From Your Board of Directors

Each year, the Board of Directors wrestles with budget preparation. The Board never wants to raise the quarterly assessments and with that in mind, has cut numerous items that impact the budget, including reducing the amount of money put into reserves.

However, after years of cuts, the 2019 budget will unfortunately see a 5 percent increase in assessments due to an anticipated and usual 3 percent increase in the lawn care contract, and a 25.5 percent increase in the management firm’s fee. These two items form the biggest expenditures in the HOA’s budget.

The old management fee system was outdated. Austin Realty Management and Investments must keep up with numerous HOA functions and recordkeeping as well as stay abreast of the ever-changing complicated rules under which HOAs operate, under the Code of Virginia. After this increase, ARMI will charge its usual 3 percent annual increase. This one time major increase is a catch-up from the original contract implemented in the early 2000s.

Several residents, at the last Board of Directors’ meeting, asked about the new barricades erected at the dead ends of the five streets in the subdivision. The Town of Culpeper determined that the barricades were necessary to limit civil liability to the Town, which maintains the roads, and the HOA, which owns them. The Town indicated that the developer should have erected the barriers since there is no turn around area in the cul-de-sacs, but he did not.

One resident asked the management office to investigate the cost of additional umbrella insurance, should the Town agree to remove the barricades, and have the HOA take on all civil liability should something occur, and a lawsuit be filed. The insurance agent from whom the HOA purchases insurance said that it would cost $350 annually for each $1 million of additional coverage. The agent, whose livelihood hinges on sales, recommended that the HOA not purchase the additional coverage as it is not worth it.

The Town noted that should there be a power outage, which has been more prevalent recently, people unfamiliar with the neighborhood might not realize that the streets dead end. In that scenario, there would be no street lights operating. Two of the streets end with retaining walls.

As it stands, with the barricades in place, the Town shares the liability with the HOA. The barricades meet VDOT standards, and are in place at several other locations throughout Town.

The planned budget has no room for the purchase of additional umbrella insurance coverage without raising the proposed dues above the projected 5 percent increase, from $148 a quarter, to $155.65, which will possibly be rounded down to $155, depending on how the Board finalizes the budget. The Board is prohibited from raising assessments more than 5 percent without approval from two-thirds of the homeowners.

Fences Located on Property Lines

Between many of the homes in Willow Shade, there are fences located on property lines. The responsibility for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of these fences rests jointly with the owners whose properties the fences separate.

If a homeowner feels that a fence needs maintenance or repair, or needs to be partially or completely replaced, the homeowner who thinks that the action needs to be taken should contact the adjoining homeowner and see if an agreement can be made, on which contractor should do the work, if a contractor is to be hired, and the splitting of the cost of the work. An Architectural Approval Form can then be submitted, to have proceeding with the project, approved.

If the owner of the adjoining property is not co-operative, and declines to participate in the project, it would fall to the homeowner who wants to proceed with the work, to submit the Form, hire the contractor if one is to be used, and pay for the work.

Celebrating the 4th of July in Culpeper

Celebrate the July 4th holiday with friends and family in Culpeper, beginning at 8:00 A.M. with the start of a 5K race. There will be the annual parade down Main Street, a patriotic presentation at the court house, craft and food vendors, moon bounces and hayrides, various entertainment, and the spectacular fireworks display at Yowell Meadow Park, to be set off at 9:15 P.M. Remember our country’s history and wish it well in the coming year!