

October 2008 Newsletter

No Increase in Condo Fees for 2009

On October 16, 2008 the Colecroft Station Board of Directors adopted the 2009 Budget. Through significant cost containments in the Operating Fund, due in large part to competitive bidding by KPA Site Manager Marlene Jose, the Board was able to:

- Increase contributions to the Capital Repair and Replacement Reserve Fund by over \$15,000 to \$218,200;
- Pay for over \$18,500 in increased utility bills, contracted maintenance and management fees;
- Maintain monthly condo fees for 2009 at 2008 levels.

Re-flashing of 505 Completed

EV Airtight Shoemaker, which re-flashed the 545 and 610 Towers at the Plaza interface, completed re-flashing the 505 Tower walls in October. Once again, the contracting company removed four courses of brickwork and tied a new waterproof wall-membrane to the existing waterproof Plaza deck-membrane. The company then subjected the affected perimeter to a 24-hour flood-test. Once the new wall-flashing of the 505 Tower had passed a 24-hour flood-test, EV Airtight Shoemaker rebuilt the brick walls and patio decking disturbed during construction.

Landscape Restoration

The three Tower wall-flashing projects disturbed all plantings in the raised Plaza beds. Mindful of an Alexandria Police Audit that advised the Association to limit the height of shrubs in the Plaza, the Board instructed competing landscape companies to re-plant the beds with low-growing plant materials consistent with those established elsewhere on the property. Springfield Nursery, which performed the restoration and enhanced the Tower entrances, supplemented the existing selection – low growing Holly, Liriope, Yew and Juniper shrubs, Birch and Magnolia trees – with pink Knockout Roses, Winter Jasmine and Redbud trees. The vertical / multi-stem trees are used as a contrast to the low growing shrubs.

Charles Houston Community Center Joins Nearby Oswald Durant Center

Construction of the new \$15 million City of Alexandria Charles Houston Community Center, located three blocks east of Colecroft Station, at 901 Wythe Street, is nearly complete. The facility is expected to open in April 2009. The 35,000 square foot Center, will house a full-size basketball court, a dance and yoga room, a fitness equipment room, a room for boxing and martial arts, suites for senior and pre-school programs, a computer lab and a U-shaped swimming pool. Alexandria Parks and Recreation is finalizing the 2009 Program for the new facility. Recreation Directors stress that service philosophy at the Charles Houston Center will be comparable with that of other facilities in terms of no

charge for most programs, and a nominal charge for programs such as dance or yoga that involve certified specialist instructors.

Programming at the Charles Houston Community Center will complement the Oswald Durant Memorial Center on 1605 Cameron Street, whose ethos is summarized by the Center's Mission Statement, "Where Music, Dance and Theater Come Alive." To this end the Durant Center, located four blocks south of Colecroft Station, includes one grand hall and stage, four multipurpose and practice rooms, a kitchen, gallery and ancillary facilities.

Incidentally, are you ready for the November 22, 2008 Governor's Ball at Gadsby's Tavern? If unsure about your minuet skills, the Gadsby's Tavern Museum is organizing three 18th Century dance classes on November 6, 13 and 20 for \$30. Information about the classes and tickets to the Ball, featuring patriot Governor Patrick Henry (Give me Liberty, or give me Death), may be acquired by calling 703-838-4242 or by contacting www.gadsbytaVERN.org (While dancing with Governor Henry, we recommend that you not mention the proposed Federal Constitution, lately come from Philadelphia and now up for ratification. He is very opposed.)

Parker-Gray Welcomes Dr. Morton Sherman

Dr. Morton Sherman, Alexandria's new Superintendent of Schools, spoke to the Parker-Gray neighborhood at the Durant Center on October 14, 2008. Dr. Morton, who is a distinguished educator, started by saying that he had arrived in Alexandria from his former positions in Tenafly and Cherry Hill, New Jersey, with no preconceived programs. However, he shared his philosophy that our school system should pay as much attention to the middle 70% of school-kids as to the high-performing top and troubled bottom 15%. Every child in Alexandria City Public Schools deserves an individual educational plan and monitoring. Dr. Morton also said that he had implemented in New Jersey the "International Baccalaureate" curriculum developed by international schools serving children of diplomats abroad, whose families change countries every two to three years. He would like to raise the academic bar in Alexandria by introducing the new curriculum at all grade levels, with tests being scored in Geneva, Switzerland. Dr. Morton also wondered whether a Kindergarten through 8th Grade school format might be better than current practice of large middle schools and was very happy to hear that many in the room had experienced and liked such a format. Regarding our neighborhood Jefferson-Houston School, Dr. Morton praised the commitment of staff and families.

Acknowledging that the existing facility was dated, he noted that there was space to build a new building on the property for a new Kindergarten through 8th Grade school before dismantling the older building.

Dr. Morton's recognition of Jefferson-Houston's value and potential was much appreciated by Parker-Gray and Colecroft Station residents who have heard, over the years, denigrating comments about the school from some in the development community who have been recommending conversion of its playing fields to multi-family housing.

Miscellaneous Housekeeping

- The Colecroft Station Association is a corporation established to maintain the walls, roofs, windows, elevators and other “Common Elements” needed to sustain privately owned units. The Association collects monthly fees, hires and bonds Site Staff and awards contracts to specialized firms to keep the “Common Elements” in good repair. Our Site Staff is very service-oriented but should not be asked to supervise repair and home-improvement contractors hired by unit-owners. It would be as inappropriate for our Site Staff to monitor privately contracted work in units unrelated to the “Common Elements,” as it would be for them to take unit-owners’ cars to the gas station for an oil change.
- Left-over paint and household hazardous waste may be left at no cost at the Alexandria Waste Facility at 3600 Wheeler Avenue between 7:30 am and 3:30 pm on Monday and Saturday. Facility workers will ask to see a driver’s license as proof of residence in the City.