

August 2006 Newsletter

Board Awards First Plaza-Level Water Remediation Contract

Following the 2005 Annual General Meeting, the Colecroft Station Board relieved Director Tom Manor of duties as Association point-man for water intrusion and took direct control; rented a two bedroom apartment in the 505 Tower and moved Tom in; and, after conducting a search, hired Seal Engineering to destructive-test Tom's 545 Plaza-level unit to discover how water seeps into our Towers. Seal discovered that the impermeable membrane under the Plaza brickwork functions as intended, but the flashing material it once tied into, at the interface with the 545 Tower, had deteriorated and become ineffective three or four years ago. This gap in coverage permitted rainwater 'ponding' in the porous brick to seep into the Tower at Plaza-level.

In May and June, Seal prepared remediation plans to install new waterproof flashing in 1/5 of the 545 Tower-Plaza perimeter and sent them out to six contractors. The work involves removing four courses of bricks at the base of the building while supporting the courses above in the interim, installing new waterproof flashing and then reinstalling the bricks. Five bids were returned in early August and ranged from \$25,485 to \$49,588. On advice from Seal, the Board awarded a \$25,485 contract to low-bid Culbertson Company. Seal is currently investigating whether the flashing deficiency obtains in the 505 and 610 Towers – which seems likely. In the event, the Board will award a second and much larger remediation contract in the autumn.

******* Seal Engineering's David Di Quollo will give a talk to Association Members about Plaza water remediation, in the Party Room, on September 21st at 7 PM. *******

In October 2005, as part of the Colecroft Station Reserve Study, the Board allocated \$160,000 to remediate Plaza water intrusion. The ultimate cost of the Plaza Water Intrusion Project will come to more than that. But, with \$600,000 in the Capital Repair Fund, Colecroft Station can finance the repairs without any special assessment.

Meanwhile, separate caulking and guttering projects are underway at roof level to batten down the hatches against water intrusion from the skies this winter.

Pet Questionnaire Results

17 Association Members (11%) responded to the June Newsletter Pet Questionnaire. 65% of the respondents were not in favor of changing the current limitation of a single pet. If the single pet limitation were changed, 82% considered that a yearly fee should be charged for the second pet. Of the pet owners who answered the Questionnaire, only one was in favor of creating a roster of willing 'aunts and uncles' to look after a pet in an emergency. Evidently, pet owners have made informal arrangements among themselves.

The Board reviewed the findings at the August Board Meeting. The low rate of response (11%) and tilt against multiple pets suggest that the original Bylaws and existing Resolutions embody a current consensus of Association Members and that these 16 year-old rules need not be changed.

Cautionary Tales about HVAC Replacement

Two Association Members recently replaced their HVAC units with more powerful systems. The new HVAC units rapidly cool the apartments and then shut off – instead of running continuously during torrid summer weather – and condensation develops in ducts and vents. Please remember that your HVAC unit is part of a whole system, which includes insulation in the walls and the number of your windows. The HVAC power needs to be balanced with these.

Another Association Member replaced his HVAC unit in 2004, using a contractor unknown to Management. Following a frigid December 2004 and January 2005, the Association Member called Colecroft Station's HVAC contractor, R&B. R&B noted that the heating element of the new HVAC unit had not been connected to the electric power supply and that the system had other deficiencies. The Association Member did not follow-up on R&B's recommendations. In the summer of 2005 and 2006, his HVAC performed poorly in cooling and de-humidifying the apartment. The hot-humid air contributed to the development of environmental issues. R&B has now prepared a work-plan to correct the HVAC deficiencies.

Catherine Drucker, the Covenants Committee Chair, has made a good suggestion that Management prepare a list of qualified local contractors and appropriate HVAC models.

Restoration of Common Property

Readers will recall a March Newsletter report that an Association Member had disposed of \$6,300 of Common Property and installed non-conforming windows without Association leave. Both Covenants Committee Chair, Catherine Drucker, and Association Counsel advised the Board that failure to take immediate action would lead to loss of Association control over Colecroft Station's signature facades – an intangible but important element of resale value. The Board met and communicated with the Association Member and his lawyer, over a 6-month period, in an effort to remedy the situation through an agreement. Faced with non-cooperation, the Board instructed Management to restore the windows to the original design, at the Association Member's expense. By virtue of this action, the Association re-establishes its control over the facades and brings the issue to a conclusion.

Non-Response of Garage Doors

Residents have experienced a decline in garage door response to our automatic openers. Cristar, our garage door contractor, believes that the poor response is caused by a 'haze' associated with wireless computers. Cristar is experimenting with new antenna modules to resolve the problem.

Staff Updates

Oscar Medina has joined Colecroft Station as our Groundsman and works under Orlis Cueva's supervision. Oscar is most diligent, a self-starter and a natural gardener. He was born in El Salvador, is married with three children and lives in Del Ray. Oscar is the brother of Nely Lopez-Medina, DEC's hardworking employee, who has been housekeeping the common areas in Colecroft Station since 2002. Nely is married with three children and also lives in Del Ray. Both Oscar and Nely are Green Card holders and look forward to acquiring U.S. Citizenship. If you see Nely housekeeping, or Oscar gardening, let them know what a good job they are doing.

Orlis Cueva has completed a 12-week course on HVAC Maintenance and a 16-week course on Microsoft Office. Next month he will begin a program on English Communication.