

**December 7, 2015**

**THE OMCA BOARD REMANDED THE FOLLOWING TO THE NEAC FOR FURTHER STUDY AT THE JULY 28, 2015 BOARD MEETING**

**NEAC ORIGINAL RECCOMENDATION**

*"Every three years, on a rotating basis (one neighborhood each year), the Oakland Mills Village Association will employ a Property Standards Evaluator to perform curbside inspections of all properties (single family, townhouses, condominiums, apartments, and commercial) within Oakland Mills. These evaluations are intended to make the Village Board aware of the prevalence and scope of issues and to make property owners/residents aware of observed violations. Notification will normally be made via postcard and will list the items on the property that may need to be addressed. The Oakland Mills Village Association also will also maintain a copy of each property evaluation. "*

Many questions were posed by several Board members and by the NEAC.

The following is respectfully submitted and recommended to the OMCA Board for approval after further research by the NEAC done in August, September, October, and November with assistance from the Village Manager, Sandy Cederbaum:

**NEAC REVISED RECOMENDATION FOR BOARD ADOPTION**

**Columbia will celebrate its 50th Birthday in 2017. The Oakland Mills Community Association (OMCA) wants to recognize and prepare for this event by highlighting our Village as a community of which we are all proud.**

**As part of our efforts to achieve this goal, the Oakland Mills Village Board will conduct a Property Standards Evaluation. This evaluation is intended to: (1) maintain the good physical appearance of the Village, (2) ensure**

**that all Oakland Mills property owners are aware of Oakland Mills legally-binding covenants, (3) notify property owners about observed Covenant violations so that they may be rectified, and (4) alert the Village Board about the prevalence and scope of any issues.**

**The Property Standards Evaluation will follow the timeline outlined below.**

### **2016**

**As soon as possible, the Oakland Mills Village Board will:**

- Employ a Property Standards Evaluator to perform curbside inspections of all properties (single family, townhouses, condominiums, apartments, and commercial) within Oakland Mills.
- Request funding of \$25,000 from the Village Contingency Fund.
- Send a letter from the Village Board co-chairs to all property owners, notifying them that the Property Standards Evaluation will be conducted and including a copy of the evaluation form that will be used. (NEAC recommends using a modified version of the River Hill form, attached.)

**Following the completion of each curbside evaluation, the Oakland Mills Village Board will:**

- Notify property owners of any observed property violations via postcard. Send any needed subsequent notifications according to the Oakland Mills Covenant Enforcement Process Timeline approved by the Oakland Mills Board on September 8, 2015.
- Note for further follow up any residential or commercial property that appeared to be abandoned or foreclosed.
- Maintain records of each Property Standards Evaluation in the Oakland Mills Covenant Compliance Log database.

### **2019**

**Beginning in Spring 2019, the Oakland Mills Village Board will:**

- Conduct a Property Standards Evaluation (single family, townhouses, condominiums, apartments, and commercial) of each Oakland Mills

neighborhood (Stevens Forest, Talbot Springs, and Thunder Hill) once every three years, on a rotating basis.

- Allocate funding for the Property Standards Evaluation through the annual assessment returned from the Columbia Association through the consolidated Columbia Association-Oakland Mills Community Association Management Agreement.

## **BACKGROUND**

The following are questions and answers related to the recommendations made above and summarize information from the NEAC minutes/notes provided to the OMCA Board since June, 2015 (more detailed information has been provided to the Board in the NEAC monthly reports). The NEAC attempted to be as exhaustive as possible, but some details will still need to be addressed by the OMCA Board as part of a PSE.

1. Frequency and type of evaluation (curbside, 360°, 180°)?

A curbside 180 degree inspection and as much of the sides of the property should be done for each neighborhood on a three year rotating schedule. If a property appears to be run down and not maintained (a judgment call), then a 360 degree inspection should be done with the approval of the Architectural Committee chair.

2. Number and required hours for evaluators?

One evaluator should be hired so that the evaluations are consistent. Evaluator should work a 40 hour work week but be classified as a temporary employee. Suggested pay would be \$20 per hour.

3. Cost and funding source?

Cost is estimated at \$25,000 per the estimate made by CA staff. Funding as recommended by CA staff is from the Village Contingency Fund. Cost could be less than \$25,000 if sub-HOAs are doing their own reviews and could co-ordinate with OMCA. A meeting with the sub-HOAs and the OMCA Board should be done soon to ascertain sub-HOA capabilities. Likewise, the four apartment complexes should be reviewed with each apartment complex manager.

#### 4. Items evaluated?

The committee found the River Hill Property Evaluation Form (PEF) a good model to be utilized by OM. (Since it is in tabular format it could be set up as a digitized form and directly entered on to a tablet and then into the property file. ) This is a 2 page form and each item was discussed and approved or deleted or modified. The column headings were approved with some modifications noted in the Other/Notes column for that item. Also discussed was the review of non-property items such as streetlights, cable boxes, county sidewalks, etc. The consensus was that these should also be reviewed since minimal time would be spent to assess these items.

Modifications to River Hill's form is as follows:

First page adopted with Driveway, House Numbers, Walkway, Unlicensed Vehicle/Wrecked Vehicle deleted (items are on the second page): added items were shed, fence, roof flues/fans, and chimneys; modified items were siding/brick/wood and shrubbery/trees; items added for clarity in Other/Notes column for Trash Can and Recycle Bins was Out of Sight; Y/N, Windows – Must Match, Shrubbery/Trees – trimmed.

Second page adopted with Property deleted: Walkway to House modified with wood added. A new category of Miscellaneous Prohibited Items added (check if applicable)

1. Window AC Units
2. Above ground pools
3. Front yard garden
4. Chain link fence
5. Woodpile (only in backyard)
6. Front yard fence (except in Patio Homes)
7. Vehicles parked on lawns

#### 5. Method for notifying residents of upcoming evaluation?

A letter from the OMCA co-chairs should be sent along with a copy of the PSE to be used.

#### 6. Method for issuing notification of violations and actions required?

Use postcards that can be auto filled from a form used on a portable tablet. Timeline adopted by the Board would be subsequently followed and the responsibility of the Covenant Advisors.

### **QUESTIONS ARE HIGHLIGHTED FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

All villages were asked for information by Sandy Cederbaum, but only a few responded after repeated requests.

*Edelson*

**-What has been the response in other villages that have done this recently or are currently doing it?** None currently underway. Response from residents have been generally positive: River Hill, Hickory Ridge, and Wilde Lake

**Are most residents happy with it?** Yes, some education needed as to why done in the first place

**Are the problems identified getting resolved promptly, is the cost/benefit favorable, etc?**

**-What items should the evaluator be instructed to look for? A short list of major aesthetic or structural issues, everything?** The NEAC looked at items reviewed and decided on a comprehensive review since the last PSE in Oakland Mills was done in 2004.(See Q #4)

**-What type of inspection will be done? 360 or curbside appeal?** A modified curbside review similar to what was done in 2004 in OM (See Q#1)

**-Will this be every three years in perpetuity, or will we do it once and then evaluate whether we see substantial change to determine how to proceed from there?** After reconsideration and recognizing Columbia's 50th Birthday, the initial review should cover all neighborhoods. There after, a rotating three year cycle neighborhood review should start in 2019 and funding built into the OMCA annual budget(See Q#1).

### ***Bill M***

**One person full time, two part time, etc.? The first time it was done, I think we trained three part time people to do a one-time evaluation. Issued OM Photo IDs.**

One person should be used so that the evaluation is consistent. (See Q#2)

### **What**

**Evaluation of lots and homes to maintain, enhance property values.**

### **When**

**Advance notice to residents (one month, two months?). Evaluation ongoing your neighborhood every year, two years, three years or just one time?** A one month notice is suggested. (See Q#1 and NEAC Revised Recommendations)

## Where

**Survey from public property or on lot with a 360?** (See Q#1)

## How

**Check list preprinted. Resident notified by mail of any violations. Follow up by evaluators to get violations fixed. Use a separate database with same fields as new complaint database approved 8-11-15.**

Use Timeline adopted by OMCA Board on September 8

## Why

**Current complaint driven system is not catching all homes with violations. Neighbors reluctant to complain, but homes with violations have negative impact on property values. Therefore, evaluations.**

**Check other 9 villages for their experiences in doing evaluations. Get all the details. Numbers and percentages of homes with violations, how long to get fixed. Any lasting effect on better compliance? Are future evaluations being considered?**

See River Hill Property Standards Evaluation Program: Final Report dated June 20,2014 (attached)

**Publicity to residents including who, what, when, where, why, how. Letter in U.S. Mail to each home with rationale and process, photos of evaluators, etc. See Q#4 and Q#5**

## *Verchinski*

- 1. What does a one time evaluation of all single family, townhouses, condos, apartments, and commercial/retail run? \$25,000 per CA staff analyses**
- 2. What would a rolling evaluation by neighborhood cost (Village Center should be considered as a separate neighborhood) considering that each neighborhood is somewhat unique, i.e. Thunderhill all single family, Talbot Springs - single family, townhouses, condos, and apartments, Stevens Forest, single family, townhouses, apartments, Village Center - commercial, retail, institutional. Future cost would be determined by neighborhood when the all OM Village PSE is done.**
- 3. What items should be evaluated? What did other Villages evaluate?** Items evaluated were pretty consistent by Village.

2 Attachments: River Hill Final Report and River Hill Property Standards Evaluation Form



**River Hill Community Association**

**June 20, 2014**

The program ran from mid-September, 2013 through June 20, 2014. All properties received a large postcard via U.S. Mail to announce the start of the program. In addition, the program was discussed in several issues of *The Villager* newsletter while the program was being conducted.

The total number of properties inspected in The Village was 1,877 which included the single family homes, townhouses, high-rises/condominiums and their respective detached garage buildings. A total of 954 or 51% of the properties passed the first inspection and were issued a green postcard stating that the property had passed. A total of 489 or 53% of the properties requiring a second inspection passed. Currently there are 367 properties awaiting re-inspections comprised of 168 single family homes, 191 townhomes and all of the high-rise buildings and their respective garages. Most of those properties have re-inspection dates that are to occur over the summer or in the early fall, while some others have been granted longer extensions of time due to extenuating circumstances (elderly property owner, owner out of the country, property is maintained by an Embassy, financial hardship, etc.). There are 41 properties that have had 2 or 3 re-inspections that still have no significant corrections of the violations. Eva Lambright, the Covenant Advisor, has been working with some of those property owners to explain the covenants and show them what maintenance items still need to be addressed.

The townhome communities and high-rises have not yet had re-inspections due to the time and budget restrictions for the program's conclusion. Property owners, as well as, the property management companies and/or BODs for those communities have been notified of all the covenant violations and are working on plans to address those items.

In addition to property inspections, the evaluator also documented other repairs that are needed throughout River Hill including broken/damaged cable boxes (134), damaged/heaving/subsiding sidewalks (238), damaged pathways and/or pathway trees (15) street tree stumps needing removal and/or dead street trees (12), cracked driveways due to water mains (40) and street light issues (7).

Over the course of the program, many residents and owners reached out to contact the Property Standards Evaluator, Covenant Advisor and Village Manager via emails, phone calls or stopping by Claret Hall. Over 200 residents contacted us during the program for clarification

about the violations noted on the postcards, to request an extension of time, to inquire about the wording of the covenants, to ask about exterior alterations, and to express frustration or appreciation about the program.

At the time of the program's conclusion, 1,443 or 77% of the properties in River Hill had passed inspection.

**VILLAGE OF RIVER HILL  
PROPERTY EVALUATION FORM**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Photo Taken: Yes No

Date of 1<sup>st</sup> Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Visit \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Visit \_\_\_\_\_

Postcard: Send Date \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Postcard: Send Date \_\_\_\_\_ Letter: send date \_\_\_\_\_

	Discolored/ Stained	Broken	Missing	Rotted	Other/Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalk					
<input type="checkbox"/> Driveway					
<input type="checkbox"/> Walkway					
<input type="checkbox"/> Unlicensed/Wrecked Vehicles					
<input type="checkbox"/> Front Door					
<input type="checkbox"/> Trash Can					
<input type="checkbox"/> Recycle bins					
<input type="checkbox"/> Debris					
<input type="checkbox"/> House Numbers					
<input type="checkbox"/> Screen /Storm Door					
<input type="checkbox"/> Portico/Entryway					
<input type="checkbox"/> Lamp Post					
<input type="checkbox"/> Shutters					
<input type="checkbox"/> Windows					
<input type="checkbox"/> Siding					
<input type="checkbox"/> Front Door Lights					
<input type="checkbox"/> Garage Light/Door					
<input type="checkbox"/> Planters/Retaining Walls					
<input type="checkbox"/> Shrubbery					
<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape					
<input type="checkbox"/> Soffits/ Fascia					
<input type="checkbox"/> Gutters/Downspouts					
<input type="checkbox"/> Roof					
<input type="checkbox"/> Trim					

Minor: Should be corrected within a reasonable time period (postcard)

Marginal: Should be corrected within a specified time period (postcard)

Major: Requires immediate attention within specified time period (letter)

Driveway	spalling cracked weeds in cracks pitting	
Walkway	cement brick pavers pavers	
Grounds/ Landscaping	lawn shrubs trees debris weeds	
House Number	missing broken poor visibility	
Vehicles	Unregistered/ inoperable/ trailer boat /RV	
Property	maintenance	

**Notes:**

**Basketball Hoop?**

**Streetlight?**

**Verizon/Comcast/BGE box?**

**Pathway**

**Cul de sac**

**Sidewalk (note whether it is property owner or county responsibility)**

**Fence**

**Street trees**