

## **NEW OCHOA BOARD ELECTED**

The 2023 OCHOA Board was elected at the Annual Meeting, held virtually on November 1, 2022. The new Board is as follows:

**President:** Vacant

**Vice President:** Ann Metayer

**Secretary:** Audrey Partington

**At-Large Member:** Eric Wenocur

**At-Large Member:** Julie Jenkins

Krista Boteler is the OCHOA Treasurer/CPA (a paid position, not a Board member).

In the absence of a Board President, the Vice President is performing many of the duties performed by the president. These duties include oversight of the landscaping and snow removal contracts and serving as the key contact for homeowners. Thank you, Ann.

## **OCHOA'S QUARTERLY DUES TO INCREASE**

Olney Crossing HOA dues are increasing by \$4.00 to **\$70** per quarter, beginning in January 2023. The Board voted unanimously to increase the dues.

The last increase was three years ago (from \$63 to \$66 per quarter, starting in January 2020).

According to the OCHOA Bylaws, dues can be raised 5% annually, and an additional amount to cover the cost of an increase in insurance premiums etc, by a vote of the Board of Directors without needing a vote of the HOA members. The Board only considered increasing the dues because the amount collected is not expected to cover the HOA's expenses in 2023.

The Board also agreed to return to a **30-day** due date for quarterly fees, per the Bylaws. For example, first quarter fees, Jan-March, are due by Feb. 1. (The deadline had been extended informally to 60 days). The reason for adhering to the 30-day deadline is to ensure a timely, positive cash flow into the HOA's bank account for the purpose of bill paying. There have been times in the past year when we had to delay paying a bill because we did not have adequate funds in the account.

Inflation is affecting all aspects of the cost of providing HOA services. Specifically, the rise in fuel, equipment, and personnel costs are having an impact on OCHOA's landscaping and snow removal fees, which are a large part of the budget (see "Where Do My HOA Dues Go?" on the next page).

Although most homeowners pay their dues on time, those who do not cause a shortfall in our operating funds. Thank you to homeowners who keep their accounts current, and to those who have recently made efforts to pay delinquent dues!

**NOTE:** Payments can be made via Zelle. See <http://olneycrossingmd.org/pay-hoa-dues/> or go to [www.zellepay.com](http://www.zellepay.com) to send payments to [treasurer@olneycrossingmd.org](mailto:treasurer@olneycrossingmd.org).

If you are a homeowner unable to pay your fees due to financial distress, please contact Krista Boteler, Treasurer, 410-353-8923, treasurer@olneycrossingmd.org or kristabotelercpa@comcast.net to work out a payment plan.

## **WHERE DO MY HOA DUES GO?**

If a tree falls in the woods and no one hears it, what does it cost to have it removed?

No one knows the answer to that riddle, but if a tree falls on Olney Crossing's property, we may *all* pay for the removal. This is one of the challenges of setting a budget for our HOA. Since our quarterly dues are increasing in 2023 (see "OCHOA Dues to Increase" story on previous page) it is reasonable to ask: "What do my dues pay for?"

By far our biggest expense is landscaping and grounds maintenance. This annually uses 74.6% of our funds but this percentage may vary depending on the amount and number of snowstorms and common area maintenance needs. The HOA's lawn and landscape contractor has been keeping the common areas tidy by mowing, fertilizing, and seeding the grass. These recurring costs can be budgeted from year to year. The uncertainty comes with major storms that knock down actual trees (not hypothetical ones that may fall in the woods) that create a hazard, or snow storms or ice storms that have to be professionally cleared by our landscaper. These events can add thousands to our annual costs and, unlike some other expenses, cannot be deferred.

Second are the more predictable operating costs that make up a little over 22% of the budget. These include accounting and tax preparation (ably handled since 1985 by HOA Treasurer and former Olney Crossing resident Krista Boteler), the annual audit, a required insurance policy, and legal fees.

Finally, are ongoing administrative expenses that make up less than 3% of the budget. These include the hosting fees for the OCHOA.org website (overseen by OCHOA board member Eric Wenocur), postage, and the annual cost for the PO Box where payment checks and other correspondence are sent. There are also fees associated with the HOA's bank account and registration fees from Montgomery County. These are, admittedly, not very sexy, but are all important parts of running an HOA.

If you would like to know more about the budget, or get involved with the HOA administration, please send an email to webmaster@olneycrossingmd.org.