

**WINTER NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2009**

Greetings from the Amity Place Board of Trustees and
Hampshire Property Management Group.

The Trustees have approved the 2010 budget and there will be no increase in condominium fees.

LANDSCAPING:

The association has a new contractor, Kelley Green Lawn Care, for winter snow removal and landscaping. There will be equipment on site.

In addition, we are grateful to a group of resident volunteers who continue to save the Association thousands of dollars by trimming trees, weeding, removing brush, removing dead trees, planting new items and other outdoor improvements. We expect some replacement plantings in the spring, 2010.

New gutters were added to a number of units during 2009, to help alleviate some drainage problems.

SNOW PARKING REMINDERS:

- Please park in your garage during and following a snowstorm.
- If you own TWO vehicles, please move your parked car when the snow contractor is plowing exterior spaces. This will allow the snow removal contractor to clear all parking areas throughout Amity Place. After the exterior places have been plowed, you may park in that area.
- If your favorite parking space has not been cleared of snow, please park in a cleared space. Do not park at the end of the major drive by AP #77. This is a difficult place to plow and is an ideal place to push the snow past the garages.
- The contractor will return the following day to clear any remaining driveways and to push back any drifted snow.
- Please make sure a current phone number is on file with management so you can be reached to move a vehicle, if necessary.
- During heavy snowfalls our plowing contractor may need to pile snow in certain parking spaces and over certain walkways. Alternative routes and spaces are available.
- For safety, please do not allow children or pets near snowplowing operations.
- Snow stakes MUST be left in place.

PARKING REGULATIONS:

- Cars with blue stickers belong in garages. Cars with black stickers belong in a parking space. Cars without stickers DO NOT belong at AP and should be removed. Temporary permits are available from HPMG.
- Garage doors should be closed at all times to prevent vermin from entering and taking up residence.

WINTER VACATIONS and BURST WATER PIPES:

If you go away, please inform your neighbors and the management company. Leave an emergency number, if possible. You might consider leaving a key with someone who could occasionally check on your unit; alternatively, management has a key lock-box on site. **DO NOT TURN OFF YOUR HEAT** or your water pipes may freeze and burst. Lower your thermostat to 55 degrees. In extreme cold, open the doors under the sink (particularly those sinks on outside walls). Open the front closet if that’s where your main water pipe enters the unit. Keep inside temperatures at 55 degrees or higher.

FIREPLACES:

Fireplaces should be cleaned and inspected once a year. Be sure to burn seasoned, dry wood. Creosote, which is a chemical present in all wood, is especially high in wet wood. A build-up of creosote on chimney walls can cause a chimney fire. Use extra caution when disposing of ashes.

TRASH:

Just a reminder: all boxes must be FLATTENED and placed flat on a shelf. No plastic or paper bags in GLASS/CANS/PLASTICS recycle bins. Regular trash haulers will remove cumbersome items and small electronics as long as arrangements are made beforehand (413-582-9970x109). There is a reasonable fee for this service.

TAX CREDITS for NEW WINDOWS:

During 2009 and 2010 there are federal income tax credits of up to \$1500 for homeowners who install energy-efficient home improvements, such as insulation, windows, and doors. For definitions of qualifying improvements check the IRS website

ALTERATIONS:

If you are planning on doing any major alterations to your unit you must request a “Request for Alterations” form from the management company to be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

LIMIT ON RENTALS:

To comply with Federal mortgage underwriting standards, no more than 20% of the units at Amity Place may be rented out by investors at any time. Rentals to relatives do not count. The Board wishes to keep Amity Place a community that is primarily owner-occupied. Thus, all leases need advance approval by HPMG. Landlords lacking approval may be subject to a \$1000 fine.

VENDORS: Here is a list of vendors who have worked at AP, to generally good reviews.

All Seasons Heating/ Air	1-800-520-9842
Pickering and Sons (plumbing)	413-584-1634
Schneider Plumbing/ Heating	413-536-1634
Absolute Air Quality Service	413-256-0230
A-One Window Cleaning	413-584-7888
Cooper Appliances Services	413-549-7700 (plumbing also)
Dean Powers Electric	413-584-3533

RESIDENT INFORMATION:

All residents should be listed with HPMG; current phone numbers should also be available. Units should have a spare key on file with management. Garages with electrical boxes need to provide access as needed. A list of residents as of 2009 is available upon request.

RESERVE CONTRIBUTIONS:

Upon the sale of any unit at Amity Place the buyer has to make a non-refundable contribution to the reserves of the Amity Place Condominium Association in an amount equal to one half of one percent of the deed price of the unit transferred. Sometimes the seller and the buyer split the fee at the closing. These fees help build our reserves. Other condo associations in the region are following our lead.

OWNER RESPONSIBILITY:

Owners are responsible for the maintenance of their own furnace/ heat pump, hot water tank, dryer vents, and chimney cleaning. Each owner should maintain his/ her own homeowner's insurance policy. Those who don't carry insurance may be subject to an association fine of \$1000.

DRYER HOSES:

Some units have noticed their dryers seem to take a long time to dry. The problem may be that the hose is not properly connected to the outside vent, or the outside vent may need to be cleaned. Clogged vents are a fire hazard. See the vendor list for a provider of this service.

WATER METERS:

Some old water meters in Amity Place units have corroded and sprung sudden leaks. The Town of Amherst will replace the meter. Call the Water Dept. at 413-256-3050 (Public Works Dept.).

ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS:

In considering ways to reduce the Association's expenses the trustees have considered solar panels, but the tax benefits appear to flow only to individual taxpayers rather than not-for-profit organizations like ours. Gradually we have been replacing all burned-out lamps with energy efficient lamps, and our total annual kilowatts have decreased.

We also have received a proposal from a well drilling company, which we will evaluate carefully, hoping to reduce or eliminate town water from our lawn irrigation system. We continue to upgrade portions of our irrigation system and its controls as repairs are made.

The board also approved permitting dryer racks on patios and decks to take advantage of solar power.

COMMUNITY POLICING:

As part of the Town of Amherst's new community policing program, the board invited Officer Tivnan to a recent board meeting. We can expect an improved police presence in our neighborhood. Contact information is posted in the mail shed.

PAVING:

The lowest bidder was Taylor-Davis Landscaping Co. of Amherst. They repaved the access road between units 41-49. Behind units 46-49 they found inadequate soil conditions, so they had to add another layer to improve the drainage. This extended the project and increased the cost, but with better results.

FAQ:

Why does the mail come later in winter?

Because after sundown our letter carriers (Glenn and Tom) like to work inside our warm, well-lighted mail shed!

HOW WE COMMUNICATE:

We urge owners and tenants to read the board's monthly minutes, which are posted in the mail shed, with copies available. If you would like to receive these minutes by e-mail, please provide your e-mail address to Cathy Harraghy (Unit #17), secretary. E-mail is also the best way to communicate with HPMG: mam@hpmgnoho.com. You can also visit the website at www.hpmgnoho.com, which contains all relevant condo documents and policies. Your e-mails to the management company will produce better results if they are factual and polite.

At the annual meeting in October about a dozen residents submitted Owner Request Forms with concerns about their units. All these requests are being addressed. We are grateful to the owners who attend the annual October meeting; it allows us to answer questions, transact business, and introduce the management team. It also provides an opportunity to get to know your neighbors.

CHRISTMAS TREE PICK-UP:

Trees will be collected around January 11, 2010. Watch the mail shed for the exact date. Place the tree just outside the trash shed you normally use.

We hope that non-resident owners will share this information with their tenants.

We wish everyone a prosperous new year.

The Board of Trustees:

Phil Shaver.... Unit 69.... President
Edwin Newalu... Unit 24 Treasurer
Cathy Harraghy... Unit 17.... Secretary
Bryan Trainor.... Unit 45
Ann Holland.... Unit 61