

# WESTCHESTER GARDENS OWNERS, INC. NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2019

WESTCHESTER GARDENS  
OWNERS, INC.

## 2020 OPERATING BUDGET

At a meeting of the Westchester Gardens Board of Directors held on October 23, the 2020 Operating Budget was approved that provides for a 1% increase in the monthly maintenance charges commencing January 1, 2020.

### Board of Directors

Lou Cirillo

Kim A. Derbin

Michael Hughes

Trevor Victor

Robert Orlofsky

Jeffrey Sommers

In spite of forecasted increases in Real Estate Taxes that go up every year, as well as insurance and general operating expenses, the Board was able to limit the maintenance increase to 1%.

The Westchester Gardens increases in maintenance charges have averaged just over 1% a year for the past 6 years.

According to Mark Cohen our accountant from Bloom & Streit, it is very rare that a Co-op Board can limit its maintenance increases to 1% per year and Bloom & Streit represents more than 350 Cooperatives and Condominiums throughout New York Tri-state area.

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### Superintendent

Dominic Totino  
914-664-2565

Converting our heating system from oil to natural gas (dual fuel) has already provided solid savings. Even with oil prices coming down, gas is still less expensive, burns cleaner and has fewer maintenance issues. In 2014 Westchester Gardens spent \$252,000 to heat the building using oil. Now, six years later the 2020 budget forecast for gas heat is \$120,000. Less than half the cost; a huge savings.

**Very Important – If you pay your maintenance through ClickPay or via a bank, please be sure to edit your January 2020 payment to the new amount so there will not be a balance forward on your account.**

Shareholders may download a copy of the 2020 Operating Budget by going to [www.robortorlofsky.com](http://www.robortorlofsky.com), click on Properties, then Westchester Gardens.

## ANNUAL SHAREHOLDERS MEETING

The Westchester Gardens Annual Shareholders Meeting was held on November 19 and we would like to thank the shareholders that attended and participated. There was a lot of good feedback and suggestions.

Mr. Mark Cohen from the accounting firm of Bloom & Streit reviewed the 2018 Financial Report, 2019 financials year to date and a 2020 Operating Budget.

He reported that Westchester Gardens has been doing very well financially and with the savings from the conversion of the heating system from oil to natural gas a minimum maintenance increase of 1% was approved by the Board for next year.

**WESTCHESTER GARDENS OWNERS, INC.**  
**NEWSLETTER**

Mark pointed out that the decision to refinance the Westchester Gardens mortgage in 2015 was a home run because the interest rate of 3.82% is fixed for the 10-year term and the Co-op has been able to make major capital improvements without the need to impose an assessment on the shareholders.

Mr. Cohen advised that the Westchester Gardens Reserve Fund totals \$780,000 and is invested in U. S. Treasury bills.

Robert Orlofsky gave a management report.

Last year shareholders suggested the bike room conditions be improved. The Board responded and approved construction of a brand new combination storage and bicycle room in B building. The new room is clean and bright and has a security camera monitoring the activity within the room.

For several years the Board has investigated a project to replace all of the building entry doors and repair the entry vestibules. Plans to replace the doors has been filed with the City of Mt. Vernon Building Department and work will move forward next spring.

Other long range capital improvements being investigated include roof, window replacement, upgrades to the plumbing system and replacement of the oil tank.

There was then an open discussion with recommendations from shareholders with regard to the building maintenance and operation.

### **NEW HEATING CONTROL INSTALLED**

In response to the shareholder comments a new computerized heat timer control was installed last year. Shareholders that were complaining that their apartments were “too hot” report that their apartment is comfortable. The apartments the furthest distance from the boiler in A & K building also report the heat is much better.

The new heat timer control has further adjustments that can be made.

If you feel your apartment is too hot or not hot enough, please contact Dominic at (914) 664-2565 for service.

### **ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS**

The insurance carrier for Westchester Gardens requires when a kitchen is to be renovated that the fuse panel is replaced with a circuit breaker panel that is in accordance with building code.

Residents should take precaution when using any electrical device.  
 Overloading a line with power strips is a potential “fire hazard”.

### **WINDOW AIR CONDITIONERS**

The insurance company has required Westchester Gardens to make provisions that a window air conditioner be installed in a manner that would prevent it from falling out and potentially injuring a pedestrian.

The Board approved our carpenter to install your air conditioner with a steel bar across the top that would keep the air conditioner stable even if the top window opens.

If you have not yet had your air conditioner properly installed, please contact Dominic.  
 There is no charge to have your window air conditioners installed.

## **BUILDING SECURITY**

All areas of the parking lot and dumpsters have security camera coverage and have enhanced lighting that have acted as a deterrent to theft and vandalism in the parking lot.

If you **“SEE SOMETHING—SAY SOMETHING”**. If you see any suspicious individuals that do not look familiar or vehicles driving through our parking lot that don't belong, please immediately call “911”.

## **SHAREHOLDER APARTMENT REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE**

Shareholders are responsible for maintaining the interior of their apartments including the interior walls and floors. There has been more than one occurrence when a leak developed between apartments and the cause was poor maintenance of the bathroom interior wall or floor tile. In that situation the shareholder whose tile was in disrepair would be responsible for damage to their neighbor's bathroom.

If you accidentally overflow your sink or bathtub, the shareholder that caused the damage would be responsible. Another example is a refrigerator ice maker or a dishwasher. Ice makers and dishwashers can leak and cause damage to apartments below; again, the shareholder who owns the equipment would be responsible for any building damage. It is very important and required that all shareholders purchase and keep in force an apartment insurance policy. The insurance policy would pay for damage to your apartment and for neighbor's damage as well.

## **SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS SAVES LIVES**

It is the law in New York that requires all apartments to be equipped with a carbon monoxide and smoke detector. A carbon monoxide/smoke detector can save your life.

It is recommended that you test and replace the battery in your smoke detector now to be sure that it is working properly. We also recommend that you install a smoke detector in every bedroom of your apartment.

Kidde is a very large manufacturer of smoke/carbon monoxide detectors and their website is full of fire safety recommendations. For more information go to [www.kiddeus.com](http://www.kiddeus.com).

If you hear a smoke alarm going off in the building, please immediately call 911, and then notify Dominic and the Management Office.

## **GARBAGE DISPOSAL AND JUNK MAIL**

Please make use of ALL dumpsters when discarding garbage. Do not pile garbage on the top of the dumpsters or leave your garbage on the ground. This is a common courtesy and residents that do not follow the guidelines are in violation of the House Rules and subject to a fine and disciplinary action.

**Cardboard Boxes** - When disposing your recyclables in the Laundry room, please break down your cardboard boxes and leave to the side of the blue containers.

**Junk Mail** - Please do not leave your junk mail on the floor in the entry, vestibule.

If all residents pitch in and follow these simple guidelines, it will help Westchester Gardens beautiful, clean and well maintained.

**MAINTENANCE TIPS**

- \* IF THERE IS NO HEAT FROM YOUR RADIATOR, CALL DOMINIC (914-664-2565)
- \* DO NOT BLOCK YOUR RADIATORS WITH CURTAINS, FURNITURE OR DECORATIVE COVERS THAT WILL "TRAP" THE HEAT
- \*INTERCOM REPAIRS – IF YOUR INTERCOM IS NOT WORKING PROPERLY CONTACT DOMINIC WHO WILL ARRANGE TO HAVE JORDAN INTERCOM SERVICE YOUR UNIT

**WESTCHESTER GARDENS 2019 SALES**

The year 2019 has been another solid year for apartment sales. There have been eight apartments resold and we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome the following new shareholders to Westchester Gardens.

Jaimee A. Carlos - AB3  
James P. Yandoli III - AC3  
David Sassoon - BC1  
Rosa Fernandez - KB3

Rhea Phipps - GB1  
Karl Heinz-Nifontoff - HC2  
Bryan T. Dubois - HD1

*Dominic Totino, Edgar Leal and Luis Leal do an outstanding job maintaining Westchester Gardens. The building is kept beautifully and we all appreciate their daily efforts, attention to maintenance issues and hard work. Plus, as always, we are proud that our Holiday Lights always shine bright and hope make your holidays at Westchester Gardens just a little bit brighter.*

***BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON  
AND A  
PROSPEROUS AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!***

