

Sharon Wentland, Editor

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February



WOODLAKE TOWERS CONDOMINIUM

Woodlake Accents

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Mason District Supervisor, Penny Gross,

in anticipation of an approaching snow storm event, has sent us some important phone numbers.

Snow Removal – VDOT: 1-800-FOR-ROAD (1-800-367-7623);

Email: novainfo@vdot.igirnia.gov

Status of plowing in Northern Virginia neighborhoods: www.vdotplows.org

911, for police, fire, and rescue (life-threatening emergencies only, please)

Note: if your road is not plowed and you have an emergency, VDOT will coordinate with emergency personnel.

Public Safety Non-Emergency: 703-691-2131.

Fairfax County Emergency Information Line: 703-817-7771.

Dominion Virginia Power: 1-866- 366-4357.

Washington Gas: 1-800-752-7520.

Fairfax Water: 703-698-5800.

Verizon Customer Service: 1-800-VERIZON (837-4966).

Cox Customer Service: 703-378-8422.

Fairfax County Stormwater Management Division: 703-877-2800.

Fairfax County Wastewater Collection Division Trouble Response Center: 703-323-1211.

Take Your Snow and Shovel It – to learn who is responsible for shoveling, how to help others shovel, and to access related resources and links, visit:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/shovel.

Fairfax County Emergency Information:

<https://fairfaxcountyemergency.wordpress.com>

Save the Dates! (and check the display cases for additions and updates)

Sunday 14 – Valentine's Day

Monday 15 – Presidents' Day Holiday (Management Office is closed)

- 2nd Rental Cap Town Hall Meeting Manchester Room, 7PM

Tuesday 16 – Community Concerns Committee Manchester Room, 7PM

Tuesday 23 – Board of Directors Meeting Manchester Room, 7PM

Wednesday 24 – Finance Committee Manchester Room, 7PM

A Rental Cap for Woodlake? Why Consider It?

By Terry Modglin, Secretary of Woodlake Towers Board of Directors February 2016

For many of us here at Woodlake Towers, our biggest financial investment is our condominium. For investor-owners (those who do not live at Woodlake), their investment in a condo here is just as significant. So maintaining the worth of our investment here is really important, as is the daily quality of life we experience due to our neighbors, amenities, and the condominium organization.

What are the best ways to maintain the value of our condo and have the best quality of life? One means that other condo associations in Northern Virginia have adopted is a **rental cap**, which would limit the number and percentage of units that can be rented. A number of those associations feel that their rental cap has been successful in achieving the objectives above.

For those who like the idea of a rental cap, where the greater majority of units are owner-occupied, there are many benefits. Examples include:

- increased existing value of a condominium unit
- higher purchase price for a unit
- better quality of life for all residents
- more stable condo fees, due to fewer requirements for building maintenance
- lower insurance costs, since high investor concentration has higher insurance costs
- lower interest rate for buyers, making units more attractive for purchase
- better mortgage rates and lower mortgage up-front cash requirements for buyers
- increased rental income
- Federal Housing Administration (FHA) backing for mortgages
- benefits that are the case for the investor owner as well.

Unit owners who do not support rental caps, and *even some who do*, remind us that:

Many factors affect the value of our condo – the percentage of resident owners is just one.

If the cap is set too low (i.e., only a low percentage of units can be rented), then it may be difficult to sell a condo. It is unlikely that the value of your condo would rise significantly in the short run.

A rental cap has some real possibilities, but it's not simple. Considerations include:

Making sure that the rental cap is neither too high (making little or no difference) or too low (making it difficult to sell one's property). How long a new owner must live on the property.

Criteria for priority on the waiting list for those who wish to sell to a non-resident owner.

Exceptions for resident owners who become subject to military or government order.

These issues are settled in the substance of the bylaws amendment itself and in the resolutions written by the Board of Directors to administer the cap.

Woodlake Towers is Taking a Look at the Rental Cap Concept– Stay Tuned

Your Woodlake Board of Directors has authorized a Working Group to study the possibility of proposing a change in our bylaws so that well above 50% of Woodlake units will be owner-occupied. Currently we are at about 53%. The Working Group has produced a Research Paper that can be obtained from the Management Office and will be made available on the Woodlake website, <http://woodlakecondo.org>. On February 2, a Town Hall Meeting here at Woodlake with a number of distinguished panelists crystallized a number of the issues. On Monday, February 15 the Working Group will host an Owners Forum to hear views and concerns on this critical topic. Sometime after that Forum, the Working Group will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors on a bylaws amendment. Your Board of Directors will then make a decision on whether to accept or modify or reject the recommendation. The Board can then send the bylaws amendment to owners for a vote. Amending the bylaws requires a two-thirds vote of all owners, not just those voting. Stay interested for one of the most important issues in Woodlake's history! Consider attending the Owners Forum and/or sending an email message to woodlakerentalcap@gmail.com. We would really appreciate your thoughts, input and questions.



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More Letters to the Editor, Feb 2016.

Complaint: My name is Inna Baranova and I am a recent unit owner at Woodlake Towers. I bought here because of its proximity to Arlington at half the price. However, I am finding out that there is "no free lunch". I never realized that I would be in a building where unit owners and/or residents rent rooms out. While I understand that some people may have lost their job and rather than selling or moving in order to pay their mortgage or the rent, they do what they have to do. However with Fairfax County having a very low unemployment rate, this may not apply. On most evenings when I arrive and enter the lobby at Building 2, I see individuals and families calling to be let in the door. Since I've seen the same people more than once, it appears that they have not been given a key by the office since keys given out are limited from what I understand. While it is hard for Management to enforce this, I believe that some steps need to be taken to deter this. There is a notice outside of the lobby, but clearly that is ignored. While I understand that it is difficult (awkward) to turn a neighbor in to Management, I believe it is incumbent upon all residents to do this, since in the long run their costs will go down. This is through lower utility costs leading to lower condo fees. In the case of a renter, I think that most landlords pass on the increase in condo fees to their renters. I believe that a case exists for both unit owners and renters to advise the Management Office and the Board of Directors of individuals that they believe are renting out rooms.

Response: Thank you for pointing out this issue. Woodlake Towers is a condominium, *not* an apartment building *or* a boarding house. As such, the unit owner is responsible for his unit's keys and giving them to his family members and others who have his/her permission to enter their home. The unit owner must advise Woodlake Towers Management of who s/he has given keys and who resides in their condo. Investors (unit owners who rent their unit(s) to legitimate renters) must provide Woodlake Management with the names of all persons living in their condo(s). Please see both the explanation of Woodlake's **CC&R's** in this column, and the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance explanation of legitimate occupancy. You might also be interested in attending the conference sponsored by Fairfax County's Department of Code Compliance on Saturday, March 5th at Falls Church High School, also explained in this issue of The Accents. Thank you again for bringing up this problem.

Q. During and after the recent blizzard ("Snowzilla"), Woodlake's response to shoveling the parking lots and sidewalks was the object of criticism, mine and several others. What is Woodlake's policy when dealing with 2-3 feet of wall-to-wall snow, blowing 35 miles per hour in freezing temperatures? I know a blizzard is dangerous and can create life-threatening situations.

A. The governor of Virginia called out a State of Emergency, and the entire DC-MD-VA area was paralyzed for days. Weathercasters and public officials were *begging* people to stay in their homes, and most did just that. Sharon Bulova, Chair of Fairfax County's Board of Supervisors, sends us the county's response to the blizzard and the positive steps the Board is taking to deal with problems encountered by county residents. *We understand that VDOT is responsible for plowing primary and secondary streets.* But who is responsible for sidewalks and parking lots? Please see her article in this issue. With regard to Woodlake's policy, *yeeaaahhh*, we were "up to our butts in alligators" and trying to figure out where to put all our snow. Our staff made a Herculean effort (Thanks, guys!!!) And our General Manager, Judy Johnson arranged for them to stay over in our guest rooms on the property and she even cooked meals for them to sustain their constitutions. It's not likely that Pizza Hut was delivering!

Editorial: FACTOIDS (submitted by Sharon Wentland, January 20, 2016)

Woodlake Towers Condominium has 829 individual homes (units).
Approximately 2,500 people live at Woodlake (men, women, and children).
Approximately 1,000 of them are children.

Woodlake Towers has 8 schools within walking distance for kids:

- Glen Forest Elementary School
- Carlyn Springs Elementary School
- Fairfax Academy of Early Learning
- Campbell Elementary School
- Corpus Christi School & Early Childhood Center
- Bailey's Elementary School
- Kenmore Middle School
- JEB Stuart High School

Adjacent to the west of Woodlake are the higher crime neighborhoods of Culmore, Patrick Henry and Seven Corners. To the east of Woodlake are gang-infested areas of Bailey's Crossroads and Alexandria.

Bailey's Office of Revitalization will move its Bailey's Crossroads Community Homeless Shelter to a location on Route 7/Leesburg Pike *between* Culmore and Seven Corners with plans to *double* its size.

The Woodlake Towers Condominium is a little *over* half owner-occupied and a little *less* than half investors' renter-occupied.

Woodlake residents' primary concern living here is safety and security. A close second is the property value of their condominium,

whether owners or renters live here.

Investors who rent out their condos, hope their tenants will take care of their investment/ property/ condo and follow the condo rules and not cause any damage or problems.

It would seem prudent for residents of Woodlake Towers to have an active Neighborhood Watch / Window Watchers Program under the guidance of the Mason District Police Department's Crime Prevention Officer to demonstrate Woodlake residents' determination to have a safer community environment in which to live. That would certainly improve the property values, too. It would also be prudent for Woodlake Towers Condominium Association to openly prohibit convicted felons such as murderers, violent sex offenders and child molesters from living on Woodlake property. These persons are required by law to register themselves with local authorities and violent offenders and molesters may *never* live within 500 feet of anywhere children may be concentrated or congregate. Offenders can certainly purchase or own property anywhere, but they are prohibited from living near or among children by law. See Code of Virginia, Title 18.2-370.3.

New potential Woodlake condo owners should be made aware of the felon restrictions and provide a criminal background check (at their expense) should they plan on residing at Woodlake Towers. Investors would have their renters also provide or pay for their renters' criminal background checks.

For those felons who may already reside at Woodlake, as long as they do not commit any new offenses they would be considered "grandfathered". A new or repeated offense, however, would mean their immediate expulsion.

Offenders' records are available to the public on websites and registries and are easily found at: www.sexoffenderregistry.com.



Letters to the Editor – Feb 2, 2016

Q. What is meant by “CC&R’s”?

A. *Covenants, Codes, & Restrictions* are the Governing Documents for homeowners associations.

Condominium communities also have governing documents. However, the terminology we use to refer to these documents are “**Condominium Instruments**”. In Virginia, the term *Condominium Instruments* is defined in the Virginia Condominium Act and includes the (i) Declaration, (ii) Bylaws, and (iii) the Plats and Plans that are recorded to establish a condominium. Any exhibit, schedule, or certification that accompanies any of these documents is considered an integral part of the Condominium Instruments. In addition, any amendment to or certification of the declaration, bylaws or plats and plans is part of the Condominium Instruments, provided that it was made in accordance with the **Virginia Condominium Act**.

The *Declaration* for a condominium is the document that creates the condominium. The Declaration identifies the submitted land and any additional land that may be added to the condominium community. It addresses the rights of the declarant in developing the community, identifies the boundaries of each unit; identifies the common elements; addresses each unit owner’s interest in the common elements; and specifies the improvements and number of units that will be constructed that will be completed by the declarant. The Bylaws for a condominium are also a recorded document; they provide for the self-government of the unit owners association. The Bylaws address the election of directors, director and unit owner meetings, maintenance responsibilities, assessments and insurance requirements.

Rules and Regulations and Resolutions **are not included** in the definition of Condominium Instruments. However, they are legal documents of the condominium and create additional governance for the community. These documents establish rules and procedures for the association and its unit owners. The Board of Directors is typically empowered to adopt rules and regulations which govern the use of common elements, pools, clubhouses and other amenities or services provided by the unit owners association. They are used to address holiday decorations, permissible window treatments, pets, parking and safety rules.

Resolutions are used to address policies or to address a problem encountered by the unit owners association. The issue being addressed must be within the rule-making authority of the board. Examples include the community’s policy for collecting assessment(s) or its policy addressing rules enforcement.

Q. According to Fairfax County’s Zoning Ordinance, What exactly is a “*dwelling unit*”? And is there a limit on how many people can occupy that unit?

The zoning ordinance defines a dwelling unit as any accommodation where one or more rooms in a residential building or residential portion of a building are arranged, designed, used, or intended for use as a complete, independent living facility which includes permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation. In Fairfax County, housing, building, and zoning codes limit the number of people who may live in a home, apartment, townhouse or condominium. The occupancy requirements are governed by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) and the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance. The VUSBC places limits on the number of people who may live in a dwelling and establishes the following occupancy standards that are enforced by the Fairfax County Zoning Enforcement Branch:

A bedroom or sleeping area regularly occupied by one (1) person must have at least 70 square feet of space, for two (2) people, 100 square feet of space, and for three (3) people, 150 square feet. In addition to the space requirement, the room(s) used for sleeping must provide privacy, adequate light and ventilation, and two (2) means of exit; one must lead directly to the outside. Kitchens, bathrooms, hallways, living and dining rooms, non-habitable spaces, and other interior public areas may not be used for sleeping. . . The Zoning Ordinance also contains limitations on occupancy of a dwelling unit. **As a matter of right, a dwelling unit may be occupied by not more than one (1) of the following:**

One (1) family, which may consist of one (1) person or two (2) or more persons related by blood or marriage with any number of natural children, foster children, step children or adopted children. In addition, there may be up to two (2) roomers or boarders *with a Home Occupation Permit*.

Two single parents or guardians with not more than a total of six (6) of their dependent children, including natural children, foster children, step children, or adopted children, functioning as a single housekeeping unit.

A group of not more than four (4) unrelated persons functioning as a single housekeeping unit.

[Note: for additional information or clarification, please contact the Zoning Permit Review Branch of the Department of Planning and Zoning at 703-222-1082, TTY 711.]

...and a Report from Fairfax County Supervisor, Sharon Bulova... February 2016

'Snowzilla' wasn't nearly as bad last month compared to 'Snowmageddon' in 2010 that trapped residents in their homes (many without power for up to a week), a lot went well during this historic snow event. Our primary and secondary roads were cleared quickly, although disappearing travel and turn lanes were a problem. Neighborhood streets and cul-de-sacs took longer in Fairfax with heavily blowing "dry" snow measured 2-3 feet and blowing snow drifts appeared as quickly as they were plowed away. [the smaller side streets seemed to take *forever*.] Yet, despite strong winds and deep snow, Fairfax experienced very few, brief power outages. You know, in Fairfax County, with the exception of privately owned Homeowner Association streets, pretty much *all* roads are owned and maintained by the State of Virginia, not the County. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) augmented their fleet of plows and front-end loaders with private contractors.

Additionally, in response to the Governor's declaration of a State of Emergency, our public safety workforce was aided by members of the National Guard and their Humvees. Although VDOT's response to 'Snowzilla' throughout the state of Virginia was really incredible, we think there are still lessons learned and practices that can be improved.

On **March 1st**, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors will hold a "**Snowzilla Summit**" during our Board Meeting to

discuss a number of issues, including clearing pedestrian facilities, school bus stops and bus shelters after a heavy snowfall.

Currently, neither the state nor the county clears snow from sidewalks. While not legally obligated, residences and businesses are asked to shovel walkways in front of their property. However, there are many sidewalks in Fairfax County not adjacent to a home or business, and they go un-shoveled. Snow piles up at cross-walk corners, making it impossible for pedestrians to cross the street. Fairfax County Public Schools (like so many others in Northern Virginia) stayed closed for a week, in large part due to snow-covered sidewalks kids rely upon to walk to school. [Even school buses in their bus yards were paralyzed to get out from under it all.] Clearing sidewalks is a tough issue, and there are many ways to address it. Tune in to Channel 16's **Live Stream** program on Tuesday, March 1st (after closed session and before public hearings) to listen to our Board discuss the issues we face when heavy snow hits the area. If you have some ideas for me to review before the Summit, please email me at chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov. Your comments are always welcome.

Neighborhood Code Compliance & Property Concerns

Fairfax County's [Department of Code Compliance](#) is hosting a conference for all those interested in learning about common types of property concerns, and how the county can use available ordinances and codes to bring properties into compliance. Come learn more about the enforcement process and how to report a concern/complaint about a property.

The conference topics will include:

*Code Compliance * Community Association Best Practices * Community Connectedness * Emergency Management and Preparedness * Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) * Police * Successful Children and Youth *

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) * Zoning *

The conference will be held from 9am to about 2:30pm on **Saturday, March 5th at Falls Church High School**, 7521 Jaguar Trail, Falls Church, VA 22042. Following a brief opening welcome and remarks, attendees will break out into several classroom settings to take part in presentations/discussions on topics of interest and value to them and their community. Group and agency information tables will also be available for attendees to collect information between presentation sessions.

USG Internships for Students and Grads

One of the benefits of living in the metro DC area are the fabulous internship opportunities for students (from high school to graduate level), and recent graduates!

Applying for any type of federal employment requires planning. Check out this website for more information: <https://www.usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads>.

There are paid and unpaid internships which look great on a resume, and might be just what you need to prepare for full time employment (so please don't overlook unpaid listings).

The **Pathways Programs** offer clear paths to Federal internships for students from high school through post-graduate school and to careers for recent graduates, and provide meaningful training and career development opportunities for individuals who are at the beginning of their Federal service. As a student or recent graduate, you can begin your career in the Federal government by choosing the path that best describes you and where you are in your academics:

Internship Program: This program is for current students **enrolled** in a wide variety of educational institutions from high school to graduate level, with paid opportunities to work in agencies and explore Federal careers while still in school. [Additional information about the Internship Program.](#)

Recent Graduates Program: This program is for individuals who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs and seek a dynamic, career development program with training and mentorship. To be eligible, applicants must apply within two years of degree or certificate completion (except for veterans precluded from doing so due to their military service obligation, who will have up to six years to apply). [Additional information about the Recent Graduates Program.](#)

Presidential Management Fellows Program: For more than three decades, the PMF Program has been the Federal government's premier leadership development program for advanced degree candidates. This program is now for individuals who have received a qualifying advanced degree within the preceding two years. For complete program information, visit www.pmf.gov.



**WOODLAKE TOWERS
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