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**NEW MARK COMMONS HOMES ASSOCIATION**

**2025 ANNUAL MEETING**

**Monday, March 10, 2024**

**Held Virtually via Zoom at 7:00 p.m.**

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Minutes Taken by Kaitlyn Ambush

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**Attendees**

**Board Members:** Kathleen Moran, Karin Boychyn, Timothy Petros, Emily Ecker, Amanda Mita and Samuel Scheib.

**Abaris Community Management:** Shireen Ambush and Kaitlyn Ambush

**Homeowners:** The Attendee List is included as an attachment to the minutes.

**1. Call to Order**

Kathleen Moran called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

- A. **Proof of notice of meeting:** Kaitlyn Ambush attested that all homeowners were sent notice of the Annual meeting on January 14, 2025, and on February 18, 2026.
- B. **Proof of quorum:** Kaitlyn Ambush attested that the 25% quorum requirement has been met via proxy submission and those currently present at the meeting.
- C. **Minutes of 2024 Annual Meeting:** Joe Jordan moved to accept the 2024 Annual meeting minutes; seconded by Karin Boychyn and carried unanimously.

**2. Election Inspection Officer Appointment**

- A. The Board unanimously appointed Kathleen Moran and Marian Swain to serve as the official election inspectors of the 2025 Annual Election.

**3. Reports from the Board**

- A. **Presidents Report – Kathleen Moran’s President’s Report is an attachment to the minutes.**
- B. **Treasurer’s Report – Karin Boychyn’s Treasurer’s Report is an attachment to the minutes.**
- C. **Committee Reports**
  - 1. **Architectural Control Committee (ACC) – Christine Holdsworth, ACC Chairperson’s report is an attachment to the minutes.**
  - 2. **Communications Committee (CC) – Pat Reber, Communications Committee Chairperson’s report is an attachment to the minutes.**
  - 3. **Landscape Committee (LC) – Saven Wilkins, Landscape Committee Chairperson’s report is an attachment to the minutes.**

4. **Pool Committee – Stephanie Bloom, Pool Committee Chairperson’s report is an attachment to the minutes.**
5. **Welcome/Social Committee – Cou Kalantary, Welcome Committee Chairperson’s report is an attachment to the minutes.**

#### **4. Open Forum**

Laurie Krug thanked the Board for their hard work, and inquired about the status of the neighbor involved in the 2 email blasts issued by legal counsel. The Board confirmed that there are no further updates at this time, but will inform the community when any new information is received.

Amber Rodriquez reported children cutting through the community at the 100-block of New Mark Esplanade, and were observed ice skating on the lake. A child also fell into the lake after skating on the frozen ice. The Board confirmed they were aware of the incidents and have dealt with each incident respectively.

Ron Tipton commented that the geese population is growing and there is an increase in the accumulation of geese waste on the walking paths. Ron also expressed that all Annual Meetings should be held in person.

Alan Tolerton echoed Ron’s comment with regard to in-person Annual Meetings.

Chris Hershey inquired if the Board would consider lowering the clubhouse rental rates.

Rocio Crumley inquired if there are plans for landscape improvements in the 100-block of New Mark Esplanade. The Board confirmed that no improvements have been planned until after the lake dredging and dam project is complete.

Maria Sol Pikielny reported that children were observed fishing at the lake. The Board encouraged owners to contact the local police to enforce this, and to take pictures and videos.

Saven Wilkins commented that the Landscape Committee is looking forward to landscape enhancements around the lake after the dam and dredging is complete.

Pat Reber echoed the earlier comments in support of in-person Annual Meetings.

Gerri thanked the Board for cleaning the litter around the lake.

Kathleen Moran thanked all owners for attending the Annual Meeting, and for their thoughtful comments!

#### **5. Results of Election**

Since the Annual Meeting was held virtually, the ballot box will remain open for 24 hours. The votes will be counted on March 12, 2025, and the election results will be announced immediately following the vote count at the Abaris main office.

#### **6. Old/New Business: None.**

**7. Adjournment:** Tim Petros moved to adjourn the 2025 Annual Meeting. The motion was seconded by Emily Ecker and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

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## **New Mark Commons 2025 Annual Meeting PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**The NMC Board of Directors** comprised of Karin Boychyn, Emily Ecker, Joe Jordan, Amanda Mita, Kathleen Moran, Tim Petros, and Sam Scheib have been serving the community in a variety of ways and providing needed stewardship. NMC is a small business with an annual budget of over one million dollars. It takes professional services and ongoing leadership to ensure the community thrives.

**Fiscally NMC is strong.** The community is prepared to fund the mandated lake improvements and dredging once the State of Maryland permits for the project are received. This 1.3-million-dollar project may cost even more than estimated once actual proposals are obtained for the work. 2025 is hoped to be the year permits are provided. NMC has been planning for this project since January 2022. Planning and budgeting to avoid any special assessments is a major board responsibility. The Treasurer's Report will provide a financial summary.

**Abaris Realty Inc.- Property Management** continues to be essential for accomplishing NMC operational business and assisting in planning for capital projects. As of January 2025, Kaitlyn Ambush is our Property Manager. Our former lead manager Shireen Ambush is Co-President of Abaris Realty and still assisting NMC. NMC is supported by an entire team of Abaris staff that handles all NMC operational business including collection of assessments, oversight of all contracted services, insurance coverage, financial audits, responses to homeowner requests/communications, Clubhouse rentals, implementation of board approved actions, etc. Plus unexpected matters that require additional assistance.

Abaris has established a NEW email address to ensure efficiency in responding to residents. Please email [customercare@abarisrealty.com](mailto:customercare@abarisrealty.com) with all requests.

Abaris is now providing NMC with assistance to meet the legally required documentation of all Architectural Control Applications. Homeowner applications are now placed on a web-based system Vantaca which allows the homeowner to check on the status of the application at any time and ensures the required review, associated communications, and approval or denial are all documented.

**Lerch Early Brewer NMC's Legal Counsel** via lead Ruth Katz has been critically important over the last year as NMC has been faced with unusual noncompliant situations with a few homeowners. LEB's common sense recommendations, explanations of the complex legal perimeters, and legal actions implemented, have been an educational journey for the board and essential for meeting the responsibilities of the HOA.

**AW Landscapes** under owner Alan Walcoff has kept NMC functioning and looking its best throughout the year. AW not only weekly maintains the common grounds, removes trash from the seven baskets on pedestrian pathways, but has provided professional

design and implementation of new retaining walls and plantings on the lake hillside between 218-228 NME as well as near 276 NME. AW also provides snow removal services for the community and emergency clean up like the bamboo in the 100s block that fell over with the weight of ice and blocked vehicular passage

**Pool Personnel** under owner John Currie provided another successful safe 2024 season at the NMC Pool. Our pool equipment and facilities are overseen year-round. Needed equipment repairs are identified and arranged for. Qualified staff are hired seasonally. John Currie keeps NMC aware of any changing legal mandates for pools in Montgomery County. He arranges for pool inspections. Coordination with the NMC Swim Team pool use and even individual parties held at the pool during regular pool hours falls to our pool management to ensure all goes well.

**Governing Documents** approved by homeowners in 2023 established the ability to fine homeowners for noncompliance. The Board is working on a **Due Process & Enforcement Procedure** policy for when implementing a fine on a homeowner becomes an appropriate action.

**NMC Committee's** are critically important to the perceived quality of life in our community. The reports that will follow from each committee reflect the very much appreciated leadership, new initiatives, and ongoing services provided to NMC. A sense of community comes from working and socializing together. All efforts and activities by our NMC committees revolve around a core value of community – the place you call home. On behalf of all the NMC Board members, all committee members please accept our gratitude for your caring actions that have benefited all who live in NMC.

**NMC Community Members** please know that you are the reason the board and the committee members give so generously of their time, actions, and thoughtful conversations. As standards, expectations, and even mandated codes keep evolving, it is a never-ending challenge to meet the interests of the homeowners and the needed accomplishments of the HOA. The Annual Meeting is part of the ongoing commitment to serve the community. This meeting is not only full of reports on the current status of NMC, but it is an opportunity for anyone to express their comments concerning our community.

Thanks to all for being an engaged member of the community called New Mark Commons.

A special thanks to Joe Jordan and Tim Petros who have both served the NMC Board of Directors for many years over multiple terms and as of this meeting are stepping aside.

Respectfully submitted by Kathleen Moran

**Architectural Control Committee  
2024 Annual Report  
Presented at the 2025 NMC Annual Meeting**

Current members of the ACC are:

Christine Holdsworth, Co-Chair  
Susan Knowles, Co-Chair  
Tim Petros, Board Liaison  
John Tran  
Kristen Rasmussen

The ACC continues working with residents to help maintain and improve their homes within New Mark Commons' Guidelines and Covenants. All residents are required to apply to the ACC to do any exterior work on their home. The approval process allows both the ACC and the owners to plan before work begins. In 2024 the ACC received more than 115 applications or inquiries about proposed work. Most applications were approved.

The ACC has been working to improve the application process. There is a link to a fillable pdf form in the New Mark portal and on the New Mark website. Applications may be submitted through the portal, emailed to the ACC or printed and submitted on paper. Applications received through email or on paper are added to the portal. After the ACC meets to discuss applications, approvals and denials are sent to homeowners through the portal. The ACC guidelines are posted on the New Mark website. Residents can click on a heading in the table of contents to go directly to the specifics for that item.

The ACC extends our thanks to Tim Petros. He has been our Board Liaison for the last 4 years and has provided valuable guidance and effectively relayed information to and from the Board. We also want to thank Rita Molyneaux for her years on the committee as a member, chair and co-chair and Rocio Crumley, Amanda Mita, and Cou Kalantary for the time they devoted to the ACC.

The ACC meets on the second Monday of the month at 7 pm. We meet on Zoom and residents are welcome to attend. We are also looking for new members.

## **Communications Committee Annual Report / Annual Meeting, March 10, 2025**

Our volunteers manage the three communication tools used by NM residents: The newsletter and broadcasts via email; the website; and the annual printed directory, with the contents also accessible digitally through the website. The future is uncertain, as the staffer who kept things going has left ; the volunteer news editor can no longer carry the work; and the volunteer committee chair – that’s me, Pat Reber – can no longer play an active role in the newsletter or managing the committee. ANY VOLUNTEERS? It’s likely we won’t be able to produce a newsletter this month, but we will try to get out news of elections results and the president’s message.

**NEWSLETTERS/BROADCASTS:** From March 2024 to February 2025, we produced 11 monthly newsletters, taking a break in July. We kept the community abreast of activities through numerous event-specific broadcasts. There were three printed issues this year, which we also sent out digitally. There is one remaining resident for whom we print out every issue due to lack of internet connection.

It was an active year with many events that were published in the newsletter as well as individual broadcasts: (Fourth of July, Pool Party, Community Yard Sale, Spring Garden contest, International Dinner, Movie night in the clubhouse, Halloween, Balance and Strength Classes, Science in the Clubhouse, Spring landscape day,. Board Cocktail party, Holiday lighting ceremony, New Mark Art Show .... )

While there was debate about the effectiveness of the newsletter and broadcasts, we believe two outcomes confirmed we were reaching people: (1) The events had solid turnouts; and (2) our readership survey sent out in December showed these efforts were appreciated.

- We received 51 responses. All but three were submitted via email, showing strong acceptance of email as a community communications tool.
- On the question of who is reading NMC email broadcasts, 41 said “yes”; 7 said “occasionally” and 1 said “no”. Two respondents said they weren’t getting the email broadcasts or newsletters and asked to be added to the list.
- Did respondents attend a NMC event as the result of reading the newsletter or a broadcast? “YES” – 35. “NO” – 14.

**WEBSITE:** Kirsten Hall, the part time communications staffer who has left after seven years of dedicated work, managed the website with support from volunteer Bill Holdsworth and Abaris staffer Greg Lobring. Bill is able to continue doing the few things he has done in the past but is unable to take on more responsibility for the website.

**DIRECTORY:** The directory appears once a year in the summer. Keeping it updated is an ongoing chore handled in the past by Kirsten, with input/confirmation of changes from Pat. The system only works if new residents inform us of their presence. We are trying to coordinate with Social Committee and Abaris to keep track of new residents, but there have been some gaps. We are working to fill them. This directory task will have to be managed by new eyes and a new team this summer, as the old team can no longer do it.

Most importantly, here's a shout-out to the more than two dozen volunteers and contributors over the past year: Alex Belida, Julia Binder, Stephanie Bloom, Jessica Coleman, Rocio Crumley, Emily Ecker, Ardis Fisher, John Foreman, Madeline Gupta, Sally Guardia, Evin Gossin, Kirsten Hall, Bill Holdsworth, Morris Kaplan, Laurie Krug, Chiara Lowicki-Zucca, Amanda Mita, Kathleen Moran, JP Muller, Jim Nations, Lori Newman, Eric Peich, Pat Reber, Ann Reiss, David Schwartzman, Jennifer Strohm, Saven Wilkins. If I missed anyone, please speak up!!!

Submitted by the Communications Committee

**Landscape Committee Report  
NMC HOA  
2025 Annual Meeting**

**Committee Members (2024)**

- **Emily Ecker** – Board Liaison
- **Kimberly Cullen**
- **Jim Denny**
- **Jonathan Ferguson**
- **Elyse Hagner**
- **Jennifer Jackson**
- **JP Mullen**
- **Alan Tolerton**
- **Saven Wilkins** (Chair)
- **Roccio Marino-Crumley** (Stepped down 9/2024)
- **Ron Tipton** (Stepped down 12/2024)

**Events**

In 2024, the committee organized two **Community Enhancement Days** and the **Spring Garden Competition**. These events foster community engagement and beautification.

**Upcoming Event:** The 2025 Spring Community Enhancement Day is scheduled for **Saturday, April 26th, from 9 AM to noon**. We encourage all residents to participate!

**Trees**

**Invasive Species Management**

Last year, we took decisive action against the **Tree of Heaven**, an invasive species that has gained a foothold near the 100 block. This tree is a preferred host for the **spotted lanternfly**, another destructive invasive species affecting our region.

**Tree Removal and Replanting**

In 2024, we removed our last **Green Ash trees**, which were all killed by the **Emerald Ash Borer**. Additionally, required tree removals along **Monroe Street**, mandated by the City of Rockville, have impacted the green landscape for some residents in the 100 block of NME. In response, we have prioritized replanting efforts in that area and plan further plantings in 2025.

**Storm Damage and Risk Management**

Recent windstorms brought down several large trees on private property, causing significant damage. Fortunately, **no substantial trees on HOA property were lost**, which may indicate the success of our **proactive tree management program**. Our committee collaborates with **certified arborists** to assess and address tree-related risks, and we appreciate the Board's continued support of these efforts.

### **Tree Planting and Maintenance**

We planted numerous native trees throughout the year, with a special thanks to **JP Mullen** and other volunteers for diligently watering them—especially during the extended drought.

### **Tree Subcommittee**

The **Tree Subcommittee** reviewed many resident applications for tree removals. Unfortunately, unauthorized tree removals remain an issue, and we urge residents to follow proper procedures.

### **Lake Management**

We continue to monitor the **health of the lake** and continue to be frustrated by the delay in dredging caused by the state of Maryland.

### **Canadian Geese Population**

The **Canadian goose population** around the lake has continued to grow, leading to concerns about excessive waste on walking paths. Discussions were held regarding possible mitigation strategies, but no actions were taken in 2024. The Board committed to revisiting this issue in **early 2025**.

### **Landscape Projects**

- **Lake Hillside Enhancements** – New plantings and hardscaping along the paved path.
- **Erosion Control** – Working on long standing issues in the **oak grove** between the basketball court and the pool.
- **Street Circle Improvements** – Upgraded two street circles, with plans for additional enhancements.
- **Invasive Species Control** – Continued removal efforts for **garlic mustard, Asian honeysuckle, and bamboo**.
- **Contractor Oversight** – Actively monitored landscaping and tree service contractors to ensure work meets expectations and contractual agreements.

### **Meetings**

The **Landscape Committee** meets on the **third Tuesday of each month at 7 PM**.

- **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, **March 18th, 2025, at 7 PM**

- Meetings are held via **Zoom**, with occasional **hybrid meetings** hosted at a volunteer's home.
- **All residents are encouraged to join us!**

## Pool Committee List of recommendations for Summer 2025

1. Recommend keep same guest prices and same price for outside membership for this summer. Concerned that when Kaitlyn adds the 30 guest credits, Membersplash is resetting all accounts to 30 rather than adding 30 guest credits. Stephanie sent request to membersplash to clarify how to do this so 30 gets added. Otherwise, may need to do each account individually.
2. For pool umbrellas, when all the stands have an umbrella which seems to be where people want, there are 2 tables left without an umbrella. Recommend order 2 more umbrellas same style/color and 1 more frame for repairs. There are 4 umbrellas identified by the lifeguards that need repair work before pool opens. In the past, John Currie has coordinated purchase with his contact at the company as company prefers to work with pool management company.
3. Recommend move trash can by the far corner of the pool 30 feet down the hill due to the smells - should this be done by landscaping contractor or try to do as part of work day. May need to purchase new post if current trash can post is in concrete.
4. If neighborhood does any mosquito treatment, make sure to include perimeter of pool and rock area
5. On spring work day, request landscaping committee include trimming the plants alongside the far edge of the pool so they are not encroaching on the pool area as this prevents chairs from being placed there.
6. Request authorization to purchase large outdoor Connect 4 and checker games for pool for new fun elements - up to \$100 - example  
[https://www.amazon.com/KOTEK-Carrying-Release-Freestanding-Wall-Mounted/dp/B0DV4PVW98/ref=sr\\_1\\_1\\_sspa?dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.5fhQOAYBJhH4pzctRMRRwcvEP9xTnKq7bd\\_1fqH6xzfl30nsGV5PqWZCBcX8PXvT7IjvI91v4bfGTdzZDzwagEUK5n84fLXc0IAuB6v6IRhnbvrR2a4PJ\\_F6TThhg7tDjkD4ZWA31VOzz1H4rh1dTR2lzhw58kBFD0uiuS8L6jRI\\_KrM5rKCedmJ5DYkGVvAfECsXUSob58rT\\_Cg8I0MBoCbfydtEWzfrAlw1tSBCq2JRAhruVHGLrTAi2SCMTnCsjNoO5zyKITuDqIhgMKr95g3LknLDH2q0PIwAbYEWql.t8v6tKdxSGc4WoVVAhajSkr5kSJzZUKQleYIko4DddU&dib\\_tag=se&keywords=outdoor%2Bconnect%2B4&qid=1741162387&sr=8-1-spons&sp\\_csd=d2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGY&th=1](https://www.amazon.com/KOTEK-Carrying-Release-Freestanding-Wall-Mounted/dp/B0DV4PVW98/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.5fhQOAYBJhH4pzctRMRRwcvEP9xTnKq7bd_1fqH6xzfl30nsGV5PqWZCBcX8PXvT7IjvI91v4bfGTdzZDzwagEUK5n84fLXc0IAuB6v6IRhnbvrR2a4PJ_F6TThhg7tDjkD4ZWA31VOzz1H4rh1dTR2lzhw58kBFD0uiuS8L6jRI_KrM5rKCedmJ5DYkGVvAfECsXUSob58rT_Cg8I0MBoCbfydtEWzfrAlw1tSBCq2JRAhruVHGLrTAi2SCMTnCsjNoO5zyKITuDqIhgMKr95g3LknLDH2q0PIwAbYEWql.t8v6tKdxSGc4WoVVAhajSkr5kSJzZUKQleYIko4DddU&dib_tag=se&keywords=outdoor%2Bconnect%2B4&qid=1741162387&sr=8-1-spons&sp_csd=d2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGY&th=1)
7. Concerns about Abaris management of Membersplash last year. The team administrative account they set up for people to send info to does not appear to be monitored and someone does not appear responsible for it. This created a lot of delays and anger before people were finally in contact with Kaitlyn. Sent prior e-mail chains to Joe Jordan earlier. Currently awaiting updates from Abaris about primary e-mail contact to give out for pool membership issues.
8. Consider new shelving to replace the old desk in guard room for better storage options