



President's Report

Alexandria Knolls West is getting off to a great and busy start in 2021. As you probably know from past Board Meetings and issues of *Knolls News*, we are beginning repairs on the C garage on January 18th. And after much research and discussion, we will also be undertaking the vent stack cleaning project. Details will follow.

One of our goals for this New Year is to increase Owner/Resident participation in the upkeep of our building and community. We are reinstating these past committees:

- Budget and Finance
- Building and Grounds
- Swimming Pool
- Safety and Security
- Landscape
- Ad Hoc Committee to source and organize parking for cars to be displaced during our Garage Repairs in January and again later in the year



The ByLaws Committee is ongoing and now chaired by Laura Rodriguez, AKW Treasurer.

We are asking our knowledgeable and talented community members to volunteer their time to the effort that best matches their interests and expertise.

Please contact the Board at board@akwcondo.com or me directly at michael@akwcondo.com and indicate which committee(s) you would like to sign up for. Your active participation is needed and wanted. You can help shape the future of our community!

Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy New Year!



Board Meeting Highlights

Reported Financials

November financials were not available at the time of the Board meeting.

Nine accounts comprise 98% of the total delinquencies (\$33,016), with another seven accounts representing the remaining 2% (\$430) outstanding.

	October	September
Total Cash and Investments	\$2,074,299	\$2,026,817
Year-to-Date Income	\$1,730,351	\$1,558,163
Year-to-Date Expenses	\$1,664,762	\$1,511,245
Delinquencies \$	\$33,446	\$31,665
Delinquencies %	1.68%	1.56%
YTD Reserve Expenditures	(\$88,665)	(\$84,617)
Total Reserves	\$1,590,602	\$1,557,150

Board Actions

- \$38,484 to Associa On Call for the replacement of 36 domestic hot water balancing valves. This work requires a full-building WSO and the project will be phased to minimize disruption; for example, one full-building WSO per month until completed. The new valves will allow the isolation of valves in future work. Timing is yet to be determined.
- \$5,375 per day to All American Plumbing to hydrojet the plumbing lines. Work will take approximately 4-5 days of multiple tier shut-offs (for example, Tiers 1, 2, 3, 4 in day 1). Kitchen sinks in only the first and second floors will need to be capped off, a change from the approach required by a prior vendor. Work is tentatively scheduled to begin on **Monday, January 25**.
- \$3,803 to Environmental Enhancements to remove four dead/dying trees. Work to be scheduled before mid-January.
- The sagging post-tension rods in the C garage will be **repaired beginning Monday, January 18**. Affected parkers will soon be notified of alternate parking arrangements

Alex



Officially a “Family Affair”

We’ve long acknowledged our fortune that Jose Castillo has been our tireless and treasured Porter for many years. He retired for a short while but later returned to AKW on a part-time basis. This summer, son **Alex Castillo** began working as a contract Porter and joined AKW as a full-time employee in September. **NOW**, Alex’s son — Jose’s grandson — **Enrique Castillo** has also joined us as Porter and began employment with AKW on December 14. We couldn’t have wished for a better team! Please say hello when you see them about the building.

Enrique



2021 Board Meeting Dates

January 12	February 9
March 9	April 13
May 11	June 8
July 13	August 10
September 14	October 12
November 9	December 14

Board Schedule Update

The Board changed the monthly meeting cycle to the **second Tuesday** of each month. The original schedule sometimes found us with no financial reports due to the time necessary for CMC to prepare those materials. Moving to an early date in the month means there will be few instances where financial reports are not available at meeting time.

Landmark News

The City of Alexandria on December 22 announced a development partnership for the former Landmark Mall property.

The release states that “A joint venture that includes Foulger-Pratt, The Howard Hughes Corporation (NYSE: HHC) and Seritage Growth Properties (NYSE: SRG)... announced an initial agreement with the City of Alexandria and Inova Health System to advance the development of the much-anticipated four million-square-foot community to include a new hospital campus at the site of the former Landmark Mall.



Conceptual drawing; subject to change

The proposed development would revitalize the West End of Alexandria by transforming the unoccupied, enclosed mall site into a mixed-use, walkable urban village. Inova, the leading nonprofit health care provider in Northern Virginia, would invest \$1 billion to create a new medical campus, anchored by the relocation and expansion of its Alexandria Hospital and more than 2,000 health care workers. Development plans on the balance of the site include residential, retail, commercial, and entertainment offerings integrated into a cohesive neighborhood with a central plaza, a network of parks and public spaces, and a transit hub serving bus rapid transit (BRT), DASH, and Metrobus. Affordable and workforce housing would be enhanced through developer contributions and co-location with community facilities such as a new Alexandria Fire-EMS station. Construction at Landmark could begin as soon as 2023, with the first buildings delivered in 2025.”

The announcement continues: “The initial agreement announced today provides a concrete starting point for further engagement and review by the community, City staff, the Alexandria Planning Commission, and the Alexandria City Council. Inova and developers will submit applications for applicable City review, public hearings and approvals in the months to come, which will provide additional details about the separate projects at the Landmark and Seminary sites. Two virtual community information meetings will be held to provide an overview of each project and answer general questions:

- Landmark Site Redevelopment: January 4, 2021, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.
- Seminary Site Rezoning: January 6, 2021, from 6 to 7 p.m.

Additional information about the meetings, answers to frequently asked questions, and other materials are available at alexandriava.gov/Landmark.



New Traffic Law Effective January 1, 2021

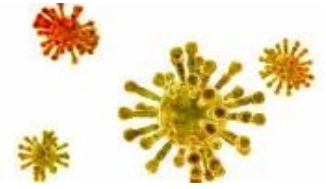
It happened in July and you may have seen it and since forgotten. But you now **need to be aware**. Effective January 1, 2021, the [use of handheld personal communications devices in certain motor vehicles is prohibited](#), with these exceptions:

1. The operator of any emergency vehicle while performing official duties.
2. An operator who is lawfully parked/stopped.
3. Anyone using a handheld personal communications device to report an emergency.
4. The use of an amateur or a citizens band radio.
5. The operator of any Department of Transportation vehicle.

First offenses receive a \$125 ticket; a second offense costs \$250. Any violation occurring in a highway construction zone is a \$250 ticket.

COVID Corner

With two vaccines approved, we all have a reason to be enthusiastic that an end of the pandemic is in sight. That said, it will be months before everyone opting for the vaccine will receive one — some estimating not until June or July of 2021. [CDC statistics](#) on December 26 show the death toll surpassing 330,000 in a seven-day period with more than 179,000 new cases in a single day. Positive cases nationwide total almost 19 million people. Many of the new cases are presumed to be a result of Thanksgiving gatherings and travel. By the time you read this, more cases and deaths will have occurred.



With a solution on the horizon, it would be easy to hope that one can coast through to the vaccination. Instead, now is the time to **maintain vigilance**. Redoubling the proscribed safety protocols is the best defense. Continue to wash your hands, use hand sanitizer if washing isn't possible, maintain social distance, and follow [Executive Order #72](#) and stay home between midnight and 5 am and wear a mask outdoors. Maintain your social bubble and don't take risks. We're almost there! Let's get there together safely!



Space Heater Safety

Mary Lariviere

I have wanted to write an article hoping to share some safety tips that you may not know and thought space heater safety would be appropriate for this time of year. If you work for the federal government, you may know that they frown on having space heaters in the office and there are reasons for that. When we get cold all we want is to be warm and sometimes we cut corners or bend the rules in order to do so.

First, when you are shopping for a space heater look for the certification mark such as ETL or UL. These are the marks of companies that test products, including space heaters, to ensure they meet OSHA electrical standards. These companies put the product through multiple safety tests.

You may have heard those pesky safety people telling you not to plug space heaters into an extension cord or surge protector and thought maybe they were just being picky. Not so much. **Extension cords and surge protectors are not designed for the load that a space heater puts on them and could cause a fire in a very short period of time. Plug your heater directly into the wall outlet.**

A few other things to consider when using a space heater:

- Consider buying a space heater that has a tip-over feature, where the heater turns off if it tips over.
- Another great feature is a timer that you can either program to shut off after a period of time or automatically shuts off after a certain period.
- Place your heater on a flat surface on the floor, preferably not on a rug, and leave it there. Don't put it on furniture.
- Keep your heater at least 3 feet from the wall, furniture, and any flammable objects.
- Never leave the heater alone in a room while it is on.
- As with any electrical appliance, keep your heater away from a water source.

We are fortunate to live in a concrete building, which prevents spread of fire from condo to condo, but that doesn't mean we can't start a fire in our units. You may think "stuff is stuff and it can be replaced" but fires could also cause you considerable physical, financial and psychological damage as well!



You have to pay attention every minute!

Michelle Singletary, personal financial affairs columnist in [The Washington Post](#), wrote on December 16 that *“The pandemic has created new jobs – for scammers preying on the unemployed!”* She said that income-based scams have increased in this year, cheating people out of \$150 million, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC explained that “the scammers are taking advantage

of a desperate situation to rip money from the hands of those of us least able to afford it.” Law enforcement is focusing on shutting down fake employment, work-at-home, multilevel marketing [also called ‘pyramid schemes’] and investment scams. Some of these involve cryptocurrency. If you don’t understand that [‘Bitcoin’ and others], don’t fall for a pitch! Don’t fall for being promised gigantic commissions that you’ll make for recruiting others – and the cost to get into those can be from \$1,000 to \$25,000! Work-at-home schemes seek to have you resell luxury products for commissions up to \$1,000 per week! Investment schemes are merely that – *schemes*. Companies claiming to be affiliated with Amazon might sound okay but really aren’t at all! Click or send the email to Spam or Junk to be rid of them.

The [FTC offers more information](#) on a lot of scams. To protect yourself, “*Slow Down*” and don’t jump at the “high-pressure” sales pitch. “*Don’t believe* the hype of ‘success stories’ or ‘testimonials.’ Those can be as fake as everything else! “*Skip the research* and you’re more likely to be victimized.” Search the Internet for the company’s name and add the words ‘review,’ ‘scam,’ or complaint’ to your online inquiry. The FTC remarks that “finding no complaints doesn’t mean the company is legitimate, but complaints can tip you off to possible problems.”

Even if this doesn’t apply to you, personally, think about others who may be susceptible.



Holiday Atmosphere

Many thanks to Rick Treviño for the gorgeous outdoor planters! And kudos to Dail Claridge and KC Snyder, with assists from Jose and Luis, for the much appreciated holiday spirit. The lovely tree, the beautifully wrapped presents, the wreaths and bright cheer from the poinsettias were welcome additions this year!

THANK YOU!!



Enjoying Knolls News?



We hope that you enjoy receiving **Knolls News** and that articles provide a benefit and are of interest to you as a community resident. We’d be pleased to hear suggestions on topics you want to know more about.



Did you know you can change from a print edition to one via email? Or perhaps you prefer the tactile pleasure of paper (a few print copies will be made available in the Mailroom, Lobby and in the Office). It’s entirely up to you!

Drop an email to w-shelley@comcast.net or sharon@akwcondo.com for suggestions or comments. We’re here and listening!





Buyer or Seller, everyone should be aware of this

This scam showed up a couple of years ago, but apparently it's still one that can trip up even the most savvy consumer. This will show up at a time when a Buyer or Seller is anxious to get to the settlement table and may not pay quite enough attention to the details in emails referring to closing costs and what should be brought to the table.

For all of us owning at AKW, we've been lucky enough to have slid by without being fleeced of a load of money. We're here, we're tucked into our homes, and feel safe. But what if you want to sell? Do you want to buy an investment property? Thinking of refinancing?

Attorney Harvey Jacobs exposed this scam in a January 6, 2020 [Washington Post](#) article, saying "...consumers must now be aware of an increasingly insidious form of email-based real estate fraud" that involves the FBI in investigations, estimating that 11,300 consumers lost \$150 million to these crimes! It involved fake emails that (obviously) look real, talking about "settlement date" or "wire instructions" or "cashier's check." These emails almost always use words like "urgent" (there's a problem with your settlement), so "please click on this link" and of course that leads to the scammers and possibly infecting your computer with a virus. What the scammer is trying to do is **redirect your to-be-wired funds** to their account, rather than to the account of the title company where the settlement is to take place. Result? Get to the settlement table and no funds are available to complete the transaction!

Mr. Jacobs continued, "To avoid being victimized, carefully examine the sender's email address as being legitimate. If in doubt, *do not reply!* Call your Realtor or Attorney to confirm any wire transfer instructions, using known phone numbers or accessing the title company's web site. DO NOT CALL the number in a suspicious email. Minimize the number of people who get copied on settlement-related transactions" and make it "need to know." An interesting extra tidbit: "Start a new email thread each time you email anyone involved in the transaction, especially when communicating about the financial part of the transaction."

The American Land Title Association (ALTA) has consumer resources at [StopWireFraud.org](#). Immediately call your bank and ask them to issue a recall notice for your wire (plus report to the FBI and the police department). If done within 24 hours, some recovery is possible.

Your Realtor (and possibly your mortgage representative) probably told you about this rotten possibility, but keep this story in the back of your mind, for when it might be what saves you at settlement!



Pet Owners Should Know This

Pet owners should be aware of an increase in [roundworm](#) infections in Alexandria, a November 24 [WTOP broadcast](#) reported. The parasite can be transmitted between dogs and cats, and even be transmitted to humans, most often young children. The [Companion Animal Parasite Council](#) has more info on the prevalence of infections in our and other areas.



SSA's January 22 Annual "Caregiver Support" Program with Insight Memory Care (virtual workshop at 10 am)



Every January SSA hosts its Caregiver Support Workshop, inviting community leaders to share information about resources and programs designed to help those who are serving as caregivers, as well as for their loved ones who are living with memory impairment. SSA partners with Insight Memory Care, a local nonprofit adult day health and resource center providing specialized care, support and education for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other memory impairments. They will be leading a virtual workshop on "Caregiving at a Glance – Tips, Hints, and Aha Moments" on Friday, January 22 at 10 am. If you are interested in attending, [register online](#) or call 703-836-4414, ext. 110.

By the way, did you know... "Senior Services of Alexandria" is a 501(C)(3) non-profit charitable organization, and gratefully accepts support for their services. They may be reached at 703-836-4414 or at 206 North Washington St., #301, Alexandria 22314. To give online, go to www.seniorservicesalex.org.

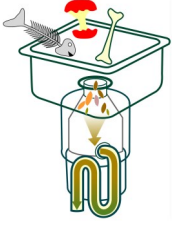


The thought of having a library card may seem a bit old-fashioned to some. But without a card, you and your family are missing some great opportunities that are FREE! The [Alexandria Library](#) has books, games, and movies among other options, but also online learning opportunities for crafts and games, songs and rhymes (to keep children engaged), cooking, self-care, sustainability, and more YouTube [videos](#) and virtual programs than possible to list. See the January virtual programs [here](#). There are also links to a myriad of community resources. The Library recently offered some technical instructions for accessing FREE reading apps [Overdrive / Libby](#), which is the gateway to accessing online books. This is likely to be offered again, so check the [website](#) or call the Library (703-746-1702) to see when they will next offer.

Encouraging your participation at Board meetings!

Our Community has always encouraged Volunteering by all Residents. One of the easiest ways is to come to a Board meeting — now via Zoom since the virus prevents us from meeting in person! — and participate by asking questions and by bringing up comments and concerns during the Open Forum for Residents. Click into the link that will be sent out from the Office (**next meeting is Tuesday, January 12th at 7pm**), and take part in our very own democratic process of running the building! It takes a *lot* more than just the seven directors. Your expertise can add a lot to our discussions. **Please join us!** (And remember to let Capri know that you'd like to speak so your audio can be active during the Open Forum.)

NEW
year
NEW
beginning



Garbage Disposal Cleaning

One area of your household that may be overlooked for deep cleaning is your kitchen sink's garbage disposal. We daily run water and soapy suds down the drain. It should be clean, right? Well, not necessarily.

The rubber flange (also referred to as splash guard) at the drain prevents water splashing back into the sink when the garbage disposal is running. As the water runs down the drain, what may not be visible is potential food debris collecting on the underside. The splash guard, the bottom of the garbage disposal and the drain stay damp a majority of the time, creating a breeding ground for bacteria and mold.

An online site suggests a number of cleaning options. One is with a combination of [baking soda, vinegar](#) and lemons to refresh. Another uses a toothbrush, soap and water (you'll want to wear rubber gloves) to [remove any build-up](#) on the underside of the splash guard. There are also [brushes](#) specifically for cleaning disposals. More arms-length options include [foaming cleaning pods](#) (while quick and effective, this writer's experience was that the splash guard still needed hand cleaning). Also, check out what to [avoid placing in your garbage disposal](#) to keep problems at bay.

If you have a holiday tree to discard

TrashAway will pick up spent Christmas trees on **January 8** and **January 15**.

Helpful-to-know Take your tree (hopefully wrapped in the tree bag—available from the Office!) to the Trash Room either the night before or by 7am on the day. There is no charge for these pickups. *If you discard your tree at any other time, you'll be charged for such pickup.*



And speaking of services, our waste disposal contractor, [Trash Away](#), offers individual trash removal of unwanted household items. Call 703-339-4560 to schedule, confirm pricing or with any questions.

OTHER HOUSEHOLD ITEMS:

CHAIR	\$25.00
DESK/COFFEE TABLE	\$50.00
ENTERTAINMENT CENTER	\$75.00 and up
FILING CABINETS	\$125.00 and up
KITCHEN TABLE & CHAIRS	\$100.00
DINING TABLE & CHAIRS	\$175.00
SOFA	\$75.00
LOVE SEAT	\$60.00
SOFA BED	\$100.00
TWIN MATTRESS	\$35.00
TWIN MATTRESS & BOXSPRING	\$65.00
QUEEN MATTRESS	\$45.00
QUEEN MATTRESS & BOXSPRING	\$85.00
KING MATTRESS	\$55.00
KING MATTRESS & BOXSPRING	\$95.00
REFRIGERATOR	\$175 and up
STEREO EQUIPMENT	\$55.00 and up
COMPUTER EQUIPMENT	\$50.00 and up
CLOTHES DRYER	\$75.00
CLOTHES WASHER	\$75.00
STOVE	\$75.00
TELEVISION	\$50.00 and up
DISHWASHER	\$75.00





of the Resident Service Program (RSP)

The purpose of the “Resident Service Program” (RSP) is to save Residents the cost and aggravation of having an outside contractor to come in to do small projects and odd-jobs. If we as Owners receive the service at a lower price than we would otherwise pay and that money goes to the Association as income, everybody wins! Please take a moment to review the program (at akwcondo.com as well as Appendix D in the Handbook) and consider if you have need of the services it offers.

And please note some important guidelines –

- All service requests must be made directly to the office
- Requests directly to the Maintenance Staff are *strictly prohibited*
- Payment for the services **may be made by check, to the Office –OR– credit card charge via BuildingLink**, as outlined in the program’s rules
- Payment is NOT to be made to the Maintenance Staff.

It’s important to note which services are not offered by the program, including HVAC servicing or repairs (other than changing filters semi-annually and springtime anti-mold pellet that the original units get). See the program details [here](#) and the chart below for pricing.

If you have feedback about the Resident Service Program, please share it with the Office or raise it during the Open Forum at a Board Meeting.

Resident Services Program Fees

(temporary charges during Covid-19 pandemic)

Service	Temporary RSP Fee	Normal RSP Fee
Faucet Washers	\$32.50	\$25.00
Unclog/Snake Drain	\$50.00	\$40.00
Garbage Disposal Reset	\$32.50	\$25.00
Garbage Disposal Unclog	\$50.00	\$40.00
Replace Toilet Seats	\$32.50	\$25.00
Replace Toilet Seats Where Bolts Are Frozen	\$50.00	\$40.00
Replace Light Bulbs	\$22.50	\$15.00
Reset Circuit Breaker	\$22.50	\$15.00
Fix Door or Drawer Handles	\$32.50	\$25.00



Important Dates in January

- ◆ Board Meeting Tuesday January 12, 7:00 pm*
- ◆ C/D garage repairs Monday Beginning January 18
- ◆ Hydrojet project Monday Beginning January 25

*Information on accessing the electronic meetings will be provided in advance.
The Board Meeting agenda is available in the Office the Friday before the meeting.



Sharon Grant is a Virginia Notary and offers services to AKW residents by appointment at no charge.



Important Phone Numbers

Guard Mobile	571-565-5591
AKW Office Phone	703-751-7541
AKW Office email	office@akwcondo.com
AKW Fax	703-751-2136
A-1 Towing	703-971-2600
CMC Emergency	301-446-2635
Police Non-Emergency	703-746-4444
Police Emergency	911
City of Alexandria Info	311 or 703-746-4311

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