

# Rockburn Commons III

Spring 2011 Condo Newsletter

## Your Board Members for 2011

President – Karl Sturzebecher  
Vice President – Beth Dodson  
Treasurer – Lois Thor  
Secretary – Donna Hammett  
Member-At-Large – Catherine Gearhart

Property Managed by: Residential Realty Group  
3600 Crondall Lane, Suite 103 Owings Mills, MD 21117  
Managing Agent - Cambria Hall  
Administrative Assistant – Marie Bigham

Web Site- [www.rockburncommons3.org](http://www.rockburncommons3.org)

## Greetings!

### A Message from the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors' main purpose is to provide direction and oversight for the property of Rockburn Commons III Condominium Association, Inc. During the past five years the Board's main goal has been to incrementally improve the infrastructure and next the curb appeal of community property while at the same time keeping the condo fee as low as possible. We are happy to report that all ten building roofs have been replaced, while the we are down to the final polybutylene piping for the water supply lines. We appreciate everyone's patience and assistance by homeowners on these projects. The effort to improve the community continues. The latest project to trim the trees and pull the bushes has recently been completed. The goal is to improve our curb appeal with a new low cost maintenance profile.

There are 108 units in our community and at our recent meeting the discussion was on the overdue payments on condo fees which can make it impossible for homeowners to sell their property to buyers who are using FHA financing. For FHA mortgages to be approved, the delinquency rate must be no more than 15%. The high rate of delinquencies also affects how we pay our bills in order to provide basic services to our community. It all boils down to this: it costs money to keep the community running. From the BGE bills to keep our street lights on at night, to the Verizon phone lines as the fire system keeps us safe at night, or the water that flows in your sink, lawn mowing, snow plowing and salting and our Howard County Tax bill and so on so forth. When some homeowners are delinquent in paying their condo fees, all of us suffer since this affects the quality of life at Rockburn Commons III.

The number of owners who owe back condo fees over 30 days has gone down just below the 15% marker. This is encouraging and the Board of Directors again requests that more owners make the effort to get current. The Board recently agreed to pay for FHA approval where Rockburn Commons III could be listed as a community that is worthy of their financing for new buyers (provided the new buyers meet bank qualifications). In order to obtain FHA approval we need to keep our delinquency rate below 15%.

So what can be done? We all are experiencing problems with the current state of our economy, some severe, other not as bad. Some of us are retired and on fixed incomes, while a few of us have lost employment or suffered a reduction in salary. If you are having difficulty paying your condo fee, please contact Residential Realty as soon as possible so that a payment plan can be arranged. Residential Realty also offers an automatic payment program that has the condo fee withdrawn from your bank account monthly without having to send in a check. Just call and a form will be sent to you with instructions.

The Board of Directors has been working very hard to improve our community and increase the owner's value in these difficult times but staying current on your condo fee is your effort which will continue the paying of bills, the maintenance and the updating projects that helps improve our quality of life here at Rockburn Commons III.

Thank you – The Board of Directors

## Association Meetings Schedules

The Board met last on March 21, 2011. We had a very large turn out! The next condo association meetings will be:

**Monday, May 23, 2011 at 7:00pm**

**Monday, July 25, 2011 at 7:00pm**

**Monday, August 15, 2011 at 7:00pm (Annual)**

**Monday, September 26, 2011 at 7:00pm (2<sup>nd</sup> Attempt for Annual)**

**Monday, November 21, 2011 at 7:00pm (Budget)**

All meetings will be held at Elkridge Library and condo owners are **strongly** encouraged to attend. Dates are subject to change based on the availability of the library. Please call Residential Realty or visit the web site for changes and updates to this newsletter as well as other community information

## Projects in Motion

**Water Lines** - ALL POLY INSIDE WORK WAS COMPLETED! Building 6455 was the last one. The inside lines have been a priority because a flood will affect everyone's insurance rate. The remaining outside building lines for 6335, 6375, 6410 and 6455 will be completed on an as needed basis. This was decided in order for the Board to focus on a new issue that is under investigation.

**Trees and Bushes** - The trimming of trees and bush removal was recently completed by Arbor Masters and Brickman Landscaping. There were several trees removed because of their health and storm damage. There are 6 new replacement trees that will be installed in the next month. These trees will require a water bag to keep maintain them watered during the summer months. The Landscaping Committee is looking for help watering several of the trees - please contact Amelia or one of the Board members if you can lend us a hand.

**Chimneys** - The recent association discussion on the chimney cleaning has been a sore spot for several residents that do not use their chimneys. The Architectural Committee may have a solution. Jeremy is looking into a tape seal for your flue damper that will be an easy check by the contracted chimney sweep company. This is still in development and further discussion will continue at our next meeting.

**Dumpsters** – The dumpster enclosures were recent upgraded in 2009 and they have already been damaged from trash trucks. It appears that several large items are being dropped in the way and the driver has a hard time placing the dumpster back in place. Please report if you see anyone dumping items in this area. The cost of removing this “junk” can run up to \$250 per trip and that causes an increase in your condo fee. There will be a proposal to stain and repair the wood damage at the next meeting.

**Verizon & Comcast installations** – In an ongoing effort to improve appearances the Board of Directors will be asking Verizon and Comcast to clean up the cable installations. A sloppy installation is a safety hazard and real eye sore. Verizon has been very proactive and we appreciate their understanding. Inspections of the community are performed by the Board of Directors, Committee Members and Management. The Board of Directors and Committee members are volunteers and need your help, support and understanding when inspections are performed.

**Termite Bait Traps:** We have had over three years of termite protection on all buildings. . The termite bait stations are in the ground around each building. They are black/green disks with numbers on the top. Please **DO NOT** tamper with these bait traps. Thank you!

## Proposals

If you have a new idea or improvement we want to hear from you! Get involved and helps us out!

**Building Carpet** – The 2010 budget had a line item to paint the enclosed buildings and update the carpets inside the enclosed buildings. This was delayed because of the polybutylene pipe repair costs for Building 6420. This year again the line item is under consideration and the Board will be working on a request for proposals from 3 contractors.

**Building Steps** – There have been several requests to review the all the steps (treads) throughout the community. The Board has asked Becht Engineering to propose a review package for the all the steps. Once this report is complete the next stage would be to bid for repairs and staining of the buildings steps.

**Outside Lighting and Security** – The removal of all the bushes helped reduce these hiding places and after the recent assault in December 2010 the Board of Directors has been working on a possible proposal to replace all the light sensors and provide a security audit for lighting. If you are interested in helping with the first steps of this project please see the Board President.

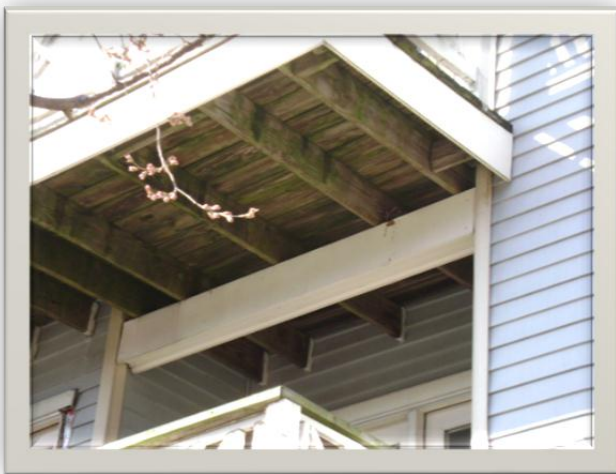
**New Sign** – Did anyone notice where the Rockburn Commons III signs went? The old ones were about to fall apart and rather than have the image of decay, the Board of Directors decided to have them removed, while a new proposal is being considered. If anyone in the community has experience or would like to provide some new ideas for a new sign, please let us know.

**Balcony Replacements** – The Board of Directors is considering a new motion that would require all owners to replace their balconies by the end 2012. This would provide curb appeal to our community. Those owners who are replacing their balconies are reminded that any exterior construction requires the approval of the architectural committee who has the required specifications for such projects and the exact paint needed to do touch-ups. Information on either option is on the website for the association at [rockburncommons3.org](http://rockburncommons3.org) or is available from the management company, Residential Realty by emailing Cambria Hall ([chall@residential-realty.com](mailto:chall@residential-realty.com)) or Marie Bigham ([mbigham@residential-realty.com](mailto:mbigham@residential-realty.com)). There is a toll-free number for their office as well – 1-800-460-0550 and ask for either Cambria or Marie; the office is open Monday – Thursday with extended hours of 8:30 am until 5:30pm because the Owings Mills area is operating on the 4-day work week system.

**Please See *PROJECT BALCONIES!* under CONDO TIPS for a group offer for balcony replacements.**  
(This offer is not associated with RBC3)

## New Challenges

**Water leakage** - Recently the Board of Directors hired Becht Engineering to review a water leakage issue that is under investigation at Building 6455. In one of the units the ceiling was stained only recently but the damage underneath has been going on for several years. The entire header board was recently replaced and the leakage was partially due to the incorrect flashing installation by the original builder. There are a number of possible solutions and part of the issue will be to determine what our next steps will be. The Board of Directors will be inviting several contractors to talk about the siding issues and affordable solutions. In the meantime Becht Engineering is preparing a final report.



Balcony under view



The black rubber flashing was never unfolded.

## **URGENT NOTIFICATION REMINDER!**

- Summer is coming and we have to remind everyone that **no grills of any kind** except ELECTRIC grills are permitted in the community. No combustible material which includes, but not limited to, propane cylinders, charcoal, lighter fluid, chimeneas, or the like is permitted to be stored on any patio, balcony, inside the unit or on the any common or limited common element in Rockburn Commons III Condominium Association, Inc. The Howard County Fire Department will fine violators.
- Please check toilets and faucets for drips and leaks. This will save on the community's water and sewer bill, and help keep condo fees down. When the Association incurs a large water bill, the Owners are sent a letter and test kit for their toilet(s). It is imperative that you test your toilet(s) and send the information back by the due date.

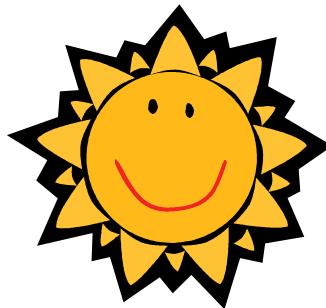
## **Parking**

**Please note that parked cars that do not have proper registration or are not in working order will be towed.**

***Buildings: 6335 and 6355*** - In an effort to improve the parking problem at these buildings RESERVED was painted on twenty-four(24) parking spaces giving each unit one (1) reserved space. All Owners were given one (1) reserved parking pass that must be displayed in the dashboard area in order to park in the reserved spaces for 6335 and 6355. If you plan on selling or renting your home, please remember to give the New Owner(s) or your tenant(s) the reserved parking pass. Replacement parking passes cost \$30.00. All other cars, whether guests or unit owners are requested to park in the remaining available spaces or on the street. Your cooperation and consideration is greatly appreciated.

***Buildings 6420, 6410 and 6400*** - In an effort to improve the parking problem at these buildings, approximately 10 years ago, the Parking Committee (at that time) presented the Board of Directors (at that time) with a parking plan for these buildings. The Board of Directors and the Unit Owners agreed that each unit would have one (1) assigned parking space and the cost of the painting and maintenance of the markings would be the Unit Owners responsibility. If you are uncertain of which parking space is assigned to your unit please call Residential Realty Group. If you plan on selling or renting your home, please remember to inform the new Owner(s) or your tenant(s) of the reserved space. All other cars, whether guests or unit owners are requested to park in the remaining available spaces marked "VISITOR". Your cooperation and consideration is greatly appreciated.

## ***Think Spring!***



## **CONDO TIPS**

**Project Balconies!** *There is an independent group of owners that are preparing a group rate for new railing and or flooring for our condo owners. This is a completely separate contract project outside of Rockburn Commons III, Inc., however we thought is a valuable Condo Tip for all you owners that have not replaced your balconies. The deal also has possible financing available with payment schedules that start from 3 months and extend to 18 months. Please call Jeremy for the details at phone # 443-472-2567 or email: [jojob@gmail.com](mailto:jojob@gmail.com).*

## Balcony Railing Standard

This work specification request pertains to the repair and replacement of balcony guardrails in Rockburn Commons III. Any requests for repair or replacement will need to adhere to the below standards AFTER approval is obtained by the Architectural Review Committee and/or the Board of Directors. All railings must be WHITE in color and must be from the approved color formula used at Rockburn Commons III Condominium Association, Inc. Building materials may be selected by individual unit owners from the following: wood, or composite. Please note that there have been issues with owners that have used vinyl material as the work requirements are hard to meet.

### Specifications

The following requirements are in place to create uniform guardrail structures for all units within Rockburn Commons III:

Railing height shall be 42" from deck surface to the top edge of guardrail.

4" x 4" post shall be used to attach deck frame to provide support for the rails. Post must be spaced according to current deck structure.

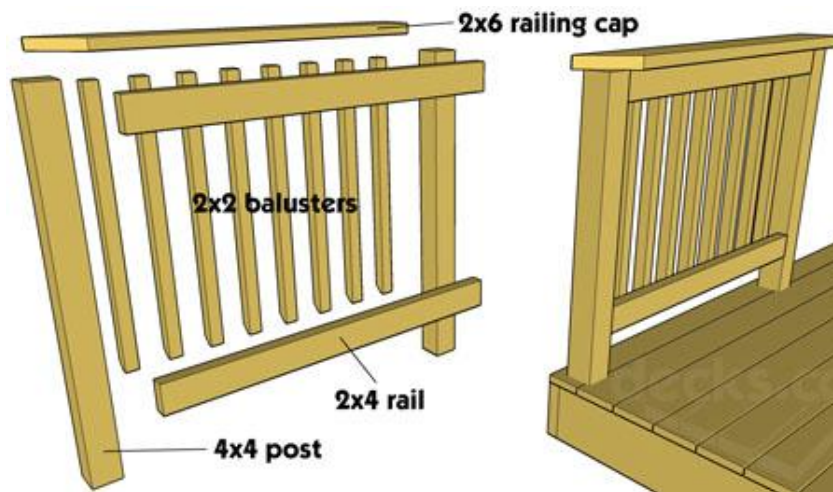
2" x 2" square, flat balusters shall be used to create the guardrail. The gap between balusters shall not exceed 4".

2" x 4" rails shall be used to fasten all balusters together both at the top and bottom.

A 2" x 6" railing cap shall be used for open buildings and 1" X 6" railing cap should be used for the enclosed buildings.

The sweep space beneath the bottom 2" x 4" shall be 4" in height.

All boards and posts must be white in color. Acceptable building materials include wood, or composite.



**Note: 1X6 railing cap should be used for the enclosed buildings.**

**Contact Residential Realty for detailed Specification.**

**Change Your Furnace Air Filter-** This will help keep dust and pollen out of the air and help your heat run more efficiently and save on your energy bill.

**Upgrading your Condo -** With the financial downturn of 2010-2011????, many condo owners all over the country are seeing the prices of single family homes fall and are looking into buying while the prices are lower. To make your condo more appealing to buyers, there are many ways to update your condo. A fresh application of paint in neutral colors gives the perspective buyer a chance to imagine how their furnishings might fit into the condo. New mini-blinds make the windows brighter and fresh drapes/curtains perk up the window areas. Replacing the windows and the heating system for your unit also make an impression on perspective buyers. **Please remember that any exterior modification REQUIRES architectural approval.**

## Resident Guide & Responsibilities

1. Owners are responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of plumbing and electrical serving the unit and/or located only in the unit or unit side of the plumbing leading from the common area.
2. Owners are responsible for maintenance, repair and replacement of all household appliances, i.e., washer, dryer, water heater, garbage disposal, air conditioner, heat pump, all vents (including dryer vent, kitchen and bathroom vents), sinks, toilets, bathtubs, and water lines. Outside light fixtures next to the unit's front door, in the open hallway buildings are also the responsibility of the condo owner.
3. Owners are responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of unit doors and windows, including gaskets, casing, seals and frame.
4. Fireplace & dryer vent must be cleaned every 1 ½ years. The Condo Association will try to arrange group deals. Watch for the announcement in your newsletter.
5. Owners are responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of balconies and patios and the railings and floors. Also balconies and patios are not to be used as a storage area.
6. Balcony posts are **ONLY** for holding up the balconies above. Owners must not attach items (i.e., flags satellite dishes, plants) to balcony posts, as this degrades their strength and integrity, and poses a hazard to the units above. Owners attaching items to balcony posts will be charged for replacement of the posts.
7. Owners of the first floor units of buildings with open hallways are responsible turning on and off the outside faucets in the spring and fall. The valve with the yellow tag is located near the water heater.
8. All trash must be placed in the dumpster. (Do not leave out in hallway.) Recycle items such as cardboard boxes must be broken down. There is **NO** bulk trash pick up; the owner is responsible for bulk trash removal. Bulk trash may be taken to the Howard County landfill or use a company that can pick up and dispose of the items for you. Bulk items include furniture, large toys, Christmas trees, or anything that will not fit into a trash bag. **Hazardous materials and Christmas trees** must be taken to the landfill by the owner.
9. Pets are the responsibility of their owners. Owners must pick up and dispose of their animal waste. Your Pet(s) must be on a leash at all times. Please walk you pet(s) away from the buildings, as allowing your pet(s) to use the grass around the buildings causes bare spots.
10. **NO propane grills or tanks or charcoal grills or charcoal or lighter fluid or other flammable materials are to be stored or used in or around the buildings because they are a fire hazard, are against Howard County regulations, and can affect association insurance rates.** This means **NO PROPANE OR CHARCOAL GRILLS ARE ALLOWED ON YOUR BALCONY, PATIO, OR INSIDE YOUR UNIT.** The only grills allowed on balconies or patios are *electric grills*.
11. Do not store any combustibles (i.e., cardboard boxes, rags, clothes, paint, etc.) within three (3) feet of furnaces or electric panels.
12. All outside repairs or improvements must be approved by the Architectural Committee and Board. These forms can be obtained from Residential Realty. 410-654-4444 or on the website [www.rockburncommons3.org](http://www.rockburncommons3.org).
13. If you stand outside your condo's closed door and can **hear your sound system** then your noise level is disturbing your neighbors. Please be considerate.