

# Brownstone Homeowners' Association

## Brownstone HOA Newsletter June 2024



### EIFS Repair/Maintenance Project Update

A detailed RFP has been created and sent to several recommended contractors. Responses are due at the end of June. The board and property manager will review, seek clarifications, determine the scope of work to be undertaken in 2024, and select a company to perform the work. Additional information will be provided to owners as progress is made on these steps.

### Planned Projects for 2024

In the 2024 budget, the following projects are planned.

- **Roof, gutter, and downspout replacement for three buildings** – contract conditionally approved for 301-341, 502-526, and 534-550 Brownstone Drive. The work is not yet scheduled and owners will be advised in advance of the start date.
- **Refinishing of front doors** – our property manager is collecting bids.
- **Painting of metal gates, railings, and patio enclosure toppers** – bids pending.

Additional repair and maintenance projects are also being considered.

### Overgrown Shrubs

As most of our landscaping is approximately 20-years old, it is time to consider replacing and/or removing some of your private property plants which are well past their prime. These include:

- Lilacs on the sides of most buildings, particularly those units that receive a lot of sun on their side planting beds. These Miss Kims lilacs grow to a height of 6-9 ft and a width of 5-7 ft. These lilacs were over-planted by the developer, which was easy to do when they were only one foot high. Suggestions are to remove every other or every third lilac to give the remaining ones some breathing room or replace and replant with something more appropriate in size.
- Juniper evergreens on the sides of rear patio walls of end units on the river and the side of garages of end unit Fieldstones. Many owners have already removed these aging monstrosities. Anyone wishing to remove junipers or lilacs should contact the landscape chair, Fran Gilmartin at [gilonfox@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gilonfox@sbcglobal.net), for advice about how to go about doing this.

If you prefer to keep your junipers, be aware that junipers do not take well to being sheared with power pruners, which is the only pruning our landscapers do. Pruning junipers this way results with an ugly skeleton of a shrub with bald spots and bare branches.

To correctly prune a juniper, large branches should be trimmed with a pruning saw following a specific procedure. Fran can provide instructions and also contractor recommendations.



## Landscaping Water Needs

It is shaping up to be a very hot summer. Please remember that owners are responsible for watering the plants in their private property gardens. Grass, on both private and common property is watered by the inground sprinklers.

**For Keystone owners** (garage in front)\_the private property gardens include:

- The narrow strip(s) of land that border your driveway from the garage to the front gate.
- The side of the unit (for end units).
- Inside the brick walled patio and the area around the patio where the pear trees, yews and day lilies are planted.

**For Fieldstone owners** (garage in the rear)\_the private property gardens include:

- Between the front of the building to the start of the concrete stoop.
- The side of the unit (end units).
- The planting beds between the driveways.

## Window Maintenance

While it is commonly accepted that the Homeowner's Association is responsible for exterior repair and maintenance, it is less understood that windows are owner responsibility. During the annual spring walk-around inspection of the Brownstones, the board noticed several units where windows were showing their age. Below are some examples to demonstrate areas that would benefit from repair or replacement.



The above photo shows a seal that has become detached from the window. This seal is designed to keep moisture out of the wooden frame that encases the glass. If this seal separates, moisture can enter the wood frame and hasten the rot. Owners may also have their glass frames sealed to offer an extra layer of protection against weather elements and prolong window frame life.



This picture shows wood rot on the bottom edge of the window. The builder did not seal or paint the outer window edges, leaving the frame exposed to moisture. This window is in dire need of repair or replacement (as noted by this inspector 😊).

Moveable window frames can be replaced without replacement of the entire window structure, which is significantly less expensive. On the Brownstone website, you can find a list of vendors that specialize in window replacement. <https://www.brownstone-homeowner.com/recommended-contractors>



This is the same window, shown from the inside, where signs of rot can again be observed.

As for all additions and alterations, an A & A form is required for window replacement. Of course, the windows must match the old ones (same size, same model, Pella manufacturer) in order to preserve the building's uniform exterior appearance.

## Friendly Reminders

- **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.
- **HOA website is live!** – this new website is a great resource for owners. <https://www.brownstone-homeowner.com/> Several pages are protected and the password is Brownstone2024!



You can find Alfresco Fridays at the open space at Brownstone and Cobblestone Drives, starting at 5:30 pm on the following Fridays:

- June 28 – Theme “USA”.
- July 26 – The musical duo Afternoon Logic will provide entertainment.
- August 23
- September 13



## July 4<sup>th</sup> in St Charles

Fireworks will be launched at dark from Langum Park, the same location as in 2023. Around noon on July 4th, a red balloon will be launched to assist viewers in finding a great viewing spot for the fireworks. Along the Fox River, at Pottowatomie Park and east of our development, are great viewing areas.

In addition to the fireworks show, there will be activities at both Pottowatomie Park and Mt. St. Mary Park. For more information, visit <https://www.stcparks.org/july-4th/>

## Property Management Contact Information:

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