

BILTMORE II CONDOMINIUM MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Volume 13 Issue 7

April 2021

BILTMORE II CONDO

600 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, Florida 33134

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HOW TO REACH US

Manager .. manager@biltmore2.com
Office..... 305-448-4765
Admin...... admin@biltmore2.com
Concierge/Front Door.. 305-443-7914
Concierge.. Concierge@biltmore2.com
Maintenance.....
maintenance@biltmore2.com
Association Website.....
<https://biltmore2condo.mycommunitysite.app>

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday..... 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.



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Security Surveillance System Upgraded

In March 2021, Abar Technology Group (the Association's new security video surveillance system service provider), upgraded interior and exterior video cameras and supporting equipment to implement the recommendations of a Building Committee (BC) task force that examined the existing CCTV system. Its recommendations were accepted by the BC and the Board of Directors approved them. The upgrade includes converting video cameras that were old analog technology to higher resolution and better performing digital technology. Also, a few new digital cameras were added or relocated to areas in the front driveway portico and east parking areas to eliminate blind-spots and provide better coverage of these heavily trafficked locations. Also, a pool area camera was upgraded to provide sufficient quality to better recognize people in this area. New recording equipment with internet access to enable remote access by authorized staff was added, as well as a new workstation for front desk personnel. Finally, a maintenance agreement with Abar Technology Group to perform on-site quarterly preventative maintenance of all system components including cameras (cleaning, adjusting focus) and upgrading camera and recording software when available is in effect.



The security of all residents is a primary responsibility of the Association and its staff. The historical track record of Biltmore II being a safe place to live is excellent.

NEW RESIDENTS

Yvette Calles
Mirta and Donald Stewart
Margarita Gonzalez
Xavier Plaza and María Cristina Bejarano
Raul Weill
Victoria Berg





TREASURER'S REPORT

(FINANCIAL MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2021)

INCOME/EXPENSE

The month of February shows a net surplus of income vs. expenses of \$11,824 bringing the year-to-date surplus to \$ 18,810. While having a surplus in the first two months of the fiscal year is a positive sign, please keep in mind that not all expenses will be incurred on a regular basis. Just FYI: Insurance expenses are showing a positive YTD balance of \$ 5K which will be diminishing once the new premiums take effect in a few months. There are other cost elements where currently we are below budget, but they will be impacted by required future transactions.

COLLECTIONS

Regarding the collection of maintenance fees, we have, as expected, still quite a number of units in the Aged Delinquency Report showing for their unit the difference between payments received and the monthly maintenance fee approved by the Board and adopted by the members. We expect that the number of delinquent units will drop substantially going forward as unit owners will send a check or make an automatic payment for that difference.

In addition, we have 8 units with late monthly payments. Notices have been sent to all unit owners who were late.

FUNDING

The funds available in our operating bank accounts including petty cash are \$425,820.97 at the end of February. As for Reserves, we have \$2,713,573.88 of funds available in our Reserve bank accounts at the end of February.

OUR NEW NEIGHBOR

In 2019, a developer purchased the two small 2-story apartment buildings located at 701 and 711 Valencia Ave., across Cardena Street from Biltmore II. Initially, the developer planned to construct a multi-story 125 feet tall multi-unit residential condo condominium structure with just one unit per floor. Current zoning would allow new residential buildings of 150 feet in height, which is about the height of the David William residential structure behind these properties to the north. Biltmore II is about that tall as well. Recently, a lawsuit from a resident of the David William was settled and the new owner of these properties agreed to reduce the height to 75 feet with a redesigned building of 7-floors with 23 condo units. Then in March 2021 the City approved the developer's request to add two more units, bringing the total density to 25 units. Currently, the two existing apartment buildings have a combined total of 10 rental units. For Biltmore residents at the west end of our building and that have views to the west, it is beneficial that the new structure will be substantially shorter than what was originally planned. The owner is contracted with T A Builders to provide design and construction services. This firm designed Biltmore Parc, the 5-story 32 condo unit property at 718 Valencia Ave.

Bob Petzinger

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2021 BUILDING PROJECTS

The Association, advised by its appointed resident Building Committee (BC), is addressing the following building infrastructure projects in 2021. Some of these projects have been approved by the Board of Directors (BOD). Others are pending final BC recommendation and BOD approval.

- **PIPE REPLACEMENT**

Some of the horizontal segments of our nearly 50-year-old cast iron sanitary sewer pipes are rusting and present a leaking problem. Based on a condition-assessment performed by Intertek last year, these segments are in three areas of our building – above the east and west covered parking areas, in the upper parts of the garage, and in a soffit above the north end of our lobby area. A contract for the work in the first area, with Douglass Orr Plumbing, was recommended by the BC and approved by the BOD. Work started January 19, 2021 and completed February 19, 2021. The next phase involves the sanitary pipes in the garage and lobby soffit chase areas that serve units bordering the atrium in the center of Biltmore II. The extent of the work (identification and sizes of pipes to be replaced) and bid documents are currently being developed by Louis Aguirre & Associates (our engineering consultant). A contract with a plumbing contractor is expected to be bid and awarded later this year, subject to BC review and recommendation, and then BOD decision.

- **LOBBY FRONT DOOR**

The current pair of manually operated front doors were determined to be in poor condition and need of replacement. In 2020, the BC solicited quotes and recommended, and the BOD approved, ASSA ABLOY Entrance Systems (contractor) to furnish and install an automated sliding impact-resistant glass front door, which will not require human contact. The new door will be installed in Spring 2021 and is awaiting approval by the City of Coral Gables.

- **VIDEO CAMERA (CCTV) SECURITY SYSTEM**

In 2020, the BC recommended, and the BOD approved, a contract with Abar Technology Group to upgrade

interior and exterior cameras to all digital technology. 17 of our 43 cameras were old analog technology and will be replaced with higher resolution digital cameras. A few new cameras will be added in the front driveway and service entrance areas to provide better coverage of these are heavily trafficked locations. Also, one pool-area camera will be upgraded to provide identification of people using the pool. Work is underway and will be completed soon.

- **GARAGE ACCESS SYSTEM**

In 2020, the BC recommended, and the BOD approved, a new system to control vehicle access to the basement garage. The new system, also by Abar Technology Group, will replace the current “Clickers” with a windshield-mounted transponder that is encoded and will be recognized by a new Radio Frequency ID antenna to automatically open the garage gate/arm as the car approaches. FOBs will continue to be used for elevator access to/from the basement garage, entry to the lobby from the pool area, and unlocking the front door when it is locked from 11P-7A. Management is currently advising residents of the transition requirements.

- **ELEVATOR MODERNIZATION**

In 2019, it was determined that the mechanical equipment of our 4 elevators needed to be replaced due to premature deterioration. Compass Elevator Consultants was hired to develop renovation specifications and bid documents. Bids were received and analyzed, with Kone Elevators being recommended by the BC, and selected by the BOD, for a two-year project to replace and upgrade the mechanical and electrical elements of each of the 4 elevators. The contract was executed in 2020 and all new equipment was ordered. The first elevator to be modified will begin in May 2021. Each elevator will take about 3.5 months to complete. Compass Elevator Consultants will continue to be our representative for this project.

- **ELEVATOR CAB REFURBISHMENT**

This project involves refurbishment of the elevator cab interiors, including lighting, ceiling, flooring, and

Continued on page 4

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Building Projects (cont. from page 3)

wall paneling. A Task Force was convened by the BC to develop a design and obtain quotes to do the work. Except for the flooring part, a BC-recommended design and contractor (Vasile) was approved by the BOD. Each Cab will be refurbished after the Modernization work, by elevator, is completed. The first cab to be refurbished is scheduled to be done in August 2021 and will progress after each successive cab modernization is completed.

- **POOL EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT**

This project replaces key components of our pool operating equipment including pumps, filters, and heater. Currently, we have engaged the consulting services of Louis Aguirre & Associates to develop drawings and bid specifications for the work. When these documents are available, the project will be bid and awarded for implementation.

- **EMERGENCY GENERATOR DIESEL FUEL TANK**

In 2020, the BC recommended, and the BOD approved, the replacement of the existing 500-gallon diesel fuel storage tank that provides diesel fuel for the rooftop emergency generator. The existing tank is original to Biltmore II and needs to be replaced. The new tank will be 1000 gallons, twice the current size, to extend generator running time before new fuel delivery is needed. Engineering firm Aguirre & Associates has been contracted to develop the engineering specifications and drawings for this project. Ultimate BOD approval of the project and recommended bidder is targeted for completion by EOY 2021.

- **GARAGE RESTORATION CONTRACT**

In 2015/2016 we experienced unusual flooding in the garage after

a significant rain event. A consulting engineer (Biller Reinhart Engineers) was engaged to investigate the causes and recommend fixes. A Garage Water Intrusion-Phase 1 Project was created and performed, which resolved the high-priority issues, including replacement of over half of our parking deck expansion joints, the refurbishment of our trench drains at driveway entrances, replacing the waterproofing in one planter and cleaning out our garage drainage system. A companion project to upgrade and replace all garage drainage (sump) pumps was approved and implemented to enhance our garage drainage system. In 2019, we began to experience new and additional water intrusion into the garage. Again, Biller Reinhart was called to investigate. It was found that additional expansion joints and several planters were newly leaking, providing for a Garage Water Intrusion – Phase 2 project. However, Biller Reinhart also identified some potential post-tension cable defects, along with concrete cracks, delaminations and spalling. While these issues have not contributed to water intrusion, they do represent structural concerns that need to be addressed. Additionally, re-waterproofing the pool and replacement of the waterproofing membrane on the upper deck appeared in the Reserve Schedule for the current period. Because all these projects can be done by the same type of contractor, it was decided to include all these garage, waterproofing and structural projects into a single contract of related work (Garage Restoration Project). Biller Reinhart developed a bid document and solicited bids. The BC, with Biller Reinhart's assistance, evaluated the bids and recommended an award to Restoration Technology Inc. (RTI) as the contractor. The BOD approved the selection and a contract agreement with RTI is underway.

- **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 in assigned parking spaces by residents. The amendment specified that 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 Louis Aguirre & Associates (electrical engineering firm) to 1) complete a study outlining any modifications which might be required to our existing electrical installation to accommodate such chargers, and 2) develop a set of design requirements governing such installations. The first of these two tasks is completed. For further project information, please refer to the Association's February 2021 newsletter article titled "Electric Vehicle Charging Stations".

- **DRIVEWAY**

The BC appointed a Task Force to evaluate applications that can be applied to the current ceramic tile front entrance driveway surface to provide slip-resistance during wet weather conditions. In conjunction with this effort, the Maintenance staff is testing slip-resistant applications on sections of the driveway. Although our current supply of spare tiles is expected to last for another 6 years, the Task Force scope of work also includes obtaining structural engineering advice and costs for removing the existing tile surface and installing a new surface, such as stone, cement, asphalt, etc. and recommending when a new surface should be installed.

Terry McKinley (Building Committee - Chair) & Bob Petzinger

#1 Preventable Condo Unit Headache - WATER LEAKS

The amount of unit water leaks over the past 8 months reveals that this is the most frequently occurring damage problem impacting unit owners, residents, and our Maintenance team. The interruption to the lives of the residents impacted by water leaks is exceeded only by in-unit fires, which are rare. During the past 8 months, the Maintenance staff received 37 calls from residents who discovered a water leak in their unit or water leaking into their residence from a unit located on the floor above them. The Maintenance staff responded to every call for help and documented their findings. 13 of the 37 leak incidents were caused by clogs in the air conditioner condensation line – the single most frequent cause of water leaks. Bathroom problems caused 11 of the leak incidents stemming from clogged shower and tub drains and toilet blockages. Other problems were less frequent, such as clothes washer, kitchen sink and dishwasher drain blockages. Finally, there was one incident of water leaking from a hot water heater that was overflowing the drain pan. Pro-rating the 8-month performance to a full year results in 52 leak incidents – about 4 units having a leak every month! Remember that the unit having the leak experiences damage and often the unit below does as well. The worst case during this time involved an overflowing kitchen sink that flooded the common area hallway and damaged several other units.



Almost every incident of water leakage was preventable, but it takes the resident's commitment to take preventive measures monthly, including 1) putting a cup of white vinegar in your air conditioning condensation drain line to break up and prevent clogs; 2) replacing the A/C air filter monthly during heavy use months or as needed; 3) checking around base of all toilets for signs of water from the water line or gasket beneath the toilet and call a plumber if water is found; 4) not re-flushing clogged toilets until a plunger releases the clog and then re-flush; 5) cleaning hair from shower and tub drains; 6) using Drano or other un-clogging liquid for blocked sink drains; and 6) replacing the hot water heater when it reaches 15 years of age since it contains enough water to damage your unit and the unit below and because you cannot tell whether the interior of the heater is deteriorating by any other means. Once a year it is highly recommended that you hire a licensed plumber inspect all water lines, drains and water-using appliances.

Finally, the Association recommends that residents have current homeowner's or renter's property and casualty insurance with Personal Liability coverage (which covers water damage caused to other units if it was due to your negligence) and Dwelling coverage (which covers repairs to your own unit).

Bob Petzinger & Eduardo Mustelier-Sanchez





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CORAL GABLES APPROVES ZONING CHANGES

In a 4-1 vote by the Coral Gables City Commission on March 23, 2021, Miracle Mile was re-zoned. With only Commissioner Lago voting "No", the "compromise" plan proposed by Commissioner Mena was approved. This reduced the height of new development on Miracle Mile from a proposed 7 stories to a hard cap of 4 stories not to exceed 50 feet in height. The 4th story would have to be setback from the street. The revised plan will allow for taller buildings than currently exist on the "Mile", but without the need for adding parking, a request made by Terranova, the developer who seeks to build a hotel without parking at 220 Miracle Mile. Whether the new 4-story and 50-foot height limits will enable Terranova to build a hotel that was planned for 7-stories is not known at this time. The Commissioners voting "Yes" hope that the new up-zoned 4-story height for mixed commercial and residential use will spur small and mid-scale development that results in increased pedestrian traffic. This code change specifies that there will be no parking decks and ramps facing Miracle Mile. Developers must provide required parking within a 1,000-foot radius of the development site by acquiring rights to use parking spaces in City or private lots or garages. The City's Parking Administration indicated that there is currently enough parking availability to accommodate estimated re-development for the next 10-years. Street parking on Miracle Mile will remain as it is today.

Also, the City Commission approved up-zoning changes for the Crafts section that abuts the downtown core. The changes include a 4-story limit and residential only development for the block facing the historic San Sebastian Apartments on University Drive, the original home of the University of Miami. The rest of the Crafts section to the north will be allowed to build mixed use (commercial & residential) with a 7-story height limit.

Bob Petzinger

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