



# DUNBARTON PINES



## Homeowner Association Newsletter August, 2017

### President's Message

Rod Harris

Summer is in full swing and your Board of Directors is wrapping up another year managing the affairs of the Dunbarton Pines Homeowners' Association! You should have noticed the investments made on your behalf on the islands and several cul-de-sacs (see Andy's article on Landscaping Maintenance and Improvements). More improvements are in the works for next year! We are in good financial condition as we finish out the year but have benefited from landscaping costs that have remained stable for some time and maintenance costs for commons areas that have been relatively low. As we raise the level of investment in of our islands, cul-de-sacs, and commons area, we will be raising our expectations for landscaping and maintenance work in the year ahead. As a result, we anticipate some increase in our landscaping budget. Accordingly, we agreed to increase the annual dues \$20 for next year, moving from \$150 to \$170 per year – about the cost of breakfast for two at your neighborhood restaurant. This also will improve our reserves for necessary but unanticipated expenses (see Karen's separate Treasurer's report). Interestingly, that increase doesn't even keep pace with inflation over the last 10 years - \$150 would amount to \$177 in inflation adjusted dollars.

### Annual Dues Increase of \$20 for 2017 / 2018

Rod Harris

The Board has agreed to raise the annual dues by \$20 to \$170, effective the 2018 calendar year, due September, 2017. There are several factors which have led the Board to this decision. First, we have not had an increase in our landscaping and maintenance costs for 11 years and believe we need to renegotiate the agreement to improve both the quality and quantity of work. We anticipate that such an increase could put us near "break even" in our annual landscaping and maintenance costs at our current annual dues rate. Second, we are planning additional improvements to the cul-de-sacs in the upcoming year, which will improve the look and feel of the neighborhood but come at a cost. Third, we are anticipating additional tree removal work as the trees in the commons areas continue to mature. Finally, we need to ensure that we maintain adequate reserves to handle the unexpected expenses that come our way.

Dunbarton Pines, even with the increase, provides one of the best values compared with our neighboring subdivisions, having one of the lowest annual dues rate. Remember, we have not had an annual dues increase for 10 years. While that speaks well to the expense management of previous Boards, it also reflects the state of the economy during that time. We want to have the solid foundation required to continue the improvements we are making to the subdivision and to provide for contingency in the event we experience unanticipated costs.

## DUNBARTON PINES Homeowners' Association

The Dunbarton Pines Homeowners' Association (DPHA) is a non-profit corporation created in 1979 and composed of 341 homes governed by the Declaration of Covenants, Agreements and Restrictions (1979) and Bylaws (1980). These documents are available on the Association website:

<http://www.dunbartonpinesofnovi.com>

The Association has the duty and responsibility to maintain the open spaces, retention ponds, storm sewer system, common areas and entry way monuments for the benefit of the subdivision and the members of the Association. Annual dues are \$170 (as of 2017) payable in September.

### Current DPHA board members:

**Rod Harris, President.** Rod continues the President role after returning to the Board last year after a not-so-brief hiatus.  
rc.harris@outlook.com

**Andy Randall, V.P. Landscaping.** Andy continues his 10-some year run on the Board looking out after all things landscaping.  
AndyRandall2@aol.com

**Karen Harris, Treasurer.** Karen reprises her role as Treasurer, having served on the Board several years ago.  
ks.harris@yahoo.com

**Lisa McCausland, Secretary.** Lisa continues as Secretary, a role she has played for 3 years.  
udlisa93@hotmail.com

**Fred Schlemmer, V.P. External Liaison.** Fred is in his second year on the Board, and coordinates with the City of Novi and other third-party organizations.  
fschlemmer@alcotrans.com

## Landscaping Maintenance and Improvements

Andy Randall

Many of you may have noticed our progress on improving the islands and cul-de-sacs in the subdivision. These improvements include removing landscaping rocks (where present) and replacing with grass. We started this year with two cul-de-sacs which already had grass instead of rocks. This year we completed four additional cul-de-sac improvements for Alton, Eaton, Exeter, and Louvert. Plans are to complete the remaining five next year, which would include: Courtview Trail (two islands), Drocton, Dunbarton Court, and Plaisance. In addition to improving the looks of the islands and cul-de-sacs with grass, we plan on making upgrades next year to plant life as well (adding flowers, replacing bushes and/or trees).

We have enjoyed stable landscaping costs for the last ten years, despite what are surely increases in our provider's costs. As we raise our expectations for maintenance and service of our newly upgraded islands and cul-de-sacs, we anticipate an increase in our maintenance costs as we negotiate our upcoming contracts for next year. We are

also seeing the impact of our maturing commons areas as homeowners notify us of potential encroachment / trimming needs of our aging trees. As a result, we anticipate an increase in support costs for our commons areas in the coming years as well. These two factors – anticipated increase in landscaping services and maintenance costs for the commons areas – are two of the primary reasons for the annual dues increase next year. We also plan for and maintain a reserve in our budget to address the impact of major storms which may require removal of downed trees.

Finally, I'm sure you've seen the street work being performed by the City of Novi as part of their ongoing maintenance and improvement effort. These small projects are managed by the City and prioritized based upon a road rating they use for residential roads across the City boundaries. Not only will you need to watch out for children playing in the streets, you will need to carefully navigate around those pesky orange barrels!

## Novi City Ordinances - Reminder

Fred Schlemmer

**Maintaining your yard.** Common courtesy and pride in your yard should apply when maintaining your property. All homeowners should maintain their lawns and property in manner that is in keeping with good aesthetics. The City of Novi code requires lawns and weeds to less than 8 inches at high. Homeowners are encouraged to follow the city's guidelines and keep lawns cut to the 8 inch requirement.

**Pets.** The City of Novi code is no more than 3 dogs and 3 cats per household. Pets should be properly controlled while on public property (meaning while walking your dog on the streets in the subdivision). Common courtesy also applies here should your dog do its business on your neighbor's lawn – please clean it up.

## Annual Meeting and Election of Board Members

Your Board

Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 pm for the DPHA annual meeting and election of next year's Board!

A majority of your Board members have agreed to be on the ballot for next year. Rod, Andy, Karen, and Fred will place their names on the ballot for their current roles. We want to thank Lisa and acknowledge her help as Secretary the past several years. We will be looking for a volunteer to fill that role in the upcoming year.

## Neighborhood Babysitting Co-op

The babysitting co-op is a group of 20 mothers who share caregiver responsibilities to Dunbarton Pines, Royal Crown, Autumn Park and Barclay Estates neighbors. The Co-op is geared to provide daytime care for children ranging in age from newborn through kindergarten. Call Nikki VanDis @ 248.790.7894 or email [nvandis@hotmail.com](mailto:nvandis@hotmail.com) for more information.

Related to the topic, Katherine Gutowsky, 14, is interested in babysitting opportunities. Please contact her at 248-533-8678.

## Treasurer's Report

Karen Harris

Half way into 2017, expenses for the most part are in line with the budgeted amount for the 2017 Fiscal year. The recent water bill was higher than expected. Let's hope for a wetter July and August. We were also able to complete the landscape refurbishing of 4 islands. See Landscape article in this newsletter.

As of July 15, six homeowners owe for 2016-17 equal to \$900. There are also homeowners that owe for years prior to the current billing cycle for an amount due over \$900. Steps are being taken to collect these overdue payments. Reminder notices have been sent to no avail. Legal action will be taken and liens placed on those properties.

Invoices for the 2017-2018 billing cycle will be mailed August 1, 2017. If you do not receive your invoice by August 15, please contact Karen Harris at 248.380.3752. Invoice payment is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September.

Dues have remained at \$150 annually since 2007, 10 years. To better align with inflation, the increase of water rates, adjustments to the landscaping maintenance contract, and the increasing need to remove common area dead trees that pose a hazard, the Board has agreed to raise the annual dues an additional \$20 to \$170 beginning with the 2017-2018 collection period. This will add an additional \$6820 to use for expenses and reserves. This will also help us continue the refurbishing of additional islands within the sub in 2018.

Compared to other subdivisions, \$170 is still one of the lowest annual dues payment. Dunbarton Pines has 4 entrances, 11 islands, two retention basins and wooded common areas behind homes to maintain.

Reserves are essential for unusual expenses pertaining to the maintenance of the subdivision. Such expenses could include but not limited to damage to our properties, legal expenses or any other unforeseen expense (i.e. storm damage, sewer repair). The detention basins are also an area we are responsible for maintaining. DPHA was very fortunate many years ago when the City of Novi revamped those areas at their expense, an amount over \$650,000.

**Dunbarton Pines Homeowners Association  
Statement of Activities and Financial Positional  
July 15, 2017**

	2017 YTD	2017 Budget
<b>Revenue:</b>		
Annual Dues - collected 2016-2017	\$50,250	\$51,150
Other Income (past dues collected)	75	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$50,325</b>	<b>\$51,150</b>
<b>Expense:</b>		
Communications	719	2,000
Fees and Insurance	3	2,200
Landscaping Maintenance	15,172	51,000
Office	212	500
Mailbox Program	320	-
Electric	747	1,900
Water	928	1,400
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$18,101</b>	<b>\$59,000</b>
Contribution (Reduction) to Reserves	32,224	
Reserves - Beginning of Year	25,049	
<b>Reserves at End of Period</b>	<b>\$57,273</b>	
June 30, 2017 Bank Balance	\$63,094	
Checks outstanding	(5,821)	
Deposits outstanding	-	
<b>Checkbook Balance at End of Period</b>	<b>\$57,273</b>	
Estimated Reserves at End of Year		\$16,374
Outstanding Accounts Receivable (2016-2017)	<b>\$900</b>	6 homeowners

## Upcoming Directory Update

We will be updating the DPHA directory at the end of this year. Margie Wells has graciously offered to help with publication and mailing.

Please verify the spelling of your name(s) that are printed on your annual dues invoice – that will serve as the basis

Karen Harris

for the directory. If you prefer to use a different name (nickname), indicate that on the invoice. To have your phone number included in the directory, please add it to your contact information. All names found in public records will be included in the directory.

For updates and corrections, contact me at 248-380-3752.

Dunbarton Pines Homeowners' Association

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**Dunbarton Pines Homeowners' Association Board Members:**

President

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