

# Brownstone Homeowners' Association

## *Brownstone HOA Newsletter April 2024*



### **Happy Spring to Our Brownstone Owners!**

We hope you are all doing well, and we welcome our new owners.

### **Board Member Update**

At the Annual Meeting of Owners in February, the election of board members was conducted for the open positions, and the following Owners comprise your HOA board for 2024:

Laurel Moad – President

Sharon Bringelson – Treasurer

Anita Walls – Secretary

Brian Filer – Director

Oscar Abello - Director

### **Special Brownstone Board Meeting re EIFS**

Due to water infiltration concerns at several units, the board identified potential issues with the EIFS (exterior insulation finishing systems) material. Inspections were done, and the board has requested a meeting to discuss these results with Kapson, the inspection company. The board seeks to understand the actions that need to be taken in the short and long term, as well as receive input on priorities.

This meeting of the Board will be held virtually on Mon Apr 29 at 4:30-5:30 pm, and owners are invited to listen and observe in order to be well informed about this potentially costly project as it develops.

Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone. <https://meet.goto.com/647756565>

You can also dial in using your phone.

Access Code: 647-756-565

### **Quarterly Brownstone Board Meeting**

The next regular HOA Board meeting will be held in person on Mon May 13 at 6:30 pm at the St. Charles Public Library.

### **Planned Projects for 2024**

In the 2024 budget, the following projects are planned.

- Roof, gutter, and downspout replacement for three buildings.
- Refinishing of front doors.
- Painting of metal gates, railings, and patio enclosure toppers.

The board will also do their annual Spring Walk Around with our Property Manager on Fri May 3 to identify other places where repairs and maintenance may be needed. If you are aware of any such areas, please contact Holly Marek by Apr 30 with details, including photos. Email [hmarek@fosterpremier.com](mailto:hmarek@fosterpremier.com)

The board prioritizes repairs if safety or damage is a concern. Otherwise, needed repairs are grouped with similar issues for cost efficiency.

## Brownstone Beautification Tips and Tricks

A quick reminder about Owner responsibilities as it relates to weed removal on your private property.

**Keystone units** (garage in front) Rear brick private patios, the gravel area housing the A/C units, under deck areas, gardens around pear trees, and the narrow beds between the front porch and driveway.

**Fieldstone units** (garage in back) Between rear driveways, the area in front of the house to the top concrete step of the porch, and the planting beds in front of the Fieldstones.

Please take a minute to clean your decks, the patio stairs, and railings. If you notice a green moss-like substance, you can apply Wet & Forget, or you can use diluted Simple Green and a soft bristle brush to remove. You may also use a light power washer. And a reminder that nothing may be hung from or on the black aluminum railings, nor from the privacy walls.



## Planting of Annuals and Perennials

With the onset of warmer weather, Owners may be wondering what may be planted around their units.

For **Keystone units**, the narrow strip(s) of ground between the driveway and front entry stairs is the only plantable land in the front of your unit. Plants there may remain unless you wish to replace them at your own expense. Annuals (plants that live only one season) may be planted in this space without HOA approval. Perennials or any other shrubs will need HOA approval. Anything planted by an owner

is the owner's responsibility to maintain. The T-shaped planting bed in front of the gate is common property and may only have HOA plants in it. Pots of plants may be placed on the porch. In the back of the unit, owners may use pots and containers on the patio and deck. Annuals are permitted in the beds on the inside of patio enclosures. Perennials or shrubs will need HOA approval.

For **Fieldstone units**, annuals may be planted in the narrow gardens owners share with neighbors, between the driveways. The planting of annuals anywhere else or the planting of perennials, shrubs or trees anywhere requires HOA approval. Plants in containers can be placed on the back deck or front stoop without prior approval. Anything planted by an owner is the owner's responsibility to maintain.

It is suggested that before you submit an A&A form, to consult with our Landscaping Chair, Fran Gilmartin [gilonfox@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gilonfox@sbcglobal.net), to get her input on your proposal. Fran does an excellent job keeping our landscaping beautiful, and she is happy to help you choose plants and flowers.

## Helpful Reminders/Did You Know...

- **Dogs** - We are a dog-friendly community with rules for pets written in our by-laws. There is also a City of St. Charles pet ordinance. Be sure to walk your dog(s) on a leash, and always pick up after your dog(s), whether in the Brownstones, the open field off Cobblestone, or a nearby park or neighborhood.
- **Parking** – Owners are to park in garages and on their driveway. Our streets are not intended to have cars parked across from our driveways, nor at the curb near the driveways. Visitor parking is allowed on the opposite side of some of our streets. Please adhere to the No Parking signs and have contractors and visitors park on your driveway or in the designated indented parking on Brownstone.
- **Garbage/Recycling** - According to our bylaws, you may place garbage and recycling bins at the curb on the night before garbage pickup, no earlier than 7:00 pm, and remove them by 9:00 pm on the day of garbage pickup.



## Neighborhood Awareness

With our neighborhood so close to downtown and public parks, we have recently seen homeless persons in the area, including on our property. There have been no incidents where our owners or property seemed to be in danger. We want to provide some guidance in case you may encounter strangers on our property.

1. Ensure your safety and call the police. Do not interact with or engage. The police are trained to handle this type of situation, and have responded quickly. Do not attempt to remove an individual yourself due to the unpredictable nature of the situation.

2. Alerting the police brings in the professionals and highlights our situation in general. If the police know this is an issue, they can pay extra attention during their patrols.

3. Be aware of your surroundings! When arriving and leaving your home, take a moment to look around. Again, avoidance is the best strategy in these situations. Please look out for your neighbors as well.

A related concern, we have recently heard of instances in the downtown area where pedestrians have been followed to their homes. Again, please exercise awareness and caution, and do not hesitate to call the police if you see suspicious activity.

## Thinking of Making a Change?

Additions and Alterations (A&A) process is your required and critical first step to make any changes or improvements to the exterior of any building, patio, entry stoop, or your private deeded property. All changes to the exterior of the property must be requested through the A&A process, using the A&A. The inclusion of an accurate sketch, photos of materials, etc. are required. Upon receipt, the Board will review and provide feedback. No work should be committed to or started prior to Board approval of the A&A. Please refer to Rule 1 – Additions or Alterations to Exteriors in the Rules and Regulations of the HOA documents for additional information.



Brownstone Al Fresco Fridays are a wonderful way to meet new neighbors & get reacquainted with your fellow Brownstone residents. Drop by with your favorite beverage and/or snack. Bring a chair if you like. You can find Alfresco Fridays at the open space at Brownstone and Cobblestone Drives, starting at 5:30 pm on the following Fridays:

- May 24
- June 28
- July 26
- August 23
- September 13
- October – TBD depending on weather

## Property Management Contact Information:

Holly Marek, Community Association Manager,  
[hmarek@fosterpremier.com](mailto:hmarek@fosterpremier.com) or (815) 886-4604.