



# The Reflection Homes Association Community Newsletter

February 2024



## RHA Board & Committee News:

### Upcoming Meetings:

Board	Feb 12
ACC	Feb 5
Recreation	Feb 20
SA	Feb 28

Until further notice, all meetings will be **online** at 7 p.m. & are subject to change.

The RHA website has instructions on attending online meetings.

[www.rha-homes.org](http://www.rha-homes.org)

### Important Dates:

Feb 2	Groundhog Day
Feb 7	Lailat al Miraj
Feb 10	Chinese New Year
Feb 11	Super Bowl VIII
Feb 12	Abraham Lincoln's birthday
Feb 13	Mardi Gras
Feb 14	Ash Wednesday
Feb 14	Valentine's Day
Feb 19	President's Day  fcps holiday
Feb 22	George Washington's birthday
Feb 24	Lailatul Barat
Mar 5	VA Presidential Primary Election 

### Board of Directors:

by Mike Olson, Board Vice President

In accordance with the resolutions governing the respective RHA committees, volunteers were appointed to the Architectural Control Committee and the Street Ambassador Committee during the January Board meeting. All current members of the Architectural Control Committee were reappointed and three new members: Charles Marts, Lindsey O'Neill and Stephanie Dalton were appointed as Street Ambassadors.

The board also discussed a meeting held in December with Dominion Energy. While the project to install LED lights on Dominion-owned poles continues (13 done, 5 to go), the board is looking at options for upgrading the association owned lights.

Get ready for a busy spring. The reserve study calls for sealcoating and repaving some of our parking

lots, curb and gutter repairs, and refreshing our entrance sign. The board has also budgeted for a comprehensive inspection of our homes this year. Now would be a good time to dig out the architectural guidelines and plan to address items that might be out of compliance.



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## It's Girl Scout Cookie Time!

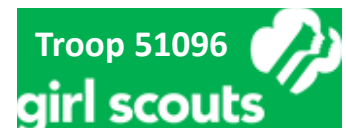
by Lourdes Umana, RCI member

Once again, RHA's Troop 51096 (along with other troops nationwide) is selling cookies! In RHA, several of the young ladies will be going door-to-door. You can view the selection at:

<https://www.girlscouts.org/meetthecookies>. To order direct from a Troop 51096 scout go to: <https://bit.ly/Makayla-GS-Cookies> or to:

<https://bit.ly/Sophie-GS-Cookies> Also, you can email your request to: [troop51096@jamieanderson.org](mailto:troop51096@jamieanderson.org) Or call Assistant Scout Leader

Lourdes Umana at 703-618-8463. Online, email and phone orders will be delivered to your door.



### Architectural Control Committee (ACC):

by Leron Culbreath, ACC Chair

At the January ACC Meeting, 2 applications were reviewed and approved: screened-in porch, new windows & sliding glass doors).

The next two ACC meetings will occur at 7pm on February 5th, 2024 and March 4th, 2024 at the following link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88050150929?pwd=ODdXaFhGRXFyK3g5YXA5bnhhMWh4dz09>

**Did You Know...** "Applications for any exterior changes or additions to Lots within Reflections Homes Association ("RHA") must be submitted in writing to the Association in care of the management agent". Work should not commence until the application is approved.

**Did You Know...** It's time to obtain seeds and plan out your gardens for the upcoming spring?

**Did You Know...** This is the best time to prune your trees prior to the upcoming growing season?

**Did You Know...** Much of the East/Central US is expected to encounter a rare double brood emergence of cicadas, which last happened in 1803 and won't happen again until 2245? This will occur when ground temperatures reach 63 degrees F. RHA is close to where one of the broods last emerged (unlike the Chicago area, which will have both). The news channels will have more information as the time approaches. Start planning how you will protect your young trees from having cicadas lay their eggs in them, & get ready for the "Spring Symphony".

(continued on page 2)

## RHA Board

### President:

John Hanchulak

### Vice President:

Mike Olson

### Treasurer:

Matthew Knepper

### Secretary:

Michael H (name withheld by request)

### At Large:

Nicholas Viau

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FirstService Residential:  
703-385-1133  
800-927-4599 (24 hour)

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**Recreation Committee, Inc. (RCI):** by Gene Harper, RCI Member

The committee met Jan 10, with seven members present and new community association manager Jonathan Stamps. He was assigned by new contractor FirstService Residential property management company, which began operating in RCI on Jan 1. Two community members were present to voice questions and concerns about the 2024 budget and the reserve funds mechanism. Members voted to approve the fictitious naming process for the new "Recreation Association" designation for the Recreation Committee, Inc. (See related article on page 3.)

Stamps informed the committee that the FirstService Residential welcome packet information was nearly "ready to go" to residents and would include information "for (how) people who are already owners of Reflection Homes can link their Recreation account to their Reflection account." The packet would also include information about how to pay RCI dues. He noted that there would be a Spanish language version of the packet.

The committee approved the 2022 draft audit of RCI financials.

A new meeting date was approved: the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month, beginning on Feb. 20 at 7 p.m.

NOTE: The committee did not get its snow-removal plans into place after the Jan. 16 snowfall in time for the Jan. 17 return to school along the Parcher Ave sidewalk on the pool side between the pool and the Saunders Drive intersection. However, snow was moved promptly after the Jan. 19 snowfall, and there should be no snowfall removal problems going forward.

FURTHER NOTE: Community Association Manager Jonathan Stamps has stated that it's standard practice to use either magnesium chloride or calcium chloride treatments on community sidewalks to melt snowfall. Residents with pets are encouraged to avoid treated areas because of possible chemical contamination.

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### RHA January Snow Days



tion. Here a few suggestions from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals:



1. Don't let dogs eat any of the salt or any of the snow (especially the slushy snow) outside that may have been treated with an ice melt.
2. Wipe your pet's paws as soon as they get inside with a damp cloth or baby wipes. Minimize paw licking until their paws are completely clean. This will also help minimize risk for skin irritation that may be seen from walking through ice melts
3. If you have a sensitive dog whose paw pads are becoming irritated, cracked or are bleeding from the ice melts, paw wax or doggie booties provide an excellent barrier to minimize risk to sensitive feet.
4. Keep all ice melt packaging out of paws' reach.



**Street Ambassadors (SA):** by Charlie Marts, Street Ambassador Chair

The Street Ambassadors will be meeting the last Wednesday of the month going forward, beginning with January 31st.

Goals:

- Increase resident/owner participation in key challenges facing the community
- Help educate the community on rules, key contacts, upcoming events and key board Initiatives
- Be the eyes, ears and heart of the community, representing street concerns to the board
- Promote resident/homeowner participation while improving the community

Interested in becoming part of the RHA Street Ambassadors?

Contact us at [Ambassadors@RHA-Homes.org](mailto:Ambassadors@RHA-Homes.org)

# Why is a Reserve Study Important?

by Charles Marts, Board Past President

Boards are responsible to protect, maintain, and enhance the physical and financial assets of the association. To meet our responsibility, we set assessment rates to match anticipated expenses. Those expenses may be "operational" (daily, weekly, or monthly bills), or they may be the silent ongoing "cost" of the deterioration of our major components. While we generally feel we have a good handle on our operational expenses, to prepare for inevitable major component repairs or replacements we need to know the answers to three important questions:

- 1- What are our upcoming major expenses and when will they occur? (i.e. parking lot/sidewalk/road repair or replacement)
- 2- Do we currently have "enough \$\$" in reserves?
- 3- How much should we be setting aside towards reserves?

The RHA Board gets fresh answers to the above questions in an updated Reserve Study every 5 years (RHA's last one was in 2019).

Current reserve funds are sufficient to cover projected maintenance expenses outlined in the 2019 study. Future reserve funding will be determined by the 2024 study.

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## A "New" Name, but Functions Just the Same....

by Gene Harper, RCI Member

Welcome to the "new" **Recreation Association**. For real, The Recreation Committee, Inc. has gotten permission from the state to do business as the "Recreation Association" under a legal process called "fictitious name filing" that's available to businesses and organizations.

Why? Back during our community's founding in the mid-1970s an Easement Agreement created The Recreation Committee, Inc. to administer the common grounds and facilities bordering Reflection Homes Association and Lake Homes Association. This included all the areas on both sides of the creek running through our communities -- grassy areas, tot lots, asphalt courts, pathways and the pool and its parking lot.

The RCI was set up as an 8-member committee that worked like a board, including specific officers. And to complicate matters the RCI name also referred to the combined 764 RHA and LHA residents. But unlike a typical committee, the RCI does not work under HOA board direction like other standing committees, such as RHA's Architectural Control Committee. Rather, it's an autonomous self-governing body. Over the next 50 years, RCI started being pronounced "reck," and written as "REC," or "rec," shorthand for "Recreation." And it was hard to link anything in writings or conversations related to the term "RCI."

So a few years ago committee members started a push for people to use the proper moniker RCI instead of REC or Rec. After all, RCI's initials stood for the real name. But to no avail, the attempt failed miserably. People quite naturally kept using REC/rec.

Reserve expenses are the largest expenses an association will face. Preparing adequately for large reserve expenses typically takes years of properly sized contributions.



Errors in contribution size will compound over the years, causing special assessments or deferred maintenance.

A Reserve Study identifies the scope and schedule of these inevitable major upcoming expenses, evaluates the association's current level of financial preparedness, and recommends a fair and responsible plan of reserve contributions. Success means having enough funds set aside in order to accomplish our Reserve projects in a timely manner without special assessments.

In addition, responsibly sized Reserve contributions mean every homeowner pays their fair share of the ongoing cost of common area deterioration. Reserve expenses are large, but predictable.

A Reserve Study provides us the insights we need to:

- see into the future and avoid surprises,
- keep our assessments fair,
- avoid special assessments, and
- maximize our property values.



Recently as RCI officers worked on the new property management contract process, they kept running into contract language problems: Was RCI the small board member committee or the 764-resident community? It was a mind-grinding experience.

Then several officers found a solution: Apply "Recreation Association" as the "doing business as" term for "The Recreation Committee, Inc." They recently completed the state-mandated process. And from now on, all things The Recreation Committee, Inc. will be called "Recreation Association." This easy reference will work its way everywhere -- in formal contracting, policy and banking dealings.

The move also helps the committee in another important area. "Being incorporated as a committee made it difficult to obtain (general liability) insurance," said Colleen Ward, who has served as secretary both in the RCI and RHA and who worked on the name change. "Committees do not typically obtain insurance in their name; rather, they are covered under the HOA board's insurance." The RCI's president, Ginny Rodgers, agreed: the incorporation term hurt the RCI's insurance standing and made "ensuing Fictitious Name Filing as a first step in helping to correct the misperception."

So expect "Rec" or "REC" and "Rec Association" to branch their way out of "Recreation Association" -- even as formal name "The Recreation Committee, Inc." remains -- for now.

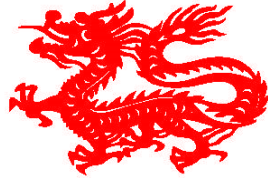
\*\*\*\*NOTES\*\*\*\*

**Fairfax County Hypothermia Prevention Program:** Since 2005 this program has provided warm food, shelter, clothing and other supportive services to the homeless during the winter months. From Dec 1 to March 31 the County has multiple emergency shelters for individuals and families who are homeless. It's on a "no-turnaway" policy: no one needs to sleep in the cold. If you see someone who is unsheltered and at risk of hypothermia you can call the FCPD non-emergency phone number, 703-691-2131. If it is an emergency, call 911.

More info and flyers in English and Spanish are available at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/hypothermia-prevention-program>

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2024 is the **Year of the Wood Dragon**, beginning on February 10th, 2024 (Chinese New Year) and concluding on January 28th, 2025 (Chinese New Year's Eve).



*Year of the Dragon*

**Dranesville Office Open House:** New Dranesville District Supervisor **Jimmy Bierman** invites you to his first Open House. Enjoy light refreshments & meet Supervisor Bierman & the staff. Saturday, Feb 4, 4-6 pm, at the McLean Government Center Community Room, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean.

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**Virginia Presidential Primary Election is "Super Tuesday" March 5:** Virginia is one of 15 states holding presidential primary elections on the same day. It's an "open" primary: registered voters can vote in either the Democratic or the Republican primary (not both).



Good Neighbors in RHA



RHA Newsletter submissions: Inputs/comments/suggestions for the March 2024 RHA newsletter are due by February 20. Send inputs to [newsletter@rha-homes.org](mailto:newsletter@rha-homes.org)

# February 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 (January)  DATA PRIVACY DAY	29	30	31  National Hot Chocolate Day	1	2  Groundhog Day	3  NATIONAL WOMEN PHYSICIANS DAY
4  Grammy Awards	5 7:00-9:00pm ★ ACC online meeting  National Weatherperson's Day	6  SAFER INTERNET DAY	7  Lailat al Miraj	8  World Read Aloud Day	9  National Pizza Day	10  CHINESE NEW YEAR
11  SUPER BOWL	12 7:00-9:00 ★ Board online meeting  Abraham Lincoln's Birthday (1809)	13  Mardi Gras	14  ASH WEDNESDAY	15  Happy Valentine's Day	16	17
18  NATIONAL DRINK WINE DAY	19  Presidents' Day fcps holiday	20 7:00-9:00pm ★ RCI online meeting  National LOVE YOUR PET DAY	21	22  George Washington's Birthday (1732)	23  Iwo Jima Flag Raised (1945)	24  Lailatul Barat
25	26	27	28 7:00-9:00pm ★ SA online meeting Operation Desert Storm ends (1991)	29  HOPPY LEAP DAY	1 (March)  Employee Appreciation Day	2  Read Across America Day

This newsletter is created by the Board of Directors of Reflection Homes Association in order to inform you about its work, and to keep you updated on things important to our neighborhood. If you have any questions, suggestions, or contributions to this newsletter, please email them to: [board@RHA-Homes.org](mailto:board@RHA-Homes.org) and/or [newsletter@RHA-Homes.org](mailto:newsletter@RHA-Homes.org)  
Visit: <http://rha-homes.org> to read past newsletters, or to request email newsletter delivery.