



## AHCA Newsletter - Summer 2017

An official publication of the Arbor Hills Condominium Association, <http://www.arbor-hills.org>

### **Welcome New Homeowners to Enjoyments of Ann Arbor and of Our Diverse Community**

Please join with other co-owners in welcoming Mr. Eaty and Tulsi Srinivas at 3256 Dunwoodie; Mr. Nishioka Asako & Masato at 3428 Ashburnam, and Mr. Li Ming & Zhou Ying at 3227 Kilburn Park Circle. We are very pleased to have them all as new neighbors, interested in the betterment of our beautiful community. Per public records, home sale prices were in the \$355,000 to \$395,000 range.

**Current board members identify their mission as providing for** timely and affordable maintenance of common elements while implementing Association covenants and policies aimed at making the community the best it can be. All can only be achieved with the help of the member / co-owners. Board members want residents to enjoy the community's parks, trees, ponds and wetlands, their natural beauty and the wild life these natural features support. **Board has addressed all current issues in summer, 2017 newsletter.**

### **2016 Financial Report Released – Growth of Reserves Continues**

Gwizdala & Associates, certified public accountants, issued their comparative report in spring, 2017. Co-owners can request a copy of the report from [mmi@meadowmgmt.com](mailto:mmi@meadowmgmt.com). This TABLE summarizes recent years.

Fiscal Year	Reserve funds Beginning of Year (BE) Year end (YE)	Total Income	Total Expense (incl. project costs to maintain ponds, wetlands, trees, roads)	Reserve Fund - net contribution	Net Revenue	Yearly Assessment – total and per household
2013	BE: \$256,925 YE= \$299,627	\$108,916	\$58,083 <b>(Projects: 14,804)</b>	\$42,702	\$8,131	\$106,000 or \$530/home
2014	BE: \$299,627 YE= \$328,826	\$109,757	\$75,481 <b>(Projects: 14,672)</b>	\$29,199	\$5,077	\$106,000 or \$530/home
2015	BE: \$328,826 YE= \$314,204	\$111,109	\$154,122 <b>(Projects: 96,516)</b>	(\$14,622)	(\$28,391)	\$126,000 or \$630/home
2016	BE: \$314,204 YE= \$348,273	\$138,296	\$77,677 <b>(Projects: 11,344)</b>	\$34,069	\$26,550	\$146,000 or \$730/home

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING of CO-OWNERS on Monday, August 14, 2017 is MAILED WITH THE DISTRIBUTION OF THIS SUMMER NEWSLETTER. PLEASE READ THE NOTICE & ATTEND or PROVIDE PROXY.**

If you would like to be a candidate for the board of directors, submit your name to the management company or have your name entered in nomination ahead of the Aug 14, 2017 meeting. As a diverse community, it is encouraged that representation on the Board also be diverse. *Thank you.*

### **Summary of 2017 catch basins repair work by an approved contractor**

Three bids were received in winter 2017, for work identified in 2016. The lowest bidder was selected by the Board at its February meeting. The contractor completed the catch basin repair work in May, 2017, and also identified additional catch basins. Those nine basins listed below were repaired as additions to the 2016 list: (1) One catch basin on each side of Earlmore where it runs into Dunwoodie; (2) 3108 Earlmore @ Earlmore and Cromwell; (3) 3370 Cromwell, catch basin in driveway; (4) 3256 Kilburn Circle Dr. at Cromwell; (5) 3209 Aldwych in front of mailboxes; (6) 3265 Ashburnham, next to driveway; (7) Kilburn Park far corner near lot 48; (8) Kilburn Circle Dr. in road next to park; (9) 3219 Dunwoodie in front of house.

Upon completion of identified repairs, contractor looked at all catch basins to verify condition and the reported need for basin VACTORING, i.e., pump out of the sumps in each basin. Fortunately, there was NO need for such service work this year. The funds budgeted for this purpose was allocated to tree work.

### **Spring “Walk About” and exterior inspection reports 2017**

Based on the June walkabout by management and members of the Board, Care Recommendation Letters are being prepared for those addresses where a need for repair work was noted. With each Care Recommendation Letter a list is being provided of three (3) local contractors who perform the kinds of care or repair services cited in the “walkabout” notes. Co-owners can consider these - or use any contractor of their choosing, if a 3<sup>rd</sup>-party happens to be required. ALSO DETERMINED DURING Annual Walkabout were three (3) SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS and more than two dozen HONORABLE MENTION awards for co-owners who yards and home exteriors demonstrate efforts deemed exceptional or very worthy of special note at the time of the Walk About. Such work preserves and enhances home values at Arbor Hills. Certificates are to be completed by management, signed by the Board and distributed. Citations of both these Special Recognition winners AND of those entitled to an AHCA card of honorary mention for excellence in 2017 yard care will be listed by address in an upcoming newsletter.

### **Common Areas Dead Tree Removal and Branch Pruning**

In 2015 board removed 40 dangerous and dead trees from common areas. Another 30 dead trees that are on Association (common) property have been scheduled for removal by the qualified low bid contractor “Guardian Tree Experts”, based in Ann Arbor. Tree removal will be on Monday, July 24 and all day on Tuesday, July 25, left over work will be taken care on Tuesday Aug 1st will be the follow-on date. If you are interested in any type of tree work in your property then contact 734-786-1688. Safety of residents’ and homes is paramount.

### **Crack Seal and Roadway Asphalt Repairs – Aug 2-4 (Don’t park car on Arbor Hills’ streets from Aug 2-4)**

Roadway crack-filling and repair (R&R) of selected areas of deteriorated asphalt in the community are scheduled to be done during Aug 2-Aug 4, weather permitting. Please don’t park your cars on the Arbor Hills street, your parked car will be towed away. The qualified low bid contractor selected by the board is “Surface Sealing”, an Oakland County contractor who works locally in and around Ann Arbor. Street asphalt sealing with M.D.O.T. #3405 hot rubber material on 5000 linear feet of major cracks over ¼” wide, 675sq.ft of potholes and 1600 sq. ft. of alligatored asphalt, repairs at a cost a bit less than \$9,000. The best quote came in a bit higher than budget estimated; so some allocation from other account(s) may be required.

### **Taping flyers on homes’ front doors and placing white flyers on mailboxes is not permitted**

Rules adopted against solicitors – and US Postal Services restrictions on use of mailboxes for private (not postal service) purposes – have become a concern at Arbor Hills. Trespass can be enforced against distributors of unwanted solicitations (through Ann Arbor Police Department). Postal authorities can be engaged to enforce rules against misuse of mailboxes. Please be respectful of neighbors, their privacy and their homes. Violations can result in an escalation of offenses.

### **Comcast Agreement with Arbor Hills reviewed by Attorney Evan Alexander @ MAGLAW.COM**

The Board wants to inform all residents that the Agreement it entered into with Comcast pursuant to the recommendation of management has had legal review and is available on written request to any co-owner who

would like a copy. Please make your written request to [mmi@meadowmgmt.com](mailto:mmi@meadowmgmt.com) . Thank you. The agreement retains the right for any resident to choose any provider they'd like for any service they wish to receive at their home, whether Internet, TV and/or phone service. Just as Comcast installed cable wiring at its expense, other service provider(s) must extend their transmission media to serve AHCA residents who sign up with them. Each service providers has proprietary equipment. In his review, the attorney noted that some terms are not applicable in detached site-condo communities like Arbor Hills (where the Association does not have structural ownership of buildings). A notice to Comcast is planned to clarify some these points, to help in making language in the Agreement less inappropriate or confusing, especially if legal interpretation might be required. One advantage of the Agreement for the Association at this time is Comcast's payment to AHCA of **\$35,000 in general purpose funds**. This extraordinary 2017 revenue will be deposited to Reserves and only used if and when approved by the Board of Directors to cover purposeful Association expenditures. As the needs for wetland and common property expenses are met in the next few years, management and board hope that the Comcast funds can help lessen the need for the kinds of annual increases in assessment AHCA has seen.

### **How can Ponds and Wetlands at Arbor Hills be improved according to Master Deed Exhibit C?**

Who does not want to live next to a well-maintained pond or to take a stroll through a native an accessible wetland area? Some nearby condo communities have examples, including **Ashford Place, Westbury, and Barclay Park**. Some cities have done wonders with wetlands, as Dexter shows by Mill Creek – and Ann Arbor is planning for acreage it has acquired. How will Arbor Hills address its needs – and realize its opportunities?

Pond D is a Filtration Basin of 3 cascading basins and adjoins a large wetland area (C – D) that has more than dozen families living around it. Six of these residents attended few open board meeting in 2016 and later submitted a petition to the board requesting action to protect their homes from storm water (high water in the wetlands). For many years, drainage from Pond D through the C – D wetland has been a concern. Actions taken in 2017 have lessened the immediate problem – but more long-term planning for improvements and care is recommended. **Please check exhibit C under master deed amendment 1 and 2 under document tab on the Arbor Hills Website for maintenance tasks and schedule along with Atwell consulting company report of Mar. 28, 2017 to the residents.** Board will look into the low-cost alternatives for controlling vegetation growth on top of the berm, wetland, ponds' slopes erosion, and accumulation of algae. (*Pond H pictured below, Spring 2017*)



Like Pond D, Pond H is a Filtration Basin with cascading basins. Some ten households surround Pond H. When water was high, one home got excess water in its basement. Nearby, there is a landlocked Wetland surrounded by homes on Elsinore, the north side of Strand and a few homes on Kilburn. This landlocked wetland has become a serious concern, as significant private yard space has been lost in recent years.

Regular maintenance of Association wetlands would include removal of fallen and dead trees and branches – also keeping yard waste of those who live around the wetlands and ponds FROM ADDING TO the organic waste that might flow with seasonal waters. It's often said that sediments in ponds accumulate at the rate of approximately one inch per year (making retention basins increasingly shallow – and demanding expensive maintenance).

Recent years have seen maintenance expenses that previous years did not. Future years are likely to require more, especially if wetland areas are improved, as well as the Filtration Basins (Ponds). For the time being, minimal perimeter care is budgeted to be part of the annual common area LAWN work. What more is needed? What more is possible?

Look at other communities and envision what Arbor Hills might do? Annual, planned maintenance of both wetlands and ponds (filtration basins) is a known need. Some work can be handled as operations expenses; but many needs require planning and allocation decisions on how best to use limited resources.

### **History and background of Champion White Oak in AHCA Kilburn Park**

In the mid-1980 when the tree was discovered and nominated for champion status, the area was entirely undeveloped. Green Road dead-ended north of Plymouth Road, at the new Chapel Hill condos. Oakwoods Nature Area was not yet designated as a park. It was a quite a trek to locate for me and another forestry professional employed by the City to reach and to measure the massive tree, after we found it. Fortunately, in later years as Arbor Hills was developed, a 1.5 acre parcel now called Kilburn Park was established and maintained by the City. Within this area is the little remnant oak-hickory forest parcel that surrounds the champion white oak, also serving to protect this giant tree. Kilburn park was dedicated several years ago to the city of Ann Arbor.

### **New Volunteer Opportunity for Arbor Hills Neighbors**

It would be wonderful to take action to help preserve the large white oak (*Quercus alba*) located in the center of the woodlot in Kilburn Park. It is the largest know white oak in the city of Ann Arbor, until a larger white oak specimen was found and still survives in Allegan County (west side of state). Consider some signage for the tree to give it special recognition and explain its age and character to visitors.

As a lifetime forester, Paul Bairley, sent a letter to board members and management that he would be happy to help oversee the volunteer work day and arrange assistance from the city (for non-volunteer tasks, including removal of a couple of large elms in the oak-hickory woodlot, both killed by dutch elm disease). Interested persons are asked to contact a board member or management to let them know of personal willingness to volunteer on a Saturday this autumn – yet to be scheduled. I will then schedule my time to participate, oversee the work day and line-up City assistance. All interested volunteer will have to sign a volunteer release form before helping on the project. The forms will be available on site for volunteers to sign.

#### **Here is what the work day would accomplish at the Kilburn Park White Oak Woodlot:**

- Clear out the invasive species, using a set of hand saws, lopping shears and volunteers, I would personally

supervise (as a volunteer myself),

- With the clear-out of the problem invasives, a better environment for this champion white oak, its future survival and nourishment would be provided. With mulching, the small trail network would be better defined, as well as soil erosion reduced and compaction around the base of the tree mitigated.
- The targeted would be the scores of small buckthorn trees & saplings and Japanese honeysuckle that now crowd the forest edge and invade the understory of this woodlot, These species are highly invasive and will eventually out-compete virtually all native plants and choke-off the trail network (while also lessening water for the champion white oak). Neatly stack the brush at the curb edge for city crews to dispose of (and possible chip as this is done). Utilize on-site wood chips and mulch (currently in NW corner of the park) to mulch the trails that lead up to and surround the champion oak tree (wheelbarrows, rakes or pitchforks required).
- Have a qualified herbicide applicator present as cuts are made, to dab an appropriate herbicide professionally to the freshly cut stumps to prevent sprouting and regrowth of the invasive woody plants we remove.

### **Management Agent's Report on Needs of a Landlocked Wetland (surrounded by Elsinore, Strand & Kilburn)**

**Background: On April 21,** a meeting was held with multiple departments of the City to discuss the history and possible solutions for the rising water levels in the LANDLOCKED wetland (Strand-Kilburn-Elsinore). City personnel and an MDOT manager were present, as well as Association management and board members Stom and Jindal.

The history of the landlocked wetland was reviewed on City slides; and discussion centered on the Association's concern about the wetland's expansion over time – and its encroachment into the yards of the surrounding homes (10-12 lots/Units). Reasons were recognized as the following:

1. loss of trees to disease and ongoing soil saturation (eliminating important uptake of water),
2. in-flow of run-off from M-14 (to AH's large Lochaven wetland);
3. Lochaven flow into the lower landlocked wetland;
4. deficiencies in original design and planning by the Developer;
5. Climate change (intensity of unpredictable rain events).

As the City's most experienced person familiar with the site, Jerry Hancock suggested a SECOND INLET be engineered and installed into the existing Elsinore Drain for the Lochaven wetland. This would serve to protect the surrounding 10-12 homes from rising water. It would be the least costly protection for the homes, while providing emergency relief that does not exist at present for the landlocked wetland.

Atwell's bid for the engineering work for a SECOND (overflow) INLET to the existing drain line is \$7,500. A second quote from SME is to be received soon. Jerry Hancock has provided other names of possible engineers who could bid, in the event more are needed.

Essentially, the SECOND INLET to the existing drain can be regarded as an EMERGENCY and OVERFLOW, SAFETY OUTLET to help keep (perhaps prevent) the lower levels of the homes surrounding the landlocked wetland from being flooded. It will not, however, LOWER the water level in the landlocked wetland.

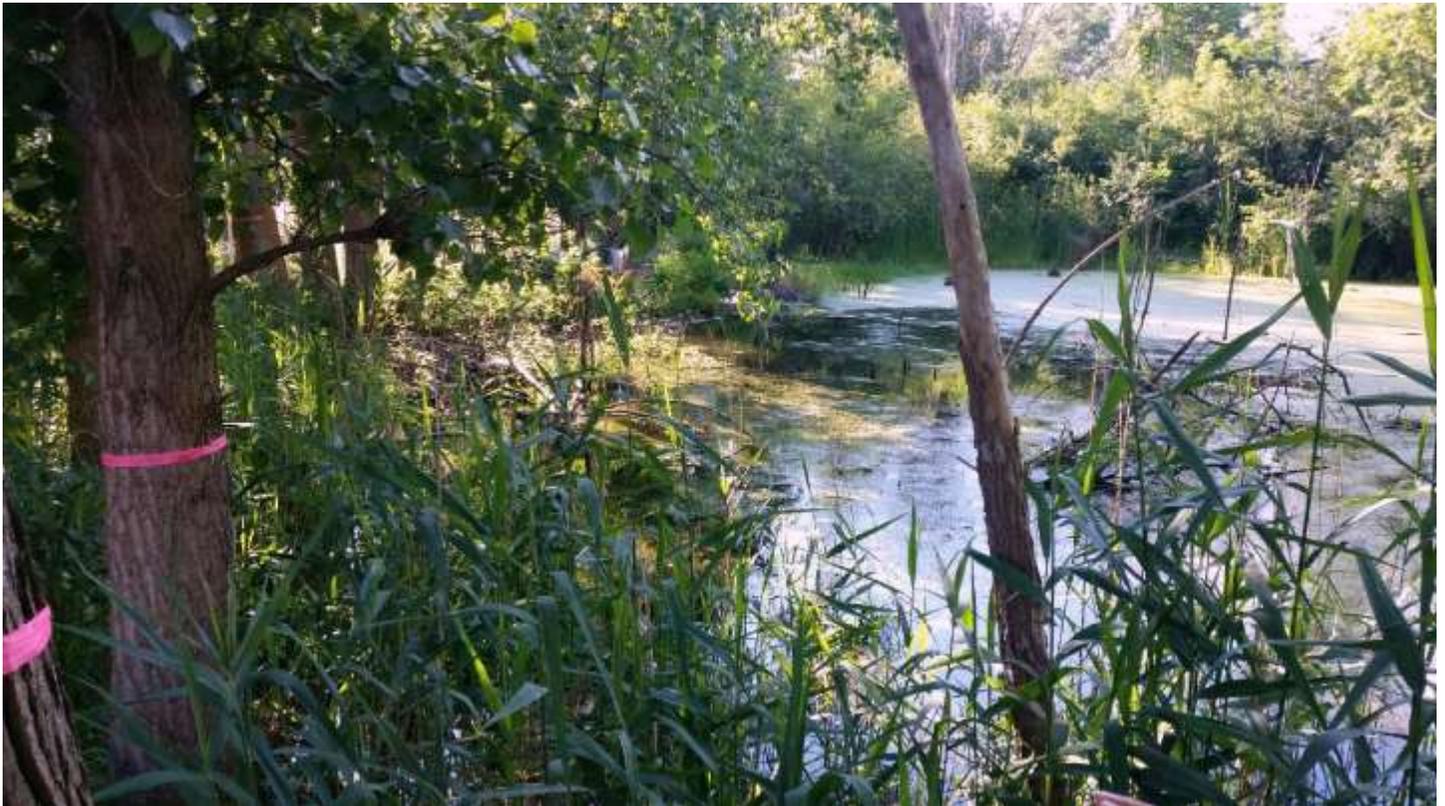
In management's opinion, if the water level in the currently landlocked wetland is to be lowered, AHCA will have to periodically (and privately) PUMP the extra water from the wetland into the new second inlet – once it is constructed and can take the water. If this proves viable, the excess water would move from the landlocked wetland to the catch basin and filtration basin system (which flows south into the non-landlocked wetlands).

## AHCA must engage in wetlands planning and wetlands management

For high water levels near Kilburn Park Circle, Strand, and Elsinore, a channel was closed to a (man made) storm water collection pond to urgently prevent flooding. It was done at no cost by a Board volunteer. A drain may still be needed to drop the water levels further. Now it will be possible to pump down the landlocked wetland – especially if a SECOND (OVERFLOW) INLET to the existing Lochaven drain line is constructed.

Without raising annual fees, money from the Comcast Agreement (which prevents no one from doing whatever they wish to do as far as I can tell) can be used for both the engineering and the construction of this SECOND INLET. The extra funds can also be used to implement CLEAN-UP of the Wetlands (removal of deadwood and invasives), plus a Pump Down to restore Unit back yards and also ADD to the remaining pond AERATION to eliminate stagnation and breeding of mosquitoes).

This is the kind of work that is NEEDED – and makes sense. It could be a good use of a large percentage of the money from Comcast, in my opinion as a professional association manager. The photograph below shows the vast expanse of the wetland on Elsinore, its water continuing to inundate (and over saturate) trees in the area.



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