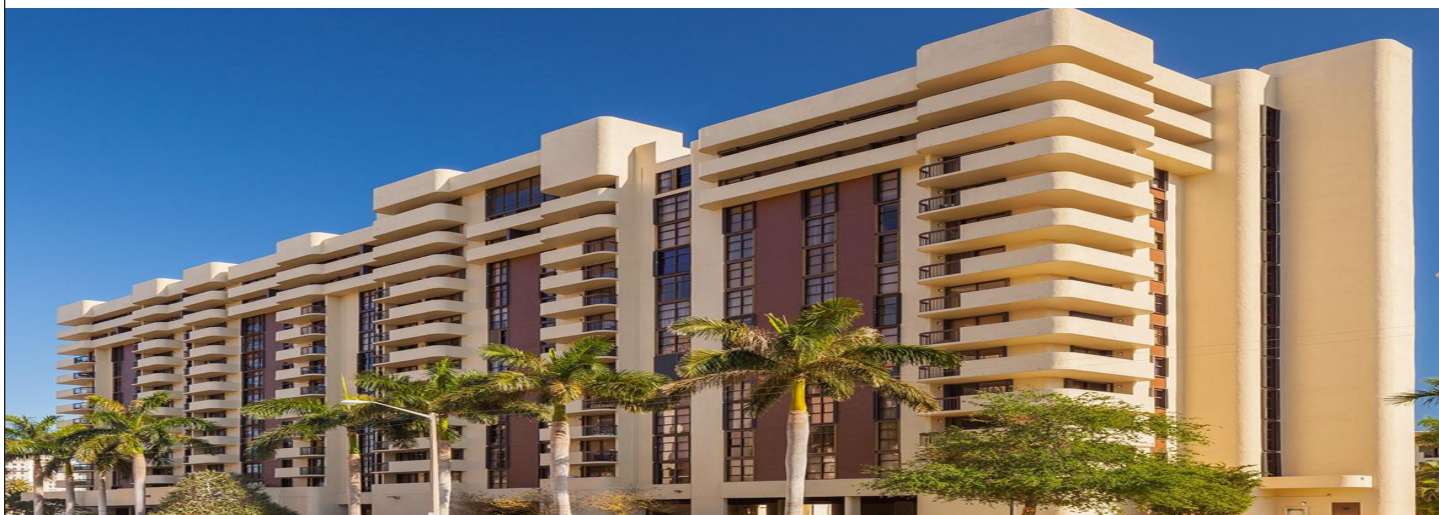


BILTMORE II CONDOMINIUM MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Volume 13 Issue 5

February 2021

BILTMORE II CONDO

600 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, Florida 33134

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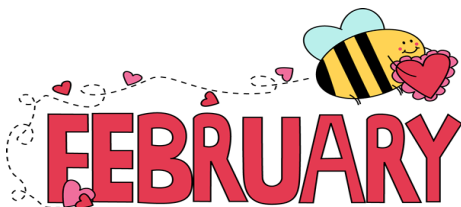
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MANAGER'S CORNER

Annual Coral Gables Farmers Market

Farmers Market Begins Saturday, February 6, 2021
through March 27, 2021 from 8:00am-2:00pm

**Where: In front of City Hall- 405 Biltmore Way,
Coral Gables, FL 33134**



While you visit the Farmers Market, you **MUST** follow these important Covid-19 guidelines:

- Wear a facemask, except when actively eating or drinking in the designated eating area. Masks are not required for children under the age of 2 or for those with medical conditions.
- Please practice social distancing by staying 6 feet apart from others
- Wash or disinfect your hands often. Complimentary hand sanitizers can be found at event entrances and in every vendor booth.
- For your convenience, a closed off eating area is available with limits of up to 6 people per table. Please do not move tables or chairs. This area may also serve as a respite area if you need to take off your mask for a quick break. Tables and chairs will be disinfected between uses.
- Please do not sample or taste any food at the market.
- Dispose of any garbage in the trash & recycling bins with open lids.
- Please note that due to the current COVID-19 restrictions our regularly scheduled classes and children's activities have been suspended for this year's Farmers Market season.
- For your safety all vendors and city staff will be subject to a temperature screening at the beginning of every shift and provided with a color-coded wristband.

MAINTENANCE FEES – REMINDER

Remember that for January and February 2021 you should pay the same amount of maintenance fees you were paying in 2020. The Board will provide an update shortly indicating how the difference will be made up. Thank you!

Change of Newsletter Editors

Hello Residents of Biltmore II,

Today I am preparing my last Biltmore II newsletter. Starting with the March edition Bob Petzinger, whom most of you know, will take over my duties. Bob has been writing articles for the newsletter for a long time and was the perfect person to whom transition the job. Under his new direction, I'm sure Bob will be implementing an innovative newsletter that you will all enjoy reading.

It's been a pleasure putting together our monthly news. I'll see you all around the building!

Stay safe ... and take care!

Ginny Shwedel

Correction to "2020 Building Projects Completed" Article

In the January 2021 Issue of the Association's newsletter, the article titled **2020 BUILDING PROJECTS COMPLETED** mistakenly stated that once the new Emergency Generator was started with diesel fuel and reached 20% load capacity, it would then run only fueled by natural gas. The new generator requires diesel fuel to start the engine, but after 20% of load capacity is reached, natural gas is mixed with diesel fuel thus conserving diesel fuel usage.



(FINANCIAL MONTH OF DECEMBER 2020)

COLLECTIONS: Regarding the collection of maintenance fees, we have 3 units with late maintenance fee payments for December. Notices have been sent to all unit owners who are late.

INCOME/EXPENSE: The month of December shows a budget deficit of (\$28,239.04) and a year-to-date deficit of only (\$187.83). The Building Manager and the Maintenance Supervisor did a particularly good job controlling expenses during the last few months of the year.

The above results include booking the \$57,000 for the roof repair and avoids having to charge it to the 2021 operating budget.

FUNDING: The funds available in our operating accounts are \$432,603.73 at the end of December. As for Reserves, we have \$2,687,024.63 of funds available at the end of December.

The above results are subject to final book closing for 2020.

GEORGE A. DAVID, PA ATTORNEY AT LAW

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SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

The Association constantly evaluates building infrastructure to determine what common elements require maintenance or replacement. This function is carried out by a partnership of the Association's Management, appointed volunteer members of the Building Committee (BC) and Finance Committee (FC), and the elected Board of Directors (BOD). For major projects expertise is sought from engineering companies or specialist consultants. The agenda for meetings of the BC, FC and BOD are made public at least 48 hours in advance. Residents and owners are invited to attend. With COVID-19 pandemic protocols still in effect, these meetings are via ZOOM teleconference that can be accessed with personal computers or cell phones. Minutes are posted in the mailroom and on the Association's website: (<https://biltmore2condo.mycommunitysite.app/>).

Our beautiful building is nearing its 50th birthday (2023). Some of its key components require deferred maintenance or replacement. For example, in 2020 our emergency generator was replaced and upgraded because the original generator was reaching the end of its useful life. Currently, a plumbing contractor is replacing old iron sanitary waste removal pipes in the east/west covered garages. In 2021 several other significant Reserve funded projects will occur, such as modernization of the four elevators, replacement of lobby entrance doors with an automated sliding door, upgrading building security by expanding the video camera system and replacing the garage entry system with new technology, replacing old pool equipment (heater, pumps, filters), continuing sanitary pipe replacement, and replacing the in-ground diesel fuel tank and doubling its capacity. Most of these projects are planned well in advance and are funded primarily through the Annual Reserve Contribution that forms part of the monthly maintenance fee. On special occasions, supplemental funds are obtained through a Special Assessment.

Our Association has a recent history of conducting a Reserve Study involving an on-site survey of building infrastructure components and records at least every 4-years. In between on-site surveys, annual updates are obtained to reflect current conditions and deferred maintenance projects conducted in the previous year and planned for the next 2-3 years, as well as updating replacement costs based on recent condo building historical infrastructure costs. The Reserve Study includes all common assets valued over \$10,000. The Study produces an estimated cost per year for the next 30-years indicating expected deferred maintenance expense or replacement cost when an asset's useful life is expected to end. It must be conducted by an independent certified reserve fund planner. Our Association has contracted with Dreux Isaac & Associates Inc. for reserve study planning. When the Reserve Study is

Continued on page 4

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786-486-9022

Excellent References
Resume Available on Request

Assessment (cont. from page 3)

approved by the BOD, it becomes a legal obligation for the Association to collect the funds necessary to meet the anticipated maintenance and asset replacement obligations. If Association members vote to not fully fund Reserves but only to partially fund them, as was done in a 132-2 vote on January 27, 2020, members are advised that they may be required to pay a Special Assessment to meet deferred maintenance and replacement costs. The FC uses the most recent Reserve Study to determine the amount of money needed to ensure that all required funding for deferred maintenance expense or replacement costs are in place to keep Biltmore II in good shape and meet resident and owner expectations for quality of life.

Despite best efforts to ensure that Reserve Funds are collected and set aside to address every building common area infrastructure repair or replacement, unexpected developments can occur. In 2019 the Association asked its preferred structural engineering consulting firm, Biller Reinhart Engineering Group, to determine the cause of water intrusion from significant rain events into the basement garage and to recommend corrective actions. This firm found an unexpected problem – small cracks and stains in the basement garage cement ceiling slab. The consultant advised that this might indicate deterioration of individual post-tension cables, placed within the concrete slab, to give it strength and to prevent cracking. Suddenly, the Association was dealing with an unexpected building structural issue and not just water penetration.

Throughout 2019, more detailed investigations were made to define the scope of work necessary to address the problem. What was initially a \$6M project was reduced to about \$3.7M by delaying some non-structural tasks and having our maintenance staff per-

form other tasks at a future time. Some funds are being allocated in Reserves for aspects of this task, such as applying a new waterproof pool membrane, replacing old leaking expansion joints, applying a new waterproof membrane to the parking deck, and repairing a limited number of compromised post-tension cables. This garage roof deck restoration project is complex and added significant costs over the next 2 years starting in 2021.

A cash flow analysis of Reserve expenditures for building infrastructure projects over the next 3-years (2021-2023) requires a total cash outflow of \$7,728,740. The BOD's decision to keep the maintenance fee at a reasonable level and to levy a \$3M Special Assessment was not taken lightly. The Special Assessment is to fund the shortfall in collections from the Annual Reserve Contribution portion of the monthly maintenance fee. The Special Assessment action is necessary as known or expected structural problems must be analyzed and fixed by the end of 2023 not only to keep the building in a sound condition, but also to achieve the mandatory 50-year recertification of Biltmore II.

Recertification of the building is required by law once a building reaches forty years of age and again every 10 years thereafter. The 50-year recertification process for Biltmore II will begin in 2023 and complete in 2024. This legal requirement is to assure that the common structural and electrical systems are operating properly and are certified by an independent engineer as providing a safe life for all residents. Any building that fails to achieve recertification is subject to municipal officials declaring the building "unsafe". This could lead to daily fines and even a mandatory evacuation order until the building is declared safe by municipal authorities. This scenario did hang over Biltmore II during our 40-year recertification process.

The BOD has chosen to address and fix all garage-related problems identified by its consultant – Biller Reinhart Engineering Group. This firm will be the Project Manager to ensure that all elements of the scope of work are properly addressed before payments are made to the chosen contractors, and to ensure that contracted warranties are in effect.

Robert Petzinger

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Gargage & Recyclable Handling – A Successful Compromise

About one year ago, the Association addressed a hygiene problem affecting all residents - the growing volume of recyclable trash cluttering hallway trash chute rooms. These small closet-like rooms were designed only for placing bagged non-recyclable garbage in the chute. When recycling of select items was implemented, 2 waste-basket size plastic containers were placed in the chute closet, but the volume of recyclable material grew more than the capacity of these containers. As a result, the chute rooms became crowded as recyclable items overflowed the containers and were placed on the floor. Some of these items were not cleaned before they were discarded, resulting in unpleasant odors, and causing hygienic problems. Board of Directors (BOD) action was needed. Increasing staff pickup from each trash chute room to more than once daily would incur unbudgeted labor costs and would impact other maintenance duties, so that was rejected.

The BOD decided to place large, wheeled recyclable bins in the basement garage near the elevator lobbies. All residents were informed to take their recyclable items to these basement garage bins. The positive impacts are several. Now hallway trash chute rooms are clean with no items on the floor. Bins in the basement garage were increased to accommodate growing amounts of recyclables, particularly cardboard. Our maintenance staff is relieved of a time-consuming task of revisiting trash chute rooms on each floor. Because these bins are near the basement office of the maintenance staff, they are checked more frequently and emptied when needed. Even with extra daily checks, it is taking less staff time than it used to take to visit 24 trash chute rooms daily.

Fortunately, this change was implemented before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a dramatic increase in cardboard package delivery. To accommodate the increase in cardboard boxes brought to the basement for recycling, our maintenance supervisor, Eduardo Mustelier-Sanchez, requested that the Association purchase a cardboard baler that compresses recyclable cardboard into rectangular packets that consume much less space and enables the cardboard packets to be efficiently recycled. The baler is on site and is working effectively.

The increased capacity to receive and process recyclable materials is helping keep our interior spaces clean during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Association, management and maintenance staff extend their appreciation to all residents for their cooperation in making this transition successful. While residents must bring their recyclable items to the basement garage bin containers, maintenance staff has increased bin

capacity, increased daily checks, and improved cardboard recycling. This shared responsibility between residents and maintenance staff is working to improve our quality of life and is aiding the environment too.

Robert Petzinger & Eduardo Mustelier-Sanchez

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS

In July 2018, the Florida Legislature passed an amendment to Statute 718 (Florida Condominium Law) which forbids condominium associations from prohibiting the installation of Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations by residents. The amendment went on to specify that the installation of such charging stations, including cost, is the responsibility of the residents and that condominium associations may establish standards governing the installation of same.

In response to this amendment, Biltmore II hired Luis Aguirre & Associates (electrical engineering firm) to:

- complete a study outlining any modifications which might be required to our existing electrical installation to accommodate such chargers
- develop a set of design requirements governing such installations.

The first of these two tasks has been completed. Aguirre & Associates determined a new electrical breaker box would need to be installed in our “electrical room” to accommodate up to twelve (12) of these chargers. Biltmore II Condominium Association proposes to facilitate the installation of EV chargers by commissioning the necessary house infrastructure upgrade and paying upfront costs for its design and installation. However, the cost for the electrical infrastructure upgrade shall be repaid to the Association by the owners wishing to install EV chargers via a onetime fee of \$ xxx (to be announced) per breaker position to be used, which payment shall be submitted with the application to install EV charger(s). Unit Owners wishing to install EV chargers shall be responsible for all work and costs necessary to install the EV charger at its desired location, including providing electrical supply from the dedicated breaker panel in the Electrical room and any other associated work.

The cost (\$3,200) of the study to develop the standards governing installation of chargers will be borne by the Association, as development of these standards are in the best interest of the Association.

Bill Beitz

SMOKE EMERGENCY IN YOUR UNIT?

On the morning of January 19, 2021, the central fire alarm system sounded throughout Biltmore II as an emergency was detected. Residents were instructed to leave the building via the emergency stairwells and not to use the elevators. What do you think happened while the alarm was going off and the loudspeakers were instructing everyone to leave ASAP via the stairs? Some people decided to leave via the elevators completely disregarding the warning **not to use the elevators**. Other people went to the open hallways around the Atrium to watch, even though the instruction to leave the building ASAP was loudly being repeated. Even after the Fire Department 1st responders entered the building, residents continued to remain in their hallways and using the elevators. **Why do residents ignore emergency instruction? Not doing so is life threatening behavior!**

Possibly they hesitate because too many emergency alarms are false

alarms, so people want verification that the emergency is really life threatening before walking down flights of stairs. However, delaying your evacuation from the building is a potentially life-threatening act as it reduces the time it takes to reach a safe point outside the building if the emergency is real. Whenever you hear the emergency alarm and announcements, **please act immediately to leave the building via the stairs** – unless staff announces through the emergency intercom system that it is a false-alarm, or the emergency has ended.

Fortunately, the incident on January 19, 2021 was brought under control before a fire occurred. A resident noticed smoke in their kitchen, no fire, but then the mistake was made to open the unit's foyer entry door to allow the smoke to leave the unit and enter the common hallway. This improper action set off the common area smoke alarms in the hallway and that triggered the central alarm to send an

emergency call to the Fire Dept. A lot of people were inconvenienced by this action. **Never open your unit's entry door to allow smoke to enter the hallway!** Only open your unit's windows or sliding doors to allow smoke to completely exit the building. As recently reported in the Newsletter, unit entry doors are fire-rated to prevent fire and smoke from leaving a unit for a period to allow residents to depart safely via the common hallway to reach the emergency stairs. Unit entry doors are designed to safeguard the hallways for the use of residents by containing the fire and smoke within the unit for a limited amount of time. To do their job, these doors must be kept closed. Opening the door and allowing smoke to enter the hallway set off the central alarm unnecessarily. **Please follow emergency alarm system instructions immediately and leave via the emergency stairs! Better safe than sorry!**

Robert Petzinger

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