING OF BLDG. 3000 FAÇADE

Linda Malm said initially the facade that is below grade in Bldg. 3000 was to be left as is, but white does not match the remainder of the building facade.

MOTION: Linda Malm made the motion to approve \$1200 to paint the board to match the remainder of the facade. Bill Anderson seconded it. All approved. The motion was approved.

DRYER VENT PROPOSAL BY FALCON ENGINEERING

Falcon has discovered some major issues with the dryer vents in Bldg. 3000 and most likely it will be in the other two buildings. Falcon has given us a bid for \$9500 to inspect all the dryer vents and the fans in all three buildings. As we want to include the TH/V the cost is \$11,500 to inspect and provide a report on how to fix them. The City is not aware of this report yet, but we will be cited on these dryer vents. It's going to take a lot to correct the problem. Kathleen Phillips asked how the community received a Certificate of Occupancy if they weren't up to code. Carrie suggested she ask the Building Inspector. They have cited VOF on many things on which we were given CO's on. Jerry said that if it met code in 2005, that was the code then. But once a home or building is condemned, then it must be brought up to code. Lisa said Falcon will create the scope of work like they did with National doing the exterior. Then they will bid it out to several companies. Council will pick one. Yuval questioned why are we paying so much for the report. Lisa replied that it is not just the report but also overseeing the job and the job specs to go out for bid. Kathleen asked why are they doing the buildings that have not been condemned. Carrie replied they are all fire hazards, and we cannot risk a fire. Once they've told us there is an issue, we must address it. We don't have a choice. Yuval said while we should take this action collectively, he does not see why each unit vent must be inspected. Carrie said they were all installed the same; if there is a problem in 3000 then there is a problem in the other buildings. If we know that and have a fire, what are we going to do. Yuval said the power booster for the dryer vent is an option, it's not a must; most homes don't have that. If you take that out, it is perfectly legal especially when you are not going more than 20 feet between the dryer and the outdoors. It's a luxury to have the power vent, but it is not a must. If you remove them all tomorrow and put in those flap vents, then you are good. Carrie said she did not think the outside vents met code anymore. Yuval agreed that they didn't meet code anymore but said just remove it, put in a plastic flap then you are done. Carrie said a resident in 2000 just had a dryer vent cleaned; it appeared it was working fine but she had hornet mud nests inside the vent over her living room. It was a lot of work to get them out. Yuval said if you have a dryer vent in a closet, it is 20-30 ft to reach the outside, you don't have to have that power vent – they're very expensive. If you do away with them, that's it. Carrie asked what is going to push the air out 30 ft. across the ceiling. Ninety-nine percent of homes in America don't have a power vent, Yuval said. And most of them go from here to the outside wall, Carrie said, the problem is the length. Carrie said as someone on Council, she is not willing to not to have them inspected. Linda Malm asked if this inspection would tell us what the problems are and how to fix them. Carrie said yes. She said that if you look at the sides of the building, you can see that most of the vents are blocked solid. Lisa said that the comment was made that if they were done two years ago they were not cleaned correctly. Yuval said he is against paying this sum of money to Falcon. Carrie said we have it in a report that the vents are a problem. Bill clarified that Falcon would inspect and identify what units have problems, and then we want to make sure that everything is done that they have recommended. Lisa said they will create a scope of work then it will go to three contractors for bid. As Bill said at the last meeting, most of the build up will be in the corrugated tin foil pipe that runs out of the dryer up to the ceiling level. That should be replaced once a year. Carrie said, we are being proactive. Bill used the example that if he had a fire from the vent, it would happen in the void space and his ceiling would have to be opened up as well as his neighbor's. There will be much more damage. Kathleen said no one is questioning the validity of it, but it is a lot of money for inspection. Carrie asked Lisa to clarify with Falcon if they are inspecting every unit or could they look at a sampling of units that would be less expensive. Lisa will ask. The cost is about \$53 per unit. Bill said \$53 per unit is for peace of mind; isn't it better than having a fire? Kathleen said her understanding about the report is that the engineer will tell us what we need to replace the fans with and if that is the case then we know that every fan has to be replaced. Bill said that is not so because his fan works. Every dryer has a bronze colored booster fan

right there with an air hose in it. You'll know that it's working as there won't be a lint build up. The air that goes up into the grommet in the vent pipe actually senses the air pressure. Yuval said the reason that vent does not meet code anymore is because it cannot be opened to be cleaned. He said the same manufacturer has the next model over that can be opened and cleaned. Now they make dryers where vents are not a problem. Yuval wants to see the code and call the manufacturer. Lisa said we are trying to stay ahead of the violation because once we receive it, we will be given 30 days to get done. Part of this is timing as the facade is off and the dryer vents are encapsulated in that thus making it a good time to get it done. Bill Scheper said the fans that were installed were never intended for dryer venting and it is not even a case of code. Bill Anderson said it is in print so if we decide not to do it, we open ourselves up for liability. Fire departments look at these types of reports by a licensed engineer so they can hold that person accountable; it is worth the \$55. Carrie concurred about the value of the cost. Lisa said what Falcon has listed as their dryer vent evaluation:

- *To observe the condition on the dryer vent exhaust hoods on the three buildings.
- *Access to the dryer vents will be via a 40 ft. extension ladder with a two-man crew for the upper level units.
- *The general condition of vents will be documented, and if any defects exist they will be photographically documented.
- *Falcon will prepare a professional report to document and explain the conditions observed.
- *The report will include colored photographic documentation of noted deficiencies and/or problematic conditions found during our observations.

Carrie suggested that maybe Falcon could just get quotes on getting them all corrected and eliminate the inspections.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Linda Malm reported the following events:

January 20th: Afternoon coffee and tea with light refreshments and ice breaker activities from 2- 4 pm at the Newark Senior Center

February 14th : Secret Valentine person (like Secret Santa)

March 10th: White elephant bingo at the NSC so please start looking around for gently used items for prizes.

The Social Committee also is going to resurrect the Welcoming Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Mary Ellen Fish made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill Anderson seconded it. All approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula F Kelly
Secretary