

January 2011



Winchester Housing Community News

Chestnut Grove • Greenwood Garden • Laurel Commons

Happy New Years!

**Wishing you 2011 be filled with hearty
laughter, grand health, and lots of love.**

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

Lots of things are going on at Winchester Housing Authority. We apologize for our irregular schedule of our newsletter.

Please know that Frank is available to meet with you on two days a week, or by telephone should you be a resident of **Laurel Commons**. This office is always open to all resident of **Greenwoods Garden** and **Chestnut Grove**. This is one of the only Housing Authorities to have on site, "off hours superintendents." Those individuals listed elsewhere in this newsletter are your neighbors. If you feel you have a problem that cannot wait until the next day or Monday give them a call. They have instructions on what to do.

Of late, on a few recent occasions, residents have thought it better to call the Town Hall to satisfy their needs. Still others have chosen to send certified letters, or to drop off unsigned complaints. Lynn and I are a bit taken back by this turn of events. For my eleven years in this office, the door has always been open.

On many occasions when meeting with other Housing Authorities around the State I have learned that many also have problems with residents wishing to bypass their management offices. While several Housing Authorities have chosen to require the receipt of complaints in writing, the Winchester Housing Authority will stay the course and have an open door policy. Please feel free to stop by, even if just to say hello.
We like to see our residents!

~ Fred Newman

Non-Smoking Policy established at **Chestnut Grove**

Over the past four years, as HUD has steadily encouraged its non-smoking policy, the Winchester Housing Authority has kept pace with their recommendations. Four years ago HUD alerted all Housing Authorities of the unhealthy aspects of smoking. This was followed by warnings of the dangers concerning second hand smoke. Then came HUD's encouragement to consider banning smoking at their public housing facilities. Last year this became a much stronger advisement, followed this year, with the issuance of HUD Notice H2010-21. As a result, all Housing Authorities in Maine, many in New Hampshire, and now several in Connecticut have non-smoking policies. On page 4 find this Housing Authority's Policy.

Found in a recently published paper:

"Medical Journal Urges End To Smoking in Nation's PH

In a paper published in the New England Journal of Medicine, a team of researchers and attorneys from Harvard University argue that the health and safety gains of a smoking ban in housing projects would far outweigh the losses, which some say would include the privacy rights of smokers, according to an article posted online by CNN.

Although the exact number of smokers in housing projects are unknown, about 30% of Americans living below the poverty line smoke tobacco, more than 1.5 times the rate of those who live above it.

HUD officials and Harvard researchers argue that smokers bother their neighbors and harm the health of those around them.

Secondhand smoke and third-hand smoke - the toxic residue left behind on walls, carpets, and clothes long after a cigarette is extinguished - are bad news, especially for children, pregnant women, people with chronic illnesses, and the elderly. These vulnerable groups are disproportionately represented in public housing, they point out, and may be at increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome, asthma, respiratory infections, heart attacks, and cancer."



Smoke Alarm Calls

This office receives reports from our alarm companies when there are smoke alarms requiring response by Winsted's Fire Department. The Winsted's Fire Marshall has required that the Fire

Department respond to any smoke alarms. In keeping count, I find that over the past four years the following responses have been required:

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Chestnut Grove	27	19	18	19
Laurel Commons	4	8	8	10
Greenwoods Garden	17	12	19	26



* **Community Updates** *

Carriage Maker Place

A general contractor has been selected. Northwest Community Bank has signed an agreement to fund a large portion of the project costs. The United States Department of Agriculture has signed an agreement to guarantee the backing of funders. An application is in preparation for the State Department of Economic and Community Development for the remaining necessary funding. The final phase of environmental evaluation and testing is being readied to start. Digging equipment will be on site in the coming weeks. Demolition and construction is anticipated in April / May of the coming year.



Federalization of Greenwoods Garden

As many of you may already know, 2/3 of Greenwoods Garden has been federalized. This came about as a result of Recovery Act funding. The immediate impact has been reduced rents for the renters of "South Greenwoods." "North Greenwoods" residents have been informed that the writer has made contact with several State and Federal agencies concerning the rental rates on North Greenwoods residents. Rental assistance applications have been submitted. A hint of maybe . . . maybe something is being acted upon. I intend to meet with the North Greenwoods Garden in the near future to provide them

* Community Updates *

all with a more detailed update. In the meantime all Greenwoods Garden residents have free, equal use of all of the facilities of the Community Building.

Laurel Commons Parking

After careful consideration, and taking into account that the parking of the Northern area of Laurel Commons is much “tighter” than that of the South, this owner will direct the Management Company to assign parking spots for all apartments. If a renter has two vehicles than the second vehicle will be required to park in an unmarked location in the parking lot. There are 66 parking spots for our 44 apartments. Every effort will be made to assign parking spots a close as possible to the resident’s apartment. There are a number of residents requiring an ADA location. This also must be allowed for in our assignments. Correct assignments will take a sincere effort by both Frank and the writer. Please be patient as we work this out.

Spring time will be the

time for painting assigned spots. There are a select few residents of Greenwoods Garden who we have permitted to park at Laurel Commons. John Navin knows who they are. If you suspect that others are parking in our lot, please let Frank know. While Laurel Commons has 66 parking spaces, Greenwoods has only 14 for its 40 residents.



BED BUGS

In recent times we’ve all heard and read about the bed bug calamity. We’ve heard on the news that New York City seems to be hard hit. Even documentary broadcast on TV have brought to our attention the used furniture and mattress refurbishment companies who have simply covered old mattresses and sold them as new. At Winchester Housing Authority (WHA) we took positive steps. We alerted all residents of all communities in past newsletters and a notice to all residents on 4-27-10. We have encouraged the reporting of suspected sightings, whether it is seeing the bugs or actually experiencing itching. In 2010 the WHA contracted with a very reputable exterminator company, Amtech Pest Control. In the past year we have received three reports of “sightings” (one each at our three communities.) After immediate investigations by the exterminating company, in all cases it was found to be a false alarm. In one of the cases a precautionary treatment was provided.



It is especially important to communicate what you think might be a sighting. Our exterminating company has been especially fast with their response. Besides safe treatments they offer mattress covers, and other items that you may purchase. Treatment is important, and does not include items you might purchase from the grocery shelf. Our exterminator uses safe products.

I will be attending an awareness class in the coming month, as will many other Executive Directors, and I will share additional information with you and all residents of all communities. In addition, we are planning on having a presentation later in January here at **Chestnut Grove** Community Room for all residents of all Communities. The presentation will include what to watch for, how to keep your apartments clean, and free hand outs. This will be an important presentation . . . stay tuned.

The bottom line is:

1. Most importantly, call the office immediately if you think you may have seen a bed bug. They don’t go away by themselves.
2. Do not try to fumigate on your own. Our exterminator uses proven products that are safe to your health, and...
3. Remove clutter from your apartment. Bed bugs love clutter and hide in unclean areas.

BOARD RESOLUTION: Non-Smoking Policy

The Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Town of Winchester finds that:

Whereas, the American Lung Association considers cigarette smoking the number one cause of preventable disease in the United States and both elderly and young disabled populations are especially vulnerable to the adverse effects of smoking.

Whereas, this concern was recently addressed by the Family Smoking prevention and Tobacco Control Act, P.L. 111-31, signed by the President on June 22, 2009.

Whereas, the Public Health Service's National Toxicology Program (NTP) has listed second hand smoke as a known carcinogen.

Whereas, Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) can migrate between units in multifamily housing, potentially contributing to respiratory illness, heart disease, cancer and other adverse health effects in neighboring families. The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) is encouraging PHAs to adopt non-smoking policies. HUD now requires PHAs to encourage non-smoking in public housing by promoting non-smoking policies in some or all of their public housing units.

Whereas, by reducing the public health risks associated with tobacco use, this policy will enhance the effectiveness of federal and local efforts to provide increased public health protection for residents of public housing. Smoking prevention is also an important method to reduce fires and fire-related deaths and injuries in public housing where even one incident puts all residents at risk.

Whereas, there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) bases its ventilation standards on totally smoke-free environments. Furthermore, ASHRAE has determined that there is currently no air filtration or other ventilation technology that can completely eliminate all the carcinogenic components in secondhand smoke and recommends that indoor environments be smoke-free in their entirety.

Now therefore, The Housing Authority of the Town of Winchester (WHA) adopts this smoke-free housing policy which applies to all residents of **Chestnut Grove** as of 1/1/2011.



Comprehensive Facility Analysis for Laurel Commons

A Comprehensive Facility Analysis has been contracted for. I have asked that an engineering firm (the one that was used to

oversee the construction of Laurel Commons), prepare an analysis of all areas of Laurel Commons, from the shingles to the grass. This study will allow the planning of capital projects necessary for the maintenance of your community. It is also a great tool when submitting an upcoming year's plan to the mortgagee. You might see an inspector kind of person roaming about as they make this inspection. In addition, all construction documents will be consulted with.

Party Planners Plans

Party plans are being formed for the mid winter and early Spring. But I'm told I can't mention what they are planning as they have not been firmed up yet. You can be sure though



that Claudia Perry of **Chestnut Grove**, Marguerite Zaccara of **Laurel Commons**, and Faith Wainman of **Greenwoods Garden** (and their teams of helpers), deserve the very best "thank you" we can give them. No other Housing Authority has what we have. Just imagine the planning meetings, telephone calls, orders having to be placed, and the many trips to the stores in preparations for your parties. Our thank you's to them all!!