



North Fairlington News

Historic Fairlington Villages

JULY 2022

VOL. 44, No. 7

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Homeowners' Forum on July 26 to Address FY23 Budget

Join us for Fairlington Villages' annual Homeowners' Budget Forum in the Community Center at 7 p.m. on Tues., July 26, for an in-depth review and discussion of how your condominium fees are spent and how the budget is being constructed for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23). Homeowners can also attend the Forum virtually by calling in to 703-552-8058 using Conference Code 230349.

SLIDES AVAILABLE JULY 13

The FY23 Budget Forum presentation slides will be online at www.fairlingtonvillages.com on July 13,



where they may be downloaded. You may obtain a hard copy by contacting the Management Office at 703-379-1440 or email office@fairlingtonvillages.com.

THE ASSOCIATION BUDGET

Our Association's budget consists of three components: operating expenses, reserve contributions, and income. Income, which is almost exclusively derived from condominium fees, equals the total of projected operating expenses and reserve contributions. The budget for current FY22, which began Oct. 1, 2021, totals over \$8.14 million, including approximately \$4.99 million in operating expenses and reserve contributions of approximately \$3.15 million.

OPERATING EXPENSES

Operating expenses encompass

all expenditures required to fund the day-to-day operation of our community. They include contracts for grounds maintenance and trash removal, repair and maintenance expenditures, administrative costs (including insurance), employee payroll and benefits, and electricity. The single largest item in the operating budget is the cost of Arlington County and City of Alexandria sewer and water fees, which constitute just over 20% of the current FY22 operating budget due to increased water consumption during the pandemic and increases in water and sewer rates.

RESERVE CONTRIBUTIONS

Reserves are set aside for long-term repair and replacement of major physical assets, including our buildings' balconies, exterior

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4th of July Parade and Celebration Returns and Needs Volunteers

Celebrate Independence Day with your Fairlington neighbors at our traditional 4th of July Parade! Decorate your strollers, wagons, bikes, scooters, kids, dogs, cats — even yourselves — in red, white, and blue and meet at the former Fairlington firehouse site at 9:45 a.m.

Beginning at 10 a.m. we will march up Abingdon Street to the Community Center parking lot. If marching is not your style, we need lots of spectators to cheer along the sidelines. Join us after the Parade for cool drinks, hot dogs, temporary tattoos, and visit a fire engine (assuming there is not an emergency).

Volunteers are needed to make this event a success! Please email activities@fairlingtonvillages.com if you can help reestablish one of our most popular events.



2021 PHOTO BY GUY LAND
Fairlingtonians in line to see a fire engine and meet an officer.

Fence Replacements Back on Track

The community-wide fence replacement project — which was delayed in 2020-21 by pandemic-driven supply chain shortages and soaring lumber prices — is back on track. Work on Phase 2 began in May 2022 to replace fences in Ward II starting on South Buchanan, South 30th, and South Columbus Streets. Residents are being notified a week or two in advance of when work will begin in their area, and are given guidance about

prepping their patio areas by moving personal items to the center, removing items from the fence, and more.

Phase 1 of the multiyear fence replacement project was completed in April 2021 with the installation of 190 new fences in Ward I. After completion of Phase 2 in Ward II, fences will be replaced in Wards III, IV, V, and VI. The entire project is expected to be completed in the summer of 2026.



PHOTOS BY CAROL BELL
PHOTO ON LEFT: A contractor replacing a fence in Ward II; you can see the residents moved their pots in preparation for the project. RIGHT: An example of a completed fence.

Fence Prep

Residents are expected to remove any items that are attached to the current fence (flower baskets, lights, satellite dishes, etc.) and to move all personal belongings to the center of the patio, including flowerpots. Any breakable items need to be moved inside.

If there is a storage shed on the patio, it needs to be moved 2-feet away from the fence. The contractor will move it if it is empty.

Any vegetation growing on the fence will be removed, along with the current fence. Any tree branches that are touching the current fence or impeding the installation of the new fence will be cut.

During the removal of the current fence, the excavation of the old posts and the installation of the new posts and fence, it is possible that some of your plants might get damaged. Please pot any plants that you want to save.

Going Green with Little Red Ladybugs and Other Insects

In keeping with their “green” and eco-sensitive practices, our landscaper Lancaster Landscapes released a total of 9,000 beneficial insects, primarily ladybugs, in Fairlington Villages on June 9 and 10. The release focused on the rose bushes in and around Ward I, the slope on South Abingdon Street, around the Management Office, and other locations in the community. This insect program was done at no additional cost to the Association.

The release of beneficial insects is a component of current Integrated Pest Management practices and enables Lancaster Landscapes

to apply fewer chemicals while maintaining a healthy and environmentally friendly ecosystem. In the end, Lancaster’s goal is to actively build and maintain a healthy and thriving landscape in North Fairlington.

Please be kind to the ladybugs; they are here to help. Beneficial garden ladybugs are used to control unwanted pests in gardens and landscapes, and are capable of consuming up to 50 to 60 aphids per day. Ladybugs will also eat a variety of other insects and larvae including scales, mealy bugs, leafhoppers, mites, and various types of soft-bodied insects.

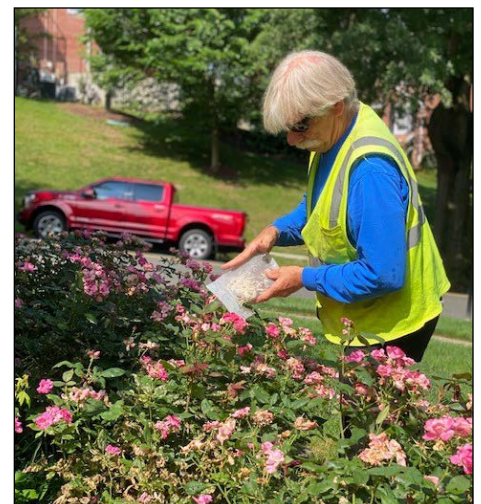


PHOTO BY MARK JOHNSON
A Lancaster Landscapes employee releasing ladybugs in Ward I.

Compound Interest in Saving Resources

Saving resources is easy and adds up quickly in a community with 1,703 condo units. Little efforts you can do to start:

- **Recycle properly.** Do not put glass or Styrofoam into the recycling bins because they cannot be recycled by our vendor.
- **Do not use your toilet as a liquid waste basket.** Sewer backups cost money and can

result in damages to your unit or your belongings.

- **Turn off the water when not in use.** The [EPA](#) estimates brushing your teeth without the water running can save 8 gallons of water per day.
- **Get this newsletter via email** instead of snail mail, thus saving paper, energy, and printing and postage costs.



Three Things to Do This July to Save Time and Money

1. Review your insurance policy.
 2. Register with [TownSq.](#)
 3. Pay condo fees automatically.
- See page 5 for complete details.

BUDGET FORUM

continued from page 1

brick masonry walls, and slate and flat roofs, as well as our property's sewer lines, swimming pools and pool houses, tennis courts, tot lot, parking lots, and trash enclosures. The Virginia Condominium Act requires that at least once every five years associations conduct a study to determine the amount of reserves required to repair, replace, and restore these capital elements. In accordance with the Act's provisions, the Board of Directors commissioned a 2019 Update to 2009 and 2014 Reserve Studies and the 2014 report's accompanying Exterior Wall (Masonry) study to ensure that our reserves are fully funded.

The Board adopted the 2009 and 2014 studies' recommendations that reserve funding be increased by 6% per year from FY10 through FY16, with increases reduced to 1% per year thereafter. The current 2019 Reserve Study Update, approved by the Board at its April 3, 2019, meeting, reaffirms this yearly 1% rate of increase and recommends both annual reserve spending totals and updated lists of reserve projects for the next 20 fiscal years through FY38.

Our Association has funded these recommended increases

during every year except FY21, when reserve contributions were reduced by \$128,217 to ensure there was no condo fee increase while our homeowners addressed the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic.

INCOME

Condominium fees are the principal means of covering our expenses, including both daily operations and major long-term reserve infrastructure repair and replacement projects. These fees comprise almost 98% of our total income.

Historically, we have also received a small, but significant, amount of income on our investments, which largely consist of accumulated reserve funds invested in the "safe" U.S. Treasury securities and FDIC-insured certificates of deposit that are available to condominium associations. By laddering our investments (purchasing instruments expiring at different times), the Association earned an increasing amount of income as interest rates rose from their historic lows following the global recession. However, because rates were slashed as part of the effort to combat the severe economic downturn during the COVID-19

crisis, for the near future the Association will not earn as much income from investment interest as it did in recent years.

Other sources of income include rental fees for the Community Center and Arlington Public Schools' lease of spaces in the Center's parking lot, late fees, resale packet charges, and income from services provided to Fairlington Court, the 10 townhouses located at South Abingdon and 31st Streets near the old firehouse.

FY23 BUDGET CHALLENGES

The Association faces continuing financial challenges as we emerge from the pandemic and confront the highest United States inflation rate in 40 years. Inflation, which is currently running at an annual rate of 8.6% as of this writing, affects all parts of our operations, but especially areas that have significant

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This month, Fairlington Villages is proud to introduce the inaugural issue of **Fairlington Underground**, which will be a special series of articles examining utility networks. Please see the section on "Our Water and Sewer System" to understand how this hidden resource operates and impacts our annual budget.

Activities Around the Village

Please Mask Yourself, If Advised

If you will be attending any activities, please review and adhere to state and CDC-guidance on COVID-19 precautions. Verify the state's face mask status: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/protect-yourself/masks/>.

Hail the Book Club on July 28

Please join us on Thurs., July 28, at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center to discuss *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir. *USA Today* describes the novel as "an epic story of redemption, discovery and cool speculative sci-fi."

Our Thurs., Aug. 25, book discussion will be on Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, the author's 2016 award-winning debut historical novel. *Homegoing* follows the parallel paths of two sisters and their descendants through eight generations.

Please visit our "Fairlington Area Book Readers Group" Facebook page for the latest details at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/185662778799790/>. If you have questions, please email bookclub@fairlingtonvillages.com.

Play at a New Game Time with the Canasta Club on Wednesday

Canasta has a new game time! Players of all skill levels are invited to join the weekly Fairlington Canasta Club each Wednesday from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Community Center. Canasta is a card game where players or partnerships try to meld groups of three or more cards of the same rank. Please email Mary Ryan at mxryan1024@gmail.com for more details.

Show Your Love for the Friday Night Tennis Ladder

The Tennis Committee invites you to the No-host Friday Night Ladder every Friday from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on North Fairlington's

Main Courts 1, 2, and 3 through Oct. 7. Ladder players can contact each other to schedule and play matches at their convenience.

If you want to join or find out more, email tennis@fairlingtonvillages.com. Please provide the following details to join the Ladder: name, preferred telephone number and email; skill levels include Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Tournament Level, and Division. Mixed doubles are available.

We look forward to seeing you on the courts, and good luck!

Court Courtesies

If you are heading to the courts, please remember to take your 2022 Fairlington Villages ID card and sport appropriate tennis apparel.

Court Reservation Tool: Skedda

If you want to guarantee time on the court, use Skedda, the online booking tool. Please email the Management Office at office@fairlingtonvillages.com with your name, address, email, and phone number. Upon verification, you will get an email from Skedda inviting you to register.

Parade Your Volunteer Spirit at Our 4th of July Celebration

Four cheers for the return of our 4th of July Celebration immediately following the Parade. Volunteers are needed to make this event a success! Please email activities@fairlingtonvillages.com if you are able to help.



2021 PHOTO BY GUY LAND

Fairlingtonians explore a fire engine at the 4th of July 2021.

Please take your 2022 Fairlington Villages ID card to the Courts or Pools.



Manager's Corner

Gregory Roby, General Manager, CMCA®, PCAM®



Review Your Insurance by July 15

The Fairlington Villages Master Insurance Policies renew on Fri., July 15. Holden & Co. Insurance will continue as the Association's insurance agent and the insurance companies providing the various coverages will likely remain the same. If you receive notice from your mortgage company asking for

proof of insurance, please send a copy of the notice to Holden & Co. via fax at 703-566-5568 or email a copy to office@holdenins.com, identify yourself as a unit owner in Fairlington Villages, and ask that a new Certificate of Insurance be sent to your mortgage company. Holden & Co. has an efficient system of fulfilling these requests, which are a common part of servicing Condominium Master Insurance Policies.

It is also a good time to check your own HO6 policy for coverage gaps, like the \$15,000 deductible for property damage claims, which could be assessed to you in the event the damage results from something over which you exercise complete control or are otherwise responsible for maintaining. Please see the [February 2022 newsletter online](#) for an article on insurance coverage.

Register for TownSq to Receive Many Benefits

Register with TownSq to receive updates, send notices to the Management Office, or pay your condo fees. TownSq is available for Android and iOS at Google Play and the App Store. Have your account number handy. If you have a tenant renting your home, please register your occupants so they too may receive TownSq updates. You can register quickly online at <https://app.townsq.io/login>.

Pay Your Condo Fee Automatically

The fastest way to pay your monthly assessment is online: use ACH transfer, direct debit, or other options such as a credit card or e-check. Mailing a payment relies on the postal system. Having the Office send a payment on your behalf is the slowest route. For a full description of each payment option, please see the [September 2021 newsletter online](#).

Participate in the Budget Forum on July 26

Attend our annual Homeowners' Budget Forum on Tues., July 26, at 7 p.m. in person at the Community Center or virtually by calling in to 703-552-8058 using Conference Code 230349.

Management Office

Location

Fairlington Villages
A Condominium Association
3001 South Abingdon Street
Arlington, Virginia 22206

Hours by Appointment

8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday
9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Saturday
Closed Sundays and federal holidays

Communications

Telephone: 703-379-1440
General Info Email: office@fairlingtonvillages.com
TownSq: <https://app.townsq.io/login>
Website: www.fairlingtonvillages.com

Staff

Gregory Roby	General Manager
Miguel Galvez	Facilities Manager
Mark Johnson	Operations Manager
Erin Moran	Office Manager
Victoria Gomillion	Office Administrator
Marcus Reed	Office Administrator

Emergency

After Hours Emergency: 703-600-6000

Patrol Service

To contact security duty officer, call 571-215-3876.

If the patrol service does not answer, the officer will receive a page. If you have not received a return call within 10 minutes, please call again.
Security hours: 8 p.m. – 4 a.m. nightly.

These Cool Staffers Made This Pool Season Happen

With all of our pools open for business and the summer season well under way, it is appropriate to recognize the extraordinary effort by the Fairlington Villages Management and Administrative staff who made it all possible. Please give Operations Manager Mark Johnson, Office Manager Erin Moran, Facilities Manager Miguel Galvez, and Office Administrators Victoria Gomillion and Marcus Reed an extra thank you the next time you see them.

From the early stages of introducing a new management company in March of this year to supplying new and renewed pool passes to more than 150 residents, to up-to-the minute finishing touches to Pool House 5 renovations, to last minute runs for supplies, nothing was allowed to prevent a return to normality with our swimming season!

It is a privilege to be a part of the dedicated team of professionals doing their absolute best each and every day to make Fairlington Villages the place you call home!

The News is published by
Fairlington Villages,
A Condominium Association

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Special Commission on Potential
Architectural Changes: Philip Brown
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GET SOCIAL WITH US

Join TownSq
Like us on Facebook
Follow @NFairlington

Comments, articles, and letters are welcome. The deadline for submissions is the 10th of each month. Please deliver or email materials to the Management Office. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions.

Board Meeting Agenda Wednesday, July 6, 2022

The following is the preliminary agenda for the July 6, 2022, Board of Directors meeting at 7 p.m. The meeting is hosted from the Community Center. Unit owners and residents of Fairlington Villages are welcome and encouraged to attend the monthly meeting virtually. Details for virtual attendance should be confirmed with the Management Office the week prior to the meeting: email office@fairlingtonvillages.com or call 703-379-1440.

- I. Residents' Comments (5 minute limit/household)
- II. Call to Order
- III. Establishment of Quorum
- IV. Approval of Minutes – June 1, 2022
- V. Old Business
- VI. New Business
 - A. Variance Request – 4815-B S. 28th St. (Remove Load-Bearing Wall)
 - B. Variance Request – 4855 S. 28th St., B-2 (Install Spigot)
 - C. Replacement of Common Element Windows in Wards I & IV
 - D. Replacement/Repair of Common Area Hand Rails
 - E. Parking Lot Engineering
- VII. Reports
 1. Officers (President, Secretary, & Treasurer's Reports)
 2. Committees
 3. Management's Financial Report
 4. Management's Project & Status Report
 5. Office Administrative Report
 6. Facilities Report
 7. Operations Report
- VIII. Other Business
- IX. Establishment of Next Board Meeting – Aug. 3, 2022
- X. Adjournment of Meeting

Prior to each regular Board meeting, the Agenda and the Management Report are available for review electronically via email copy or by appointment at the Association's Management Office at 3001 S. Abingdon St. beginning the Thursday prior to the regular Board meeting.



Mind Your Duty as a Pet Parent

Please scoop the poop and place your bags in the immovable trash receptacles around the property; do not use the black bins intended for trash and recycling.

Our Patrol Service is a Master in Security

Master Security provides the Association's nightly patrol service between 8 p.m. and 4 a.m. The general orders for the post include continuous vehicular and foot patrols throughout the 93.3-acre campus. The patrol also responds to complaints about vehicles parked without a permit, unruly behavior, and other allegations of

rule violations. The flashing yellow light on the patrol vehicle increases awareness.

Please remember that the service is here to enhance safety; it is not designed to interdict in a "security" emergency. In the event of suspected criminal activity, a fire or a medical emergency, always call 911.

Board Meeting Highlights

The Board held its regular meeting on June 1, 2022. The following are highlights.

New Business

A. Variance Request – 4638 S. 31st St. – Remove a Load-Bearing Wall: By Unanimous Consent the Board agreed that this item be withdrawn from the agenda because the application was incomplete.

B. Variance Request – 4818 S. 28th St. – Remove a Load-Bearing Wall: By Unanimous Consent the Board agreed that this item be withdrawn from the agenda because the application was incomplete.

C. Variance Request – 3047 S. Buchanan St. – Remove a Load-Bearing Wall: Ms. Lankford moved the Board approve a variance request to remove a load-bearing wall in their unit, in accordance with the specifications outlined in the variance request. Passed 8-0.

D. Exterior Painting – Ward I: Ms. Lankford moved the Board authorize Management to contract with Middledorf Property Services, Inc., for exterior painting in Ward I at a cost of \$72,885. Passed 8-0.

E. Tree Removal Policy: Mr. Reem moved the Board approve the following TREE REMOVAL POLICY: The Association does not remove healthy trees as a rule. However, due to the ecological and financial harm caused by invasive trees, as defined in lists compiled by Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, no funds are to be spent to prune invasive trees in an effort to preserve them, and they shall be removed as the budget allows. Passed 8-0.

BUDGET FORUM

continued from page 3

gasoline and other energy-related costs. **We need to frame a FY23 budget that limits condominium fee increases to no more than 4-5% while maintaining our present level of community services and executing critical reserve projects.**

Maintaining our present level of community services will require FY23 spending increases in most areas of our operating budget. The cost of the 2022-2023 master insurance policy covering Fairlington Villages' buildings is predicted

to increase by approximately 7.5%. Next year's operating budget also needs to address an increase and changes in Arlington County's water/sewer rates, as well as another rise in City of Alexandria (Alexandria Renew Enterprises) sewer and wastewater treatment costs. The costs of all of our major service contracts will increase, including our trash removal, grounds maintenance, janitorial service, and pool agreements. Furthermore, the overall rise in inflation will affect

most other areas of our operating budget, ranging from staff salaries to the cost of building painting and vehicle operations.

FY23 reserve fund contributions will continue their programmed 1% per annum increase to fund programmed infrastructure projects. Critical multiyear programs that will continue in FY23 include building masonry repairs, phased slate roof and backyard fence

replacement, parking lot resurfacing, and pool house refurbishment. Major projects currently scheduled to

begin in FY23 include apartment building hallway renovation and replacement of large sections of our property's perimeter fence.

UPCOMING BUDGET SCHEDULE

The Board will review and approve and/or amend the Treasurer's and Management's draft FY23 budget at the July 6, 2022, Board meeting. On July 11, the draft budget as approved or amended by the Board will be mailed to homeowners for

their review and use as the basis for discussion at the July 26 Budget Forum.

To find out more and contribute to building a budget that maintains our level of community services and keeps Fairlington Villages safe, sound, and attractive as we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis and confront the challenge of inflation, please plan on participating in the July 26 Budget Forum.

—Harold Reem, Treasurer



Avoid Being Rained Out

FACT: The pools must close if there is inclement weather.

SOLUTION: Get the TownSq app to stay informed of pool closings. Register with TownSq to receive pool updates, send notices to the Management Office, or pay your condo fees. Sign up: <https://app.townsq.io/login>.

North Fairlington News
 Fairlington Villages, A Condominium Association
 3001 South Abingdon Street
 Arlington, VA 22206

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 July 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 July Tennis Ladder 7 – 10 p.m. Main Courts	2
3	4 4th of July Parade, 9:45 a.m. OFFICE CLOSED TRASH PICKUP	5	6 Board Meeting 7 p.m. Hybrid Canasta Club 10:30 a.m.– 1:30 p.m. Community Center	7	8 Tennis Ladder 7 – 10 p.m. Main Courts	9
10	11 Grounds Committee 7 p.m. Virtual	12	13 Canasta Club 10:30 a.m.– 1:30 p.m. Community Center	14	15 Tennis Ladder 7 – 10 p.m. Main Courts	16
17	18	19	20 NAWG, 7 p.m. Community Center Canasta Club 10:30 a.m.– 1:30 p.m. Community Center	21 Architectural Control Committee 7 p.m. Community Center	22 Tennis Ladder 7 – 10 p.m. Main Courts	23
24	25	26 HOMEOWNERS' BUDGET FORUM 7 p.m. Hybrid	27 Pools Committee 7 p.m. Virtual Canasta Club 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Community Center	28 Book Club <i>Project Hail Mary</i> 6:30 p.m. Community Center	29 Tennis Ladder 7 – 10 p.m. Main Courts	30
31	1 August	2	3 Board Meeting 7 p.m. Hybrid Canasta Club 10:30 a.m.– 1:30 p.m. Community Center	4	5 Tennis Ladder 7 – 10 p.m. Main Courts	6

Meetings subject to change, please contact the Management Office to confirm.

FAIRLINGTON UNDERGROUND

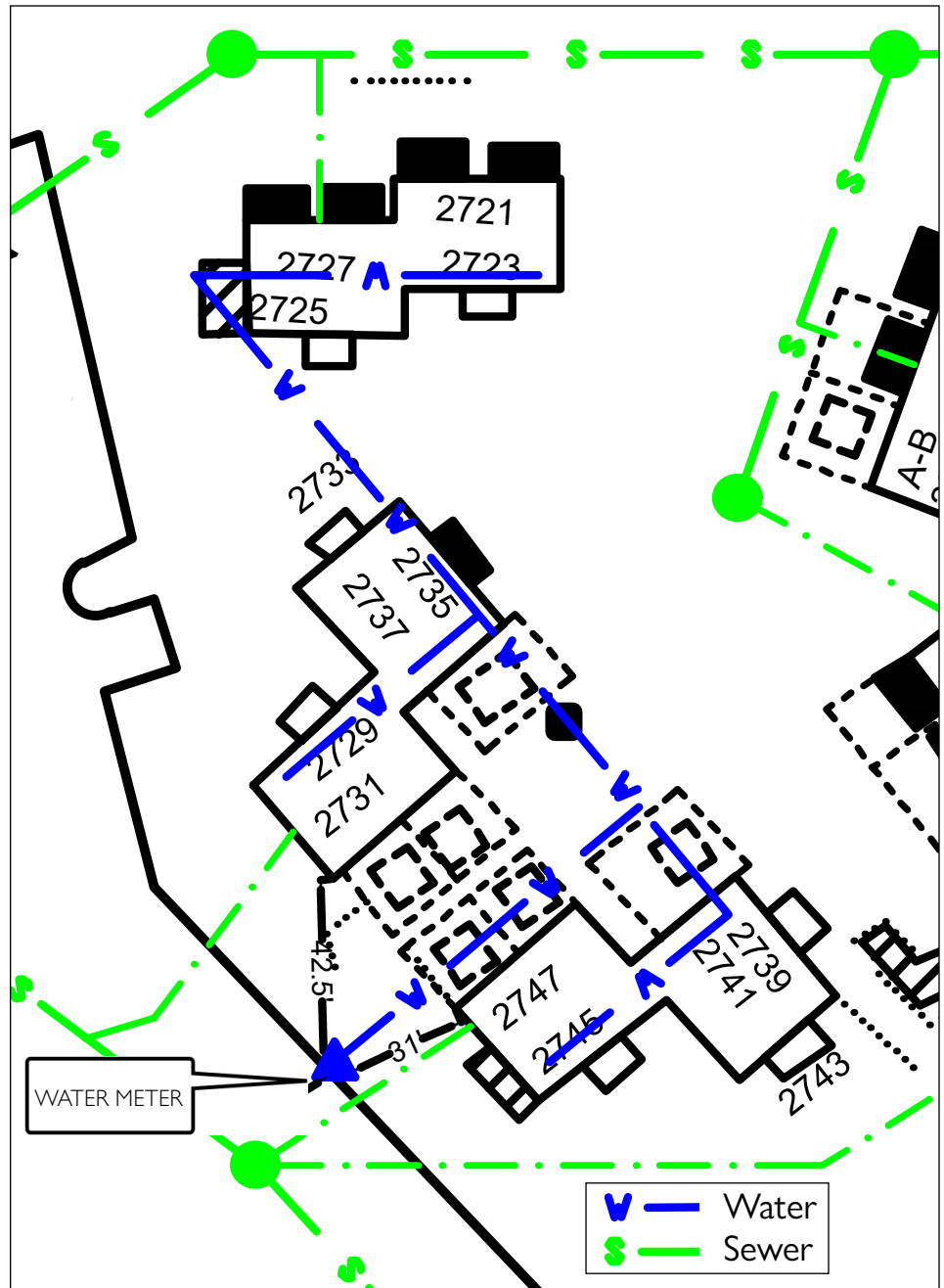
A FAIRLINGTON VILLAGES SERIES ON UTILITIES || № 1 || JULY 2022 || [HTTPS://APP.TOWNSQ.IO/LOGIN](https://app.townsq.io/login)

OUR WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM

ALL ARE CONNECTED:
1,703 CONDO UNITS,
COMMUNITY CENTER,
OFFICE, AND 6 POOLS.

When most Fairlington Villages owners and residents think about their reasons for living in our lovely community they usually reflect on its history and architecture, mature tree canopy and large areas of green space, and convenient location near Washington, D.C. and the Village at Shirlington with its restaurants and entertainment venues. What they normally don't think about are the largely invisible underground utility systems that support the community and make life here possible.

This article and forthcoming pieces in a series collectively titled "Fairlington Underground" address this gap and examine these all-important hidden utility networks. "Our Water and Sewer System," the series' current lead article, looks at these critical utilities, including our network of underground mains and laterals, common service problems with these lines, and how our water and sewer bills collectively impact and shape the Association's annual budget.



The above map shows the water and sewer service provided to a typical group of structures -- the 14 condominium units located at 2721-2747 South Buchanan Street. A water lateral (marked W) owned by Fairlington Villages runs from a County-owned water meter and its associated Buchanan Street water main, and then provides service to each unit. Sewer laterals (marked S) run from the units and eventually connect with County-owned sewer mains. Manholes (marked by circles) provide access to sewer laterals and mains at various points along the lines.

SOURCE: FAIRLINGTON VILLAGES WARD 3 UTILITIES SITE PLAN WITH ANNOTATIONS BY AUTHOR

MAINS AND LATERALS: OUR SYSTEM'S FRAMEWORK

Arlington County provides water service to all of Fairlington Villages 1,703 condominium units, as well as its 6 pools, Community Center, and Management Office. The County also provides sewer service to these units and facilities, with the exception of Pool 6 and the 241 units located in Alexandria, where the City provides sewer service through Alexandria Renew Enterprises, a publicly chartered utility.

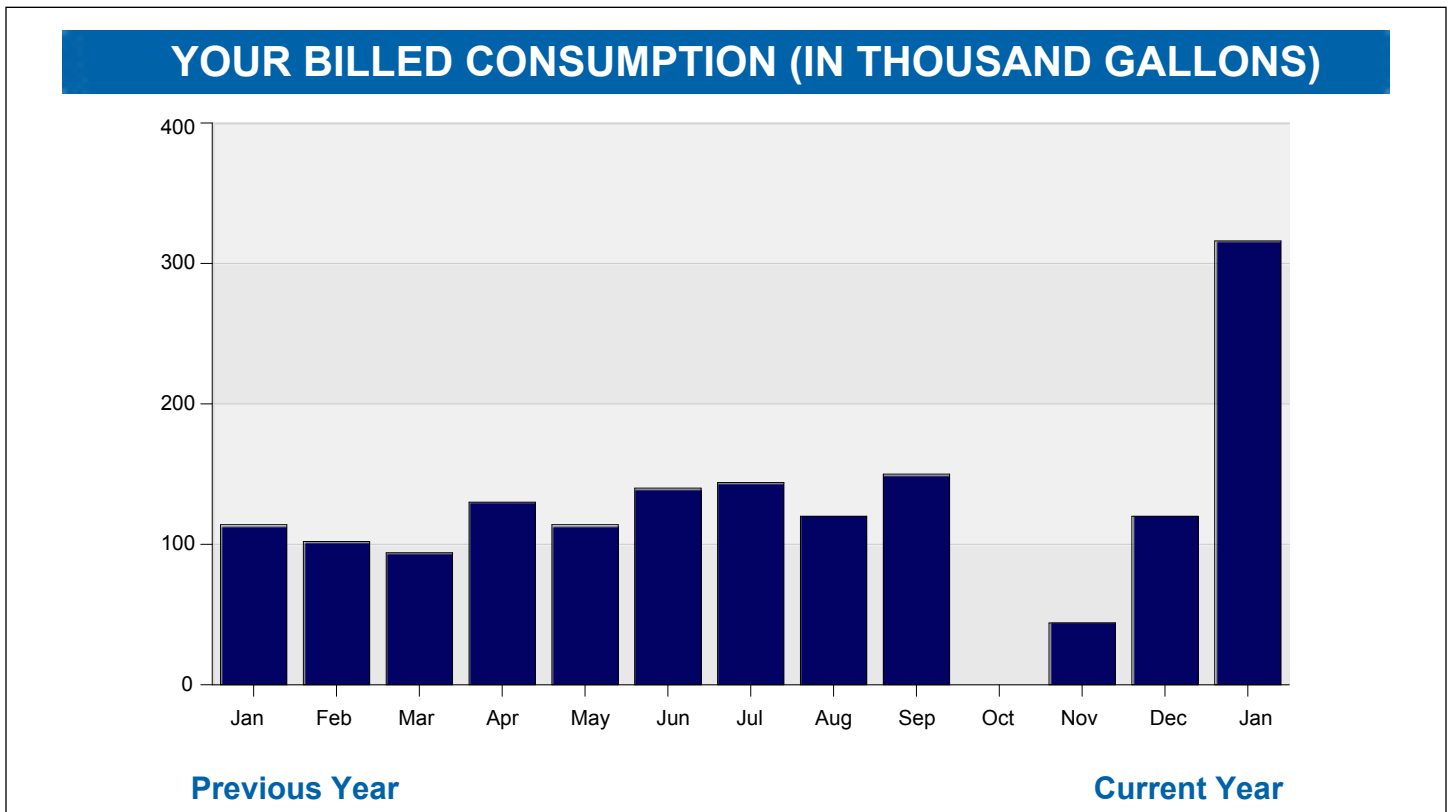
County water mains run under our streets and deliver water to our buildings and facilities via 96 Fairlington-owned steel lateral

water lines that branch off the mains and serve individual groups of units (10-41 units per lateral) and structures. Each water lateral runs from a County-owned water meter, which measures water consumption for the units and other facilities served by the lateral.

Fairlington-owned terra cotta and cast iron sewer laterals collect sewage and wastewater from our structures and carry it to County- or City-owned sewer mains running under our streets and adjacent areas of the property. Between 2002 and 2017

the Association spent \$2 million in reserve funds to reline 18,000 linear feet of 75-year-old terra cotta sewer laterals and avoid the significantly greater cost of replacing them. The epoxy relining compound has extended the laterals' useful lifespan by 30 or more years.

DAILY WATER USE HAS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY SINCE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN IN 2020.



January 2022 water bill graph for 2818-2822 S. Abingdon and 2833-2843 S. Buchanan Streets showing significantly increased consumption and a possible water system problem. No consumption is shown for October 2021 because Arlington County did not perform a meter reading during the 31-day period.

SOURCE: ARLINGTON COUNTY UTILITIES SERVICE OFFICE

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE: 2721-2747 SOUTH BUCHANAN STREET

The map on page 1 depicts the water and sewer service provided to a typical group of structures — the 14 condominium units located at 2721-2747 South Buchanan Street.

COMMON SERVICE PROBLEMS

Although our water and sewer system normally operates efficiently, we do have periodic problems.

County-owned components cause some of the issues; our aging laterals produce others; and many difficulties

stem from our residents' negligent, and in some instances, irresponsible behavior.

Water bills frequently provide the first indication of problems with our water system. Approximately every 30 days Arlington County measures consumption at our 96 water meters and sends the Association an individual invoice for water/sewer use by the units and facilities served by each meter. These bills are routinely reviewed to identify any anomalies in consumption, especially increases that could indicate there are leaks in water laterals or plumbing problems, such as a constantly running toilet in a unit.

As shown in the graph on page 2, included with January 2022 water bill for the 22 units located

at 2818-2822 South Abingdon and 2833-2843 South Buchanan Streets, monthly water consumption for each group of buildings normally occurs at a relatively constant rate. In January 2022, however, consumption for these units more than doubled, signaling a potential problem with our system. Further investigation revealed that in this instance the supposed increase in consumption was actually caused by a faulty water meter. Arlington County replaced the meter and refunded the Association the portion

TOILETS ARE NOT LIQUID WASTE BASKETS. GARBAGE DISPOSALS ARE NOT WOOD CHIPPERS.

of the January 2022 bill attributable to the defect.

In other cases, however, spikes in consumption indicate that there are actual leaks in our water laterals or plumbing issues, which are remedied by excavating and replacing the lines or by staff inspections of individual units' plumbing.

Although our sewer relining program has been a success, we still experience occasional problems with our aging sewer laterals. In February 2022, for example, a section of the lateral serving several units on South 31st Street South broke and collapsed. Remedial action included excavating and replacing the section of broken line.

YOU CAN HELP AVOID BACKUPS

Our greatest continuing plumbing problems, however, are sewer blockages and backups caused by residents' improper disposal of items in garbage disposals and toilets. Toilets are not liquid waste baskets and garbage disposals are not wood chippers.

To keep our sewer lines clear, residents should follow the following rules:

- Do not dispose of grease, artichoke leaves, coffee grounds, corn husks, egg shells, chicken bones, celery, rice, or foods that cannot be ground through the garbage disposal — some of these items will go through the disposal but can later congeal or stick together to create stoppages.
- Do not flush hygiene products such as tampons, sanitary napkins, condoms (prophylactics), adult diapers, or baby diapers.
- Do not flush any wipes or paper towels, including those indicated as flushable or safe for plumbing, including baby wipes, face wipes, disinfecting wipes, and sanitary wipes.
- Do not flush cat litter, water bottles, cleaning rags, painting rags, fabric softener sheets, or dental floss.
- Do not flush any items not broken down by water.

- Equip drains with hair traps to prevent clogging.
- Use commercial drain cleaners as required, and snaking may also be appropriate.

THE REAL COST OF SEWER BACKUPS

With the exception of the rare cases when the causes of a backup can be traced to an individual unit and the owner can be held financially liable for the costs of clearing the blockage and remediating any accompanying damages, cleanup costs are borne by the Association as a whole. These expenses, moreover, may be passed on to owners in the form of higher condo fees. The amount of the Non-Insurance Loss line in the annual budget may need to be increased (we do not file insurance claims for losses of \$15,000 or less); and insurance premiums may rise if the Association files an excessive number of large cleanup claims under its master insurance policy. In April 2022, for example, residents' improper disposal of items in a common sewer line caused a massive sewer backup that affected 8 units on 28th Street South. The backup resulted in \$5,021 in uninsured cleanup and repair costs and a recently paid insurance claim of \$37,153.

WATER AND SEWER BILLS: A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET

Besides providing initial indications of possible problems with our water system, our 96 monthly Arlington County water/sewer bills together with their associated Alexandria Renew sewer bills form the basis for our annual water and sewer budget. In current Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22), which runs from Oct. 1, 2021, to Sept. 30, 2022, our water

and sewer budget (not actual billing)

totals \$1,000,000. This budget, approved at the Aug. 4, 2021, Board meeting, was based on a mid-year/pre-audited FY21 projected water/sewer cost of \$947,212 (final audited cost was \$940,030) derived by totaling 8 months of individual County and City water and sewer bills, adjusting this number to incorporate additional assumptions about future water use, and extrapolating to produce a full-year estimate.

In FY22, these additional assumptions included the likelihood that residents would continue spending more time in their homes and using more water as the pandemic continued. For example, during the pandemic's initial months, analysis of our 96 monthly County water/sewer bills indicated that the

Association's average daily water use increased by approximately 20%. Other FY22 assumptions were the estimated \$11,000 in additional Alexandria Renew sewage costs that would be added by the City's multi-year program to reduce pollution in the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay, and the continuing need for a small buffer (less than 5% of the total water/sewer budget) to absorb any unanticipated costs due to water lateral leaks or other causes. A water lateral leak, for example, can produce several thousand dollars in additional costs before it is identified through the aforementioned active monitoring of our monthly water bills.

This analysis is being repeated as we project next year's water/sewer spending and frame the FY23 budget. Our documented monthly water and sewer spending will continue to form the core of the annual estimate, which will be finalized after incorporating assumptions regarding future trends in water usage.

Harold L. Reem, Treasurer

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