

The Grapevine Newsletter

I heard it through the Grapevine...

Notes from the March 14, 2023 Meeting of the Board of Directors of Berkowners, Inc.

Directors attending: Walter Chadwick, Wanda Chin, Cecilia Durbin, Liz Hollander, Ed Leahy, Zach Rosenblatt, and Peggy Russell. Also attending: Carlos Rivera (Superintendent), and Joe Doren of Metro Management.

1. Meeting called to order on Zoom by Walter Chadwick at 6:36 pm.
2. Minutes of the February meeting were reviewed and adopted with corrections.
3. **Superintendent's Report:**
 - National Grid discovered a gas leak on 77th Street near 35th Avenue. The work has not yet been done, but it will not affect the gas service in any of our buildings. Work will be done both outside and inside the garden area. Mr. Rivera suggested we could have Passegio Plumbing available, but Mr. Doren said that would not be necessary. Ms. Durbin asked who would be responsible for repairing the sidewalk after the work is done. Mr. Rivera stated it would be National Grid's responsibility.
 - Our insurers (Greater New York) inspected the boilers in all three buildings. All three passed inspection.
 - The assistant superintendent will be on vacation from March 25th until April 8th.
 - A representative from Whittaker Systems will demonstrate a low-moisture carpet cleaning machine on March 17 for use by our porters. If we purchase the machine, we will not need to pay for our carpets to be cleaned.
 - We are looking into a walkie-talkie system for staff to replace staff cell phones and to reduce this expense.
 - Mr. Rivera noted the need to rent a 30-yard dumpster to facilitate the removal of several bulky discarded items and old furniture. Mr. Doren stated the cost would be between \$800 and \$1,100.
 - Ms. Hollander reported that curbside compost collection is due to resume March 27th. Mr. Rivera stated compost containers would be placed at curbside on the same days as the recycling.
 - Mr. Rivera left the meeting at 7:05 pm.

4. Mr. Doren's Report:

- The LL11 filing report for the 78th Street building was accepted and the penalty amount of \$62,500 was paid. Fines totaling approximately \$20,000 more will be paid when the reports for the other two buildings are accepted—they are currently under administrative review. Architect is preparing a proposal for a plans/specifications budget for each building. The work must be done within 4 years.

- The board reviewed proposals for LL97 services from Geatrain Engineering and Lawless and Mangione. Mr. Doren noted that although the fee structures were different, the total anticipated cost would be about the same. A third estimate had been requested but has not yet been received despite follow-ups from Mr. Doren. Ms. Chin noted that time is crucial since demand will be growing across the city. Mr. Chadwick moved that we accept Lawless and Mangione, as Metro has a good relationship with them. Ms. Russell seconded. Unanimously approved.

- Mr. Doren reported that the city's projections of LL97 fines shows no anticipated fines for any of the three buildings until 2030. In 2030, 35th Ave would see anticipated fines of \$58,000/year if no alterations are made to meet the standards required by LL97. The fines anticipated for the 77 or 78 buildings through 2030 are significantly lower—\$2,100/yr for 78th Street and \$1,100 for 77th Street if no alterations are made.

- Annual shareholders meeting – Requests for candidates for the board were sent to all shareholders on March 7, 2023. The deadline for candidates to submit either their resumes or a letter of intent to run are due no later than March 24, 2023.

- Telephone lines have been consolidated in all three buildings pending change-overs of two elevator phones and superintendent's office phone.

- 50% of all shareholders have forwarded their homeowners insurance information. Second notices for those who have yet to do so will be sent out at the end of March. Ms. Chin volunteered to compose updated wording for the House Rules.

5. Treasurer's Report

- Ms. Chin reported the corporation's reserve funds totalled \$4,994,461 at February 28, 2023.

- \$4,060,230 in the Raymond James brokerage account (9 bank CDs, 5 US Treasuries, plus \$337,000 in cash)
- \$135,981 in the Chase checking and savings accounts
- \$265,576 in the Habib Bank money market account
- \$282,581 in the Habib Bank CD
- \$250,093 in the TD Bank checking account

- Ms. Chin reported that, subsequent to 2/28/23, \$264,000 was transferred to the Raymond James account from the Habib Bank money market account.

- Two bank CDs (\$500,000 in total) in the Raymond James account will mature in mid-April, and a US Treasury Note will mature in mid-May.

- The Habib Bank CD matures May 5.

6. President's Report

- Mr. Chadwick reported the Admissions Committee had interviewed and approved the buyers for A41 (77).

- On March 9, Mr. Chadwick, Ms. Chin, and Ms. Durbin, along with shareholders Mr. Danny Dromm, Ms. Bertine Lafayette, and Mr. Phil Lukeman, attended a meeting of the Landmarks Committee of the Queens Community Board 3 seeking approval of the window replacement project. Numerous questions were asked, many of which ranged beyond the issues raised by the LPC. The project may have to be reviewed by the full Community Board.

- Regarding the laundry rooms, E4P has submitted last-minute changes to the plan, and we should be putting the work out for bid by the end of the month.

7. Ms. Durbin reported on Communications.

- The resident web developer who has volunteered to redesign our website is back in graduate school for the semester, so work will be proceeding more slowly.

- Planning an online listening session on e-Bikes for users to present their thoughts. Ms. Durbin will collect questions from the Board to present to the group.

8. Garden Committee.

- Mr. Chadwick discussed his meeting with Katherine Howard regarding the South Lawn. All trees have been trimmed, which may improve the results of seeding it for grass, but the lawn is so barren that it may need to be closed for the entire spring and summer.

9. Board/Children's Room.

- Ms. Durbin reported we are waiting for the results of the asbestos and lead testing.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24pm.

!SAVE THE DATE!

BERKELEY ANNUAL SHAREHOLDERS MEETING

Convening In Person

Monday, May 15th at 6:30pm

The Jewish Center of Jackson Heights

37-06 77th St.

A formal announcement and candidate information is sent by mail to all shareholders.

If you will not be able to attend, decide to whom you will give your proxy vote!

Proxy Collection Boxes will also be placed in each laundry room.

As we did not reach quorum at last year's Annual Shareholders Meeting

ALL 7 BOARD SEATS ARE UP FOR ELECTION

!GET THE UPDATE ON THE WINDOWS PROJECT!

CHILDREN'S CIRCLE

April Children's Circle is scheduled for

Saturday, April 22 at 11 am in the 77th Street meeting room.

Weather permitting we will plant annuals for the Spring. And, as always, there will be stories, music, arts/crafts and treats.

All Berkeley families are invited to join us for books, songs, music, crafts and fun.

Q & A with Carlos about The Berkeley Pest Control Program

What is the name of the Exterminator company? Western Pest Exterminator Service

How often does the exterminator come? When? He comes twice a month on the first and third Thursday of the month.

How do I sign up for the exterminator to visit my apartment? A sign-up sheet is posted in each laundry room.

Can the exterminator get into my apartment when I'm not home? Yes. Carlos accompanies the exterminator. He will use the pass key if you write "SEE SUPER" on the sign up sheet. This lets him know he has permission to gain access. Carlos or someone else on the staff, will be with the exterminator.

Is there anything I need to do to prepare my apartment for the exterminator to come or make the exterminator's visit more productive? The exterminator will only spray the bathrooms and kitchen baseboards underneath the kitchen sink. If it's an infestation, your apartment will require multiple treatments.

What pests does the exterminator address and what do they not address? They treat any bugs or mice; however, if you have carpet moths that is a separate charge to the resident.

What chemicals/methods does the exterminator use? He uses a chemical spray called Bedlam Insecticide. He also applies a gel called Cimexa inside the kitchen cabinets. The gel product is attractive to roaches. Once the roach takes a piece of the gel the roach "shares" the gel with other roaches and contaminates them.

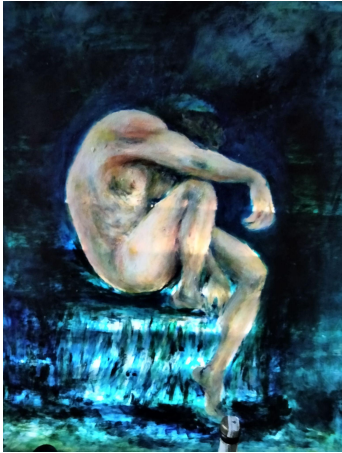
What if I have young children and/or pets? [From Cecilia, parent and cat owner - when the exterminator has come to our apartment, he's only used the gel and not the spray and only put the gel where pets and kids can't get at it]

What does the exterminator's visit cost? The cost of the monthly exterminator's visit to the building is built into your maintenance fee/rent. You've already paid for it. They will add an additional charge for carpet moths and "bombing" the apartment in the case of an infestation.

What do I do if I have a pest problem and the exterminator isn't coming for a while? Report this to the super immediately.

What if I have a mouse issue? If the resident has mice, report it to the super immediately. The super must gain access to the apartment and check the apartment thoroughly for any point of entry holes so they can be closed off with steel wool and plaster or cement.

BERKELEY ARTIST PROFILE



Federico Rosas is a visual artist whose work is inspired by Mexican surrealist painters (Remedios Varo and Leonora Carrington in particular) and by the vistas of the Mexican countryside as well as Rembrandt and the human form itself. Working mostly in oil and, more recently, in watercolor, Federico actually got his start as a young photographer and won awards for his work.

Federico is originally from Mexico, where he studied at the prestigious La Esmeralda National School of Art. His vocation then took him to Toronto, where he pursued a degree at the Ontario College of Art and Design. After graduating with honors and a scholarship for further study, he and a colleague went to Barbados with the goal of establishing an art academy for young people. When funding became scarce, they were forced to cease their efforts and Federico traveled first to Paris, then back to Mexico, and from there relocated to New York City in 1982. Once in New York, he started to build a life for himself little by little. He turned to painting after being inspired at the Art Students' League, where he studied off and on for decades right until the pandemic suspended in-person instruction. In addition, he worked at the Plaza Hotel, where he met and befriended people from all over the world and retired after 25 years. While still living in Manhattan, he was fortunate to connect with Luis Fernando Quintero (Fernando), his life partner. They have been together since the very first day they met in 1987.

Federico and Fernando moved to the Berkeley in 1997. Their 35th Street apartment is a living, vibrant testament to Federico's work as a visual artist. Each wall is painted a sun-touched color and is graced with Federico's artwork (finished paintings and other work) together with sculptural pieces from his travels around the world. Intricate surrealist images cover two doors in homage to Remedios Varo. He has created a painting studio off the kitchen, and works there most days. Federico has accepted commissions to create artwork in various locations, including a Greek restaurant in New Jersey with a domed ceiling where he painted a mural of the Greek gods and has illustrated a children's book.

For Federico, the best thing about living at the Berkeley is the garden, hands down. There was no garden when he arrived; it was something of a mess. Working with others who eventually formed the Garden Committee, Federico and Fernando helped create the wonderful space we now enjoy, and now tend to three garden plots. They also travel frequently, including visits to Mexico where they built a house in the central city of Guanajuato from the ground up. But when they are here, you will see Federico and Fernando in the garden most nights, enjoying dinner and the company of neighbors.



GARDEN GRASS CLOSED FOR 2 WEEKS

The landscapers came on Friday, April 14th to aerate and reseed the lawns. The garden grass will be closed until about the end of April to allow new grass to take root and grow. The garden paths remain open.

GARDEN SPRINKLER SYSTEM IS ON FOR THE SEASON

To keep our grass lawns inviting all summer, the sprinklers in our garden run every other day on even dates from 4am-5:40am.

The irrigation system is broken into five zones. Each zone is watered for 20 minutes. The system waters 1 zone at a time to preserve water pressure, for 1 hour and 40 mins total watering time.

Zone 1: North End

Zone 2: Sunken Garden 78th Street side (sprinkler heads in the stone beds)

Zone 3: Sunken Garden 77th Street side (sprinkler heads in the ground a few feet from the stone beds)

Zone 4: South End 78th Street Side

Zone 5: South End 77th Street Side

Our rain gauge is set for a quarter inch, so when the gauge fills up with a quarter inch of rain, the system will shut off.

If you see the sprinkler system doing something other than this, please tell Carlos.

RESTORING THE 77TH St & 35th AVE ENTRANCES

Some of our beautification funds are hard at work restoring and repainting the columns and trim around the 77th St and 35th Ave entrances. Thank you for your flexibility using the basement or garden entrances for a couple days, but the fronts of our buildings should be looking much better very soon!

SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS

The Annual Shareholder's Meeting is May 15th at 6:30 at The Jewish Center of Jackson Heights (see details above). The next Board Meeting is scheduled for **June 13th, 2023.** If you have a topic you would like to discuss with the board, please email them at berkboard@gmail.com.

Contributors to this newsletter were Walter Chadwick, Cecilia Durbin, Judy Whiting, Phillip Washburn, and Wanda Chin. If you'd like to contribute content to the Berkeley Grapevine, please email bconwayb34@gmail.com.

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