



April 14, 2014

Dear Homeowners,

Please file this newsletter from the association with your other important Charter Hall documents for future reference and to transfer to a new owner at closing. The primary intention of this newsletter is to summarize the lessons we've learned during a difficult winter.

Leaky roofs...

- Over the years we have been fortunate to have had relatively milder winters. Two summers ago we replaced our roofs, and in the winter that followed we had no reports of leaks. The weather in Chicagoland this past winter was significantly more brutal than in all but 3 of the last 100-plus years. Our insurance agent has told us that claims for snow and ice related damage nationwide were 5 times higher this year than last. In Palatine we had twice the amount of snowfall as we did last winter, and more than in any other year since Charter Hall was built 22 years ago. We believe that the new roofs are in great shape, but beginning this summer we will have them inspected yearly by the installation contractor.
- To our knowledge 7 of our 49 homes experienced leaks this winter. The two primary causes of the leaks were probably ice damming (explained in previous newsletters and our rules), and roof valleys. A valley is where the sloped roof of one home meets a vertical gable of a second home. If the exit from the valley is narrow then snow and ice can get bottlenecked and build up in the valley, increasing the chance of a leak to one or both homes.
- Ideally, snow on the roof in excess of a few inches should be knocked off to prevent ice dams. Our rules define this as an owner responsibility, and therefore an owner expense. But the reality is that this is not a job for the timid. Even professionals are frequently unwilling to get up on a snow and ice covered roof to do this. For safety reasons, we strongly advise that our owners not do this. This means hiring a professional who is willing to get up there to do the job. However the association has a vested interest in how and by whom this is done because, if done incorrectly, it could void our roof warranty. So if requested, the association will select and hire a contractor to do this work on your behalf.
- But keep in mind that the vast majority of our owners have never had snow knocked off their roofs and yet they have not had leaks. So you may want to be judicious about this.
- Because there are 24 owners in Charter Hall who could be impacted by a valley problem (only 5 of which to our knowledge experienced leaks this year) we have proactively decided to install additional waterproof membranes under the vertical siding of each valley to greatly reduce if not eliminate leaks. These membranes were not recommended by our architect when we installed the new roofs at homes without a history of leaks. But we are installing them now anyway to err on the side of caution. This work will be done before the end of summer in time to provide greater protection next winter.
- There are two other things that as an owner you can do if needed. You can install additional insulation in your attics which will lower the amount of escaping heat, one of the underlying causes of ice dams, or install warming cables in your gutter and/or along the edge of the roof. Because this second option could impact your neighbors, we will require an A&A to be submitted to the board before you can do this.

A few key points about insurance...

- Owners are responsible for any repairs or maintenance on the inside of your home necessitated by ordinary wear and tear.
- Owners and the association share responsibility for repairing or maintaining exterior issues caused by ordinary wear and tear, according to our documents.

- Owners are responsible for obtaining their own insurance to cover the contents and general liability within your home.
- The association is required to obtain the primary insurance for Charter Hall. The owners are responsible for making the repairs using money from the association's settlement, if any. We have a policy known as an "all risk" or "special form" policy which covers almost anything. For a list of the few things it does not cover contact our agent at 847-437-2184. But the association covers several of the excluded perils such as "ordinance and demolition" with additional policies beyond the primary one. We are very well insured.
- Insurance claims may be submitted against the association's policy if the damage is 1) caused by a covered peril (again... almost anything), 2) is an accident, and 3) happens suddenly as opposed to over time.
- Our insurance includes "betterments" coverage. If you have upgraded fixtures in your home such as granite countertops or new flooring and do not have betterments coverage then the insurance carrier will only pay for what was originally installed by the builder. The association cannot guarantee that we will always be able to provide betterment coverage. Only a few carriers offer it. If a time comes when we are unable to provide it we will notify the owners and recommend that you add this coverage to your personal policy.
- The association's policy has a \$2,500 deductible, which is the lowest amount we can acquire. The association's documents make the owner responsible for the deductible. Your personal homeowners' policy probably has "loss assessment" coverage which can cover our deductible. However unless the limit on this coverage is increased it usually has a limit of \$1,000 in coverage. For a small amount annually you can increase this amount to pay the full \$2,500 deductible on the association's policy. We strongly recommend that you do so. Our agent will be happy to review your personal coverage to make sure that it augments the association's insurance.
- Repairs necessitated because of original architectural or construction errors are known as "builder deficiencies" and are not covered by any policy or by the association.

How our snow removal contract works and other winter issues...

- Our contract requires that the crew starts within 2 hours of a 2 inch accumulation, which is standard. Sometimes, based on the timing of the storm, and especially in the middle of the night when few folks are driving, we mutually agree to modify that a bit so that the snow is mostly cleared by the time people are likely to be coming or going.
- The association will remove snow on all asphalt, sidewalks, and stoops.
- The areas around fireplugs and mailboxes are cleared completely.
- The amount of contracted service has limits... more than 8 hours per storm, or more than 50 inches of total snowfall or 12 storm events per season are billed at additional time and materials, again standard. This year that cost us around \$10,000 in unbudgeted expenses
- As a reminder... the association will provide you with as much ice melt as you deem necessary and appropriate. Because of this you are responsible for maintaining a safe environment on your sidewalks, stoop, and driveway. The association will apply chemicals property wide when a significant chance of a major ice storm is predicted by the NWS.

Capital improvements for this year...

- This year, in addition to fixing the roof valleys and making ordinary landscaping repairs, we will 1) replace the rusted bezels above front doors as needed with plastic ones which should last much longer, 2) extend downspouts as needed to reduce water pooling against your foundations, and 3) replace the rear coach lights. If you have already replaced yours we will not change it unless asked to. The fixtures we have selected have an optional motion sensor for an extra \$20 which would be charged back to any owners who want that feature. Below is a list of downspouts that we will extend based on an inspection done by our contractor. If you believe we are missing any or would prefer to have us not extend a listed downspout please contact management.
- We will replace the last 4 original driveways and all guest parking spaces. We will post notice on your garage door, and you will not be able to park on the new asphalt for 2 days

- Sometime after April 21st we will mulch the entire property. Please contact management if you prefer that we skip your address.
- At about the same time we will repair the sod damage caused by winter plowing. VERY IMPORTANT... as we have said many times in the past it is your responsibility to water new landscaping 3-4 times per week for 3-4 weeks. Any landscaping which dies for lack of water will be replaced and the cost will be charged back to you.

Condos vs. Single Family attached homes, and the importance of our documents...

- This is very important but not fully understood by some. We are not incorporated as a condo association but rather as a Common Interest Community. As such we are considered Single Family homes even though we are attached. We are obligated to follow only a few paragraphs of the condo act. This means that many services that may have been provided to you if in the past if you lived in a condo are owner responsibilities in a townhome community, as described in our documents. Our Declaration and Bylaws will usually prevail unless newer state laws override them. When in doubt the board seeks legal council to be certain that we are making decisions that are fair, correct and legal.
- Please take the time to read our documents (bylaws, declaration, and rules), which you should have received at closing or which can be sent to you by email.

Maintenance contractor...

- We have decided to employ a new general maintenance contractor. Cornerstone is a one-man shop and all too often the work took entirely too long to get done. Many maintenance companies charge significantly more than Cornerstone did. But DD explored the market and found a great company at a reasonable price. We have been "testing" them for several months and are very happy.

As we said earlier, please file this newsletter with your other important Charter Hall documents. We are trying to be helpful, and this content may be useful to you again in the future. We care.

As a reminder, we hold our board meetings at the Palatine library at 7PM in room 2 unless otherwise noted. Our next meeting will be the annual homeowners' meeting on June 11th. Closer to that meeting we will send an invitation, the agenda, and a proxy. The dates for the next five board meetings will be, in 2014... August 13th (room 3), October 8th, November 12th (room 1), and in 2015... February 11th, and April 8th. Please make a note of these dates.

And as always, please contact us with any questions, issues, or suggestions. You can email us at info@desirablewellings.com, or call Desirable Dwellings at 847-776-8222. Remember – we can't fix what we don't know about.

Thank you.
The Board of Directors

Downspout extensions planned...

583 – 1 F & 2 R	609 – 1 F & 3 R	612 – 1 F & 2 R	613 – 1 F & 2 R
616 – 1 F & 3 R	620 – 2 F & 1 R	624 – 0 F & 2 R	627 – 1 F & 1 R
628 – 1 F & 3 R	631 – 2 F & 1 R	646 – 1 F & 2 R	647 – 1 F & 2 R
652 – 1 F & 3 R	663 – 1 F & 1 R	667 – 2 F & 1 R	
686 – 1 F & 2 R	687 – 1 F & 2 R	691 – 1 F & 1 R	
715 – 1 F & 2 R	727 – 2 F & 2 R	668 – 2 F & 2 R	