

# Gile Hill Condo Association Newsletter

December 2022 | #6

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## Annual Meeting Highlights

The annual meeting, which was held via Zoom on October 11, covered a range of topics, including a report from Maloney Properties, review of the proposed 2023 budget, and the election of officers. Draft [minutes](#) are posted under Board Communication at [www.gilehillcoa.com](http://www.gilehillcoa.com). When they are approved at the 2023 annual meeting, the “draft” designation will be removed.

Owners participating in the annual meeting re-elected current board members **Beth McKinnon** (*president*, 4 Gile), **Monte Blaustein** (*treasurer*, 4 Gile), **Sarah-Jane Kerr** (9 Granite Lane), **Art Knippler** (15 Gile), **Olga Narvskaya** (11 Gile), **Ben Staplin** (5 Granite Lane), and **Tim Trebugov** (15 Gile). One new board member—**Laca Wong-Hammond** (7 Granite Lane)—was elected *secretary*.

The board’s regularly scheduled 2023 meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of every other month, beginning in February. Owners are encouraged to participate in condo governance by attending board meetings. If you have questions about any board policies or actions, please email [gilehill-coa-board@googlegroups.com](mailto:gilehill-coa-board@googlegroups.com)

## New Secretary Laca Wong-Hammond

Laca Wong-Hammond brings to the board a wealth of relevant experience, including nine years as president and then co-president (with her husband, Scott) of their condo board in New York City. She also served for seven years on the board of the Chen Dance Center, a non-profit NYC-based performing arts company, theater, and school.

Laca has spent 20+ years in the finance industry, primarily in healthcare investment banking (selling companies and their assets) and closed over \$11 billion of transactions. As part of that work she frequently advises many non-profit and private company boards. She currently leads the mergers and acquisitions practice for Lument, an ORIX Corporation company. Laca holds a BS from Cornell University and certificates from London School of Economics and Harvard Law School.

She became the owner of 7 Granite Lane in 2022. She and her son love bicycling around the trails.

## 2023 Condo Budget

The condo board approved the 2023 (CY) budget at its November 16 meeting. Minutes of that meeting are posted on the [website](#). (Action items are highlighted in yellow.)

The following are some notes to help owners understand how we spend our money.

We have included \$50,000 towards needed repairs. With the 7 percent increase in dues, this means we will only be maintaining our Capital Reserve Funds balance next year. When the Capital Needs Assessment is completed in 2023 (see article below), we will have a better understanding of the repairs and costs needed to maintain the site. The current \$190,000 in the reserve fund will not go very far when we start looking at repairs to the aging condo building envelopes and the common infrastructure such as roadways.

We are continuing to collect the \$12 per month per unit which goes toward the boiler maintenance completed every two years. We collect funds over two years to pay for that work, which is expected to be next completed in the second half of 2024. We are trying to come up with a more flexible plan to make the inspections more convenient for owners and their renters.

We are expecting a larger-than-normal increase in our electrical expenses from Liberty Electric, which is in line with the increased costs that everyone is experiencing.

The new \$1,500 for legal fees is to hire an attorney specializing in condo law to review the various documents that govern our association and to address other issues of concern.

If you have any questions or concerns about the 2023 budget, please email Monte Blaustein ([montewb57@gmail.com](mailto:montewb57@gmail.com)) or any board member ([gilehill-coa-board@googlegroups.com](mailto:gilehill-coa-board@googlegroups.com)). We will be happy to answer your questions as best as we can.

## Capital Needs Assessment Survey

In early 2023, Criterium-Lalancette & Dudka Engineers of Rutland, VT, will be performing an evaluation of the condo building envelopes and

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common infrastructure (i.e., carports, parking areas, paving, etc.) to assist the condo board with maintenance and capital improvement planning.

If you haven't already, please take the short [survey](#) that Maloney's Diane Badger emailed owners on December 12. Completing the survey by December 23 is an important part of that evaluation: it'll help Criterium to quickly focus on concerns that may be common to many unit owners.

Form results will be collected, analyzed, and forwarded to Criterium by Olga Narvskaya, the Condo Board member in charge of the Capital Needs Assessment project.

## Landscape: Part 1

At the end of October certified arborist Peter Butler began implementing condo-adjacent elements of the previously developed landscape masterplan. This included removing

- 1 or more stems/trunks of the **river birches** throughout the property to provide more balance, encourage straight growth, and allow more room for the trees to develop with full crowns.
- 3 **quaking aspens** behind the townhouses, which was part of the objective of selectively removing tall, fast-growing species to improve the character of the remaining trees.
- dead branches from the **lilacs** near the townhouses and cutting them down to head height.

With a focus on improving the health and vigor of the remaining vegetation, Butler said this work sets the stage for new plantings, which will provide privacy, fill in some open areas (grassland and next to buildings), and "soften" the starkness of the building architecture. He made a number of specific tree/location recommendations and suggested holding a Zoom meeting in February or so to discuss specifics.

The board is searching for an owner to head up future phases of the landscaping effort. Work would involve assessing options (by Peter Butler and others), making recommendations to the board,

soliciting bids, and working with other members of the landscape committee. Please contact Beth McKinnon ([mccarper@msn.com](mailto:mccarper@msn.com)) for details. This is a great opportunity to get involved and help enhance Gile Hill's natural environment.

## Landscape: Part 2

After Peter Butler and another private-sector arborist identified diseased ash trees that posed a potential threat to Gile Hill buildings, roads, and people, Beth McKinnon procured a Town of Hanover boundary map, which suggested that the trees were on town land. Asa Metcalf, the town arborist, confirmed that the diseased trees were town trees and promised to begin removal, subject to budgetary constraints.

On November 19, Chippers (under contract to the town) cut down five green ash trees along Gile Drive (near 15 Gile), saving Gile Hill in general thousands of dollars in tree removal costs. Thanks to Metcalf's excellent customer service, Chippers' professionalism, the onsite presence of Maloney's Tom Blondin, and repeated announcements re: temporary road closures by Maloney's Diane Badger, the entire process went very smoothly. Afterwards Metcalf noted that the trees were in decline due to ash yellows (a bacteria-like organism) rather than emerald ash borer. He also confirmed that the town would remove additional ash trees in decline next year, subject to budget availability.

## Snow Removal

For residents whose parking spaces abut sidewalks, please leave adequate space between the front of your cars and the sidewalk so L&M can get its mini-plow by in one pass. In addition to saving time, it will help L&M do a more complete clearing job and avoid any accidental damage to cars.

## Holiday Wishes

The Board wishes all owners and tenants a safe and healthy holiday season and a happy New Year.

## Newsletter Feedback

Please email comments or contributions to Monte Blaustein ([montewb57@gmail.com](mailto:montewb57@gmail.com)) or Ann Carper ([acarper2012@gmail.com](mailto:acarper2012@gmail.com)).