

# The View from the Highlands

Fall 2014 Newsletter

The Highlands at Ocean Point, Manomet Point, Plymouth, MA

<http://highlandsatoceanpoint.com/index.html>

Dear Highlands Neighbors,

With this issue, the Highlands is resurrecting a quarterly newsletter. We want to include community news, updates on what's going on with maintenance and the Board, reminders and helpful hints, and other items of interest to unit owners and other Highlands residents.

Please send items of interest, and suggestions for the newsletter, to [helenatthebeach@gmail.com](mailto:helenatthebeach@gmail.com).

Highlands Board of Trustees

## Special Election October 15

*"It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried."* – Winston Churchill

Please take a half hour on October 15 to come over to the clubhouse and help elect a new Trustee to fill the vacancy created by Mark Wells' resignation. **If you can't attend the meeting, please use the proxy form to designate a neighbor or friend to cast your vote for you.** Proxy votes are particularly important now, with some neighbors away for the winter months, because proxies count toward the quorum of unit owners required for the vote to be legal.

### Top 5 Reasons to Vote

5. It's your home – your biggest investment. The people you elect as Trustees decide what improvements are needed, when maintenance is due, and how to pay the bill.

4. It's your money. The Trustees you elect decide how much you'll pay in condo fees, when a special assessment is needed to cover unusual expenses, whether and when to take out a loan, how to invest reserves, and how your money will be spent.

3. It's your beach, pool, clubhouse, tennis courts, amphitheater and wastewater treatment plant. Three of the five people you elect as Trustees of the Highlands will also be Trustees of Ocean Point Management Trust, and will be making decisions about the facilities and costs we share with the Dunes.

2. It's your community. The neighbors you vote to sit on the Board of Trustees make decisions about the rules and regulations they believe will make the Highlands a safe and well-maintained place to live.

And the number one reason to vote . . .

1. If you don't vote, you're putting control of your home into the hands of someone else. It's your right as a unit owner to choose the people responsible for managing your biggest investment.



## Upcoming Events

### October 15

Special Owners Meeting and special election. Please attend to cast your vote. If you cannot attend, please be sure to designate someone to cast a proxy vote on your behalf.

### December 4

Highlands Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting, all welcome

### Reminder: Owners Welcome

In response to owners' requests to accommodate more observers at Trustee meetings, all meetings are scheduled to meet at either the pool clubhouse, weather permitting, or the Manomet Library if the clubhouse is not feasible.

## Here Comes Winter!

**Many Highlands neighbors go south for the winter. Please remember, before you go, to fulfill the following insurance requirements.**

- Set your thermostats at 55 degrees to protect the pipes.
- Leave all closet doors open so heat reaches sprinkler heads in each closet.
- Leave a set of house and car keys with a trusted neighbor or relative. Let Highlands Property Manager Donna Crone know who has the keys and give her your emergency contact information.
- Move your car to the back parking row near the road (or in garage if you have one).
- Turn off the main water supply for your unit (unless you have forced hot water heating system). To save on your propane bills, you can set the hot water heater on 'vacation' setting. Open all faucets to empty pipes. Leave open while you're away. Flush toilets until dry. Turn off water supply to washing machine.
- It's a good idea to find out where the gas and water main shutoff valves for your particular unit are located. When you really need to know, there's no time to search.



## Winter Tips for Those Staying Around

- Use ice melt provided in buckets at your entryways whenever it's warranted. If you need more ice melt, call Donna and request that your bucket be refilled.
- Residents in buildings 29 and 25 know that a sheet of ice forms near the dumpster as the snowbanks melt and refreeze. This winter, there will be a bucket of salt and or sand near the dumpsters. Please spread some out if you see ice forming as the snowbanks melt, and call Property Manager Donna Crone if you see a hazardous area that needs to be taken care of.
- Please move your car to the back row before a snowfall begins so that our plowing contractor can do a better job of clearing the area in front of the buildings. After that's been done, you can return your car to the front row so he can clear the back of the lots. If there are no open spaces in the back row of your own lot, call Donna Crone to ask if an alternative space at another building is available.

## Community News

### New Neighbors

Welcome to new Highlands neighbors [Debby Dugan](#) in 2407, [Emily Gallup](#) in 2902, and [Nancy Carini](#) in 2914 . . .

### Births

. . . and welcome to the youngest member of the Highlands community, [Seamus Huber](#), born to [Kyle](#) and [Carrie Huber](#) on August 13.

### Get Well Wishes

Best wishes for continued progress toward full health for [Judy Campbell](#), [Ann Nolan](#), and [David Pitts](#).

### A Wedding

[Rita Potocsky](#) will be celebrating the marriage of her niece Beth Martell to Steve Hawes at our clubhouse on October 4.

### Highlands Properties Available

Units 401 and 404 are currently on the market.

## Updates and Helpful Hints from the Property Manager

Maintenance projects completed in 2014 included power washing and sealing of building 30, tiling of building 4, deck board replacement on building 25, and deck railing replacement on building 29.

### BE KIND TO OUR WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

Please refrain from throwing any wipes down a drain or toilet, as they cause problems for the wastewater plant, and additional cost to us.

### WHEN HIRING OUTSIDE CONTRACTORS FOR PRIVATE WORK

When hiring a private contractor to do work on your unit, please be sure to inform him or her that the condominium rules prohibit contractor materials being put into a dumpster. There is a cost to trash removal, and while our condo fees cover the removal of our own trash, they don't include removal of contractor materials.

Also, please do not leave trash or household items beside the dumpsters.

### WHEN SCHEDULING CABLE SERVICE

When you schedule Xfinity/Comcast or Verizon for on-site service, please be sure to call Donna Crone ahead of time, so that she can ensure the utility room will be unlocked for the service person's access.



### UPDATES FROM THE PROPERTY MANAGER

We are looking for a new vendor for needed repairs to the tennis courts.

Egan Landscaping has completed a fall shrub pruning.

Sprinkler and fire alarm inspections will be scheduled later in the fall, dates to come as soon as we have them.

The elevators will be inspected in October; this will have no impact on owners.



### Requesting Maintenance

The best way to request maintenance is to use the link on the Highlands Owners webpage. Click on the "Owners Only" tab, and log in with your user name and password\*.

When you click on this link and fill in the requested information, an email is automatically sent to the maintenance coordinator, Donna Crane, with a copy to you. This way, you have a record of the date and details of your request, in case there is any question later.

Of course, in an emergency, you should call Donna Crone directly at 508-454-6891.

For new Highlanders who haven't met Donna yet, she is a unit owner here, and lives in building 24.

*\*Don't have a user name and password yet? Just click on the link provided at the Owners Only Page to request one.*

## **News from the Annual Unit Owners Meeting**

The Highlands at Ocean Point Trust collected \$372,556 in condo fees in 2014. Here is what they paid for: Dues paid to Ocean Point Management Trust, for the maintenance of the land and facilities the Highlands shares with the Dunes, comprised our greatest expense (21%). This includes maintenance of the waste water treatment plant, clubhouse, pool, tennis courts, amphitheater, beach, sand dunes, and any other open space. Other expenses included insurance (12%), utilities and trash (11%), lawn care and snow removal (11%), administration (9%), building maintenance (8%), and maintenance of the sprinkler and alarm systems (7%). Each year, some special projects are added to ongoing maintenance, which increases the total spent on maintenance.

Additionally, as required by Massachusetts law, we set aside 10% of our condo fees each year to fund reserves accounts. Our reserves are growing steadily to prepare to address some of the Highlands long-range capital needs, such as eventual replacement of roofs, central fire alarm panels, common area doors and windows, elevator refurbishing and upgrades, and repairs to asphalt surfaces, dumpster enclosures and mail kiosks.

Maintenance projects completed in 2014 included power washing and sealing of building 30, tiling of building 4, and replacement of deck boards on building 25 and deck railings on building 29.

## **News from the September 4 Trustees Meeting**

The Trustees have begun working on a budget for 2015. The Highlands new Treasurer, Pam Claughton (2904), will be convening a committee to draft a budget for approval at the December 4 Trustees meeting. Information will be posted to the Owners webpage (<http://highlandsatoceanpoint.com/owners.htm?gbzwdp=t>) as it becomes available.

Note that the March, 2015 Trustees meeting has been changed to Monday, March 2.

The Trustees are currently considering the pros and cons of continuing to power wash the buildings, and how much snow should warrant a call for plowing and shoveling. The concerns are, on the one side, the cost of so many plowing calls last winter, and, on the other side, the possibility of someone slipping and falling. If the Trustees believe they have enough information, decisions may be made at the December 4 meeting.

The Highlands new Secretary, Helen Jones (414), will be working with Nancy Carini (2914) over the next few months on improvements to the Highlands website to make it easier for and more useful to owners. Stay tuned.

## **Recycling Returns to the Highlands!**

The Highlands will soon begin a new recycling program, at no additional expense to the community. The plan is to add 6 recycling bins located at building 24 and 4 more at Building 4, with pickup every other week. More information will be posted as it comes in.