



Baldwin Square

Homeowners Association • www.baldwinsquare.org

Fall 2010

Principal Management Group of Houston - An Associa Company

Annual Meeting—Save the Date: Thursday, November 11, 2010-- 7:00 p.m.

Houston Academy for International Studies (Formerly J. Will Jones Elementary School)
1810 Stewart @ Chenevert.



Please attend this very important meeting. We need 1/10 of our members to establish a quorum and conduct the Association's business as required by statute. If you cannot attend, pls. allow for vote by proxy. All information including proxy forms are available online: <http://baldwinsquare.org/Annualmeeting2010.php>

BSHA Water Rates are Skyrocketing

Most of us live in BSHA communities with shared water meters; even those who have individual meters share the expenses for irrigation. In 2010, Houston City Council raised water and sewer rates by nearly 30 percent on an average single-family household, among the largest increases in Houston's history and one that places the city's rates at a higher level than many major U.S. municipalities. Therefore, it is important that we all work together to make sure we are not wasting water.

In 2010, our association has been able to significantly reduce our cost for landscaping irrigation by more than 30%. This was due to the work of a landscaping contractor with clear priorities on maintenance, a multi-year reassessment of irrigation systems, installation of rain sensors throughout the community

which are designed to prevent automated sprinkler systems from turning on during rain, and the use of modern control systems as needed to replace old ones. We have budgeted and will continue to look for additional system improvements to conserve water.

Individual residents must join in this effort in their own homes. Check all of your home faucets and toilets to make sure they are not leaking or that the water is not constantly "running" in your toilet, resulting in major loss of water. If you are not inclined to "do it yourself," local plumbers will make these repairs for you; our management company can provide you with recommendations. In the end, you will benefit by helping to control our community water rates, and your own water bills.



Those BSHA homeowners receiving individual water bills have seen their cost go up significantly on a monthly basis since early this year. Please remember that even if you do not receive an individual water bill, at year end you will still be responsible for your community's water usage. BSHA is publishing multi-year quarterly usage information by community on our website at www.baldwinsquare.org/waterinfo.

Home Maintenance Tips

Interior Water Leaks and Tips for Prevention



Check for leaking faucets and lines regularly: even small amounts of water are a sign of impending failure and could cause significant water damage to your home. Replacing valves, faucets, sometimes simply deteriorated washers (which cost cents) will prevent possible water damage to your home, and will save water and money.

Approximately one third of domestic water consumption is used by flushing commodes. Toilet leaks can waste as much as four to five gallons of water per minute and can cost up to \$100.00 per month in increased water and wastewater bills. The two most common toilet leaks occur at either the bottom of the toilet tank or underneath the toilet, due to a broken flange, which can cause significant damage. Therefore you should check for leaks regularly. Slow or 'invisible' leaks from your commode are highly underestimated and are the main cause for water waste and excessive water consumption. Such leaks are also easily fixed with readily avail-

able kits which should be replaced every 5 – 7 years.

Inside your commode are two systems: 1) the Fill Valve, and 2) the Flush Valve. Replacing old style swimmer and flapper valves with new, water saving ones can be done in less than half an hour (for both) by anyone with just a small wrench and a bowl to catch clean water from the commode, and save up to 40% of water down the toilet. Here is a recommendation for a complete and water-saving over-hall: 1) purchase a new fill valve such as the 'Fluidmaster 400A Toilet Fill Valve' or similar (just the valve, not a kit); available at hardware stores such as Home Depot or online for less than \$10; and 2) purchase a dual flush valve kit (to replace the single flush standard rubber valve), such as the Hydoright Dual Flush Converter (HYR270) for less than \$20 (hardware stores, Costco, HomeDepot or online. More info including simple installation pics and video go to: <http://www.gomjsi.com/> , or to YouTube using above search terms. Also, our management company can provide recommendations for contractors/plumbers in the area.

Garage Doors: Maintenance pays off

Most BSHA properties were built more than 10 years ago, and some items of daily importance are coming closer to the end of their useful life cycle: garage doors, springs, and rollers. The builder installed single spring systems with an average life expectancy of 10,000 cycles, same for the rollers that move the door up and down the rails. When the single spring fails ('snaps'), it is almost impossible to open the garage door manually, and your cars are locked in or out (as opposed to a dual spring system, which still allows opening and closing when one spring fails). Also, misaligned rails or failing rollers may result in damage to the whole door, individual segments, or a car underneath when a segment gets stuck or falls down. A little maintenance goes far: 1) check opener, rails and rollers regularly for alignment, noise and easy movement of the door; 2) keep moving parts 'greased' by using appropriate dry lubrication (lithium based sprays such as 'Gunk' or 'Blaster GDL Garage Door Lube' @ hardware stores, Home Depot, Loews etc.); 3) consider replacing rollers early with higher quality ones and keep the rails aligned and lubed; just the difference in vibration and noise is worth time, expense and effort; 4) if the spring is close to the end of its lifecycle or has failed, consider replacing it with a higher quality one (20,000 cycles lifetime), potentially with a dual spring system which is only slightly more expensive.; 5) if your door does not move smoothly or gets stuck, immediately call a professional: ignoring the problem or moving a stuck door yourself can be dangerous or cause further damage. You can replace all rollers for \$30-\$60; a dual spring replacement is between \$180-\$250 including labor. A new garage door will cost you at least \$600. A reliable local contractor (who answers his own phone) for preventative maintenance and all repairs can be found @ www.911garagedoorservice.net .



Energy Saving Window Replacement

(contributed by BSHA resident Jason LeCompte)



“It’s cold in here.” “It’s quiet in here.” Those are two statements we find ourselves making quite often lately. We just had our windows replaced with double pane, double hung, low-e glass replacement windows. As anyone that lives in the area knows that has stood by their windows in the summer or winter and felt the heat or

cold radiating off the windows our homes don’t have the greatest windows. Presented with the opportunity to invest in an improvement for my home we decided to go with windows because of the relatively short Return On Investment (ROI). The common number we have found in relation to ROI for windows is 4 years, in 4 years we will save enough money on heating and cooling our

home to pay for the windows. Not a bad deal. Add to this the current tax credit for energy saving improvements and you are looking at a pretty good way to save some money and also make your home a lot more comfortable.

We purchased our windows from Window World Houston who actually in writing guarantee that you will save 35% energy bills and offer lifetime warranty, even for breakage. Based on what we are already experiencing we predict our savings will be much more than that. We have not come home to temperatures higher than 84 when the A/C has been off all day, we’ve also had to raise the temperature from 78 to 80. And oh yes the quiet, gone are the sounds of the buses and cars streaming down La Branch.

If you are looking for somewhere to cut some bills and perhaps do something good for the planet I don’t think you can go wrong with replacing your windows. Just don’t forget do submit a BSHA Modification request.

Holiday Season: Good Neighbors and Crime Prevention

The weather has cooled and soon the holiday season will be upon us. Please be certain that your holiday parties do not infringe upon your neighbors’ right to a good night’s sleep. Also, this is a perfect time to make sure you are doing everything possible to avoid making yourself, or your neighbors, victims of crime.



1. Outside Lighting: Check your porch light and the light over your garage door to make sure your energy efficient bulbs have not burned out. Replace them as necessary. Turn your lights on every evening using timers and/ or photocells. This is part of our rules, and we appreciate your compliance in the interest of everyone’s safety.

2. Gate Security: Lock your gates. Anyone who leaves their gate unlocked is inviting trouble for themselves *and* their neighbors.

3. Common Sense: Secure your valuables and Do Not

Leave Garage Doors Open.

4. Report: Do not be afraid or feel silly about reporting trespassers or suspicious activity! Call HPD at 713-884-3131 or Precinct 7 Constables at 713-643-6602.

5. Good Neighbors help prevent problems: Don’t block the driveways with visitors’ cars and please be aware of noise that disturbs your neighbors. The City of Houston Code of Ordinances, Sec. 30-1 states that “*Nighttime hours* shall mean the hours between 10:01 p.m. on one day and 6:59 a.m. the following day.” Sec. 30-2 - General prohibitions: (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to make, continue, or cause to be made or continued any loud, unnecessary, or unusual noise that annoys, disturbs, injures, or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace, or safety of others.” (Ord. No. 01-945, § 2, 10-17-01)

6. Pets not pests: Don’t let your beloved pet become known as a pest in your community. Keep your dogs on a leash and don’t forget to “scoop the poop” when you take them outside. It is the Law!

Satellite Dishes and Antennas

Recently, the number of satellite dishes on homes has increased, and with it unfortunately those which have been installed without proper approval by the association, or in violation of our guidelines. Per BSHA statute, any modification of the exterior of a BSHA property has to be approved by the independent modification committee prior to execution; this certainly applies to satellite dishes installed by contractors. Per our architectural guidelines, satellite dishes and antennas must be installed in the least visible location of the townhome; usually on the roof between 3-6 feet under the roofline, with all cables hidden. The modification request form and BSHA architectural guidelines are available on top of the 'Property Management' section of www.baldwinsquare.org. Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions prior to installation or replacement of existing structures.

Community Input

The BSHA board appreciates ideas and suggestions from our homeowners that will help us maintain or improve our community. Please email your suggestions to us at: bsha@baldwinsquare.org or to our Property Manager, Sonya Bradley, at: s.bradley@pmghouston.com

BSHA Website

Just in case you have forgotten or if you are new to our community, be sure to visit our Website at www.baldwinsquare.org/ for more information about our association, important information, readily available documents, and how to contact us.



Baldwin Square Homeowners Association

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