

Garden Square Co-op Community Newsletter

Spring 2020



Did you know we have a Facebook group? If you're interested in joining please login to Facebook, search for Garden Square Housing Co-op, and request to join.

Visit the 'members only' section of our Co-op Website for access to all rules and policies:

www.gardensquare.org



***Cana's Coordinator
Contact Info:***

Lisa Berting

Email:

lisab@canateam.com

Phone: 604-524-8524 (x209)



GM – Wednesday, March 25 @ 7pm

GM – Wednesday, April 29 @7pm.

Task Sign up – Saturday May 9 (more info TBA)

Draft Budget Presentation – Thursday, May 14 at 7pm

GM for Budget Approval – Tuesday, June 23 at 7 pm

Board

Did you know?

Did you know that you don't have to wait until the Annual Income Verification to update your house insurance status with Cana? As soon as your renewal form arrives, you can make a copy of it and send it to Cana! This will keep the co-op's records up to date in case any emergencies happen between income verification surveys. Send scanned copies of your current insurance papers to lisab@canateam.com, and remember to include your Garden Square unit number.

The Annual Income Verification survey will be coming out soon also. Watch for it in the mail.

Budget Planning – Attention all Committee members and Committee chairs! It is annual budget planning time, so please start thinking about what items your committee might want to include on the budget.

Budget Meeting – Meetings this year will be held **on days other than the last Wednesday of the month** to allow Lisa Berting from Cana to attend our meetings. The dates will be:

Draft Budget Presentation: Thursday, May 14 at 7pm

General Meeting for Budget Approval: Tuesday, June 23 at 7 pm

Members' Website

We have been adding more and more co-op documents to the members' section of our website, www.gardensquare.org. We hope to post the Agency's annual summary of our Co-op very soon. Please check out the current documents there, including policies and the building condition studies. Remember that the members' section of the website has a login and password. Please contact Donna Wik for the login name and password.

Membership

There is a new Chair (George), and right now, we have six members. We would love to have a couple more, so please reach out if you are looking to join a committee. We meet once a month, on the 2nd Sunday of the month at 7:30pm.

We are excited to be working on **digitization of our current waitlist**, as we are looking to move to a streamlined online process. A process that will move all applications online, that will allow us to have a proper record keeping, transparent qualification, and properly follow through with families that want to stay on the waiting list or drop out of it.

Maintenance

Just a few reminders from your Maintenance Committee

1. All Christmas lights should be removed as of February 1!
2. Spring is fast approaching, remember to turn on outside hoses in March.
3. Please turn on your outside light. The lighting assists everyone on the co-op.
4. Large items are not to be stored in alcoves or in front of units. Please make arrangements for pick-up prior to placing them outside.

We hope to have a bin for Spring details to come!

Are you looking for a way to volunteer in your community?

The Maintenance Committee is looking for members

No experience needed

Friendly Reminder

As per our Pet Policy, all dogs must be on a leash while on co-op property.

No dogs are allowed in the common room, laundry room or pool area with the exception of seeing-eye dogs.

Please pick up after your dog.



Pool

Our pool is running and pool team members are doing their task in the best manner possible. Safety first, so we are keeping water up to perfect level all year round. Purity, chemical level and cleaning the pool area are our goals and we are trying to keep to that high level. In the near future, we are planning to buy some more equipment in the range of our pool budget, - vacuum cleaner, electric power washer, and some cleaning stuff.

Additionally, we need to install a safety power plug to use this equipment without any problems. We hope that pool will be ready to please our members for the upcoming spring season. We also believe that our co-op members will be using it with pleasure and leave it clean after their use, so that other members will enjoy it, too.

Task

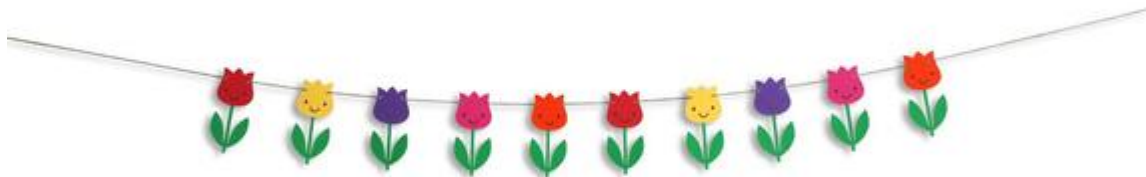
Reminder: All task members are required to pick up dog feces (grass and sidewalk) when doing their task.

If you are interested in being a task monitor or would like more info about it please contact task at task@gardensquare.org

Recreation

We would like to welcome Brenda as our new chair!

Recreation committee meetings will continue to take place on the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm. If you have any questions contact Brenda at: recreation@gardensquare.org



Policy

The Garden Square Co-op (ad hoc) Policy/Policies Update Committee is pleased that through perseverance, the Pet Policy has been updated and was approved at the GM, of 29 January, 2020.

There are still a number of other co-op policies that require review and, in some cases, revision and/or complete updating.

Remember co-op policies are our terms of reference for our home and govern how we share in mutually acceptable standards that are at the basis of co-op life. The Policy Committee doesn't determine the rules or acceptable regulations, it (we) are only here to consider and make suggestions as to what is prudent and/or ideal for all members to decide on, as to what is appropriate for our co-op and our co-op members and our day-to-day existence. If you would like to participate with this committee until these revisions are completed, please let us know as we anticipate continuing with our Policy Update Meetings in March. Drop a note off to me, Gerry Knutsen @ 5140 Smith.

THE PET REGISTRY IS COMING SOON



The Garden Square Co-Op Emergency Preparedness Committee is compiling a Pet Registry! Look for an email with a form to complete, or let us know if you need a paper copy to fill in your pet(s) details by calling or sending a text to (604) 456-0708.

Why are we creating a co-op Pet Registry?

The Pet Registry is a co-op database of the pets in your household. Because our pets are an extension of our families, we want to make sure they are taken care of in case of emergency. The registry will be a valuable tool in this situation.

What kind of pets should be registered?

We suggest including all of the pets in the household, including small animals and birds.

Is the registration optional?

All **cat and dog owners** will need to register their pets with the co-op as per our **Pet Policy**. All **dogs** must also be registered with the City of Burnaby. Details on how to do this can be found here: <https://www.burnaby.ca/City-Services/Permits---Licences/Licences/Dog-Licence.html> Registering a pet with our co-op, will not take the place of the city process for registering your dog. We suggest that you register any or all of your pets with the co-op. There is no fee, and we may be able to help you be reunited with your pet(s) in the case of emergency.

Is my pet information confidential?

The information you provide about your pet(s) will be available on the member-only section of the Garden Square website.

What pet information is required?

When you receive the form, there will be requests for all kinds of useful identifying information and care instructions. Some of the information will be mandatory, e.g., though most fields will contain additional voluntary information. For example, you can record a micro chip number, or

health/special pet dietary concerns, which can both be very helpful if your pet is lost. We will also file one photo per pet registered.

We will be trying to keep the Registry as accurate as possible. Over time, the emergency preparedness committee anticipates that our property manager will collect this data through the Annual Membership Survey. Until such time, please let us know if your pet situation changes. We will also be sending you messages from time to time to remind you to update your information.

There is also a Provincial Pet Registry, and the info about it is here if you are interested:
<https://bcpetregistry.ca/how-it-works/>

With thanks, and on behalf of Emergency Preparedness Committee:
Monique Nelson and Michael Ilushin

CALL TO ALL CO-OP COMMITTEES: INTERESTED IN APPLYING FOR A NEIGHBOURHOOD SMALL GRANT?

Neighbourhood Small Grants is Vancouver Foundation's grassroots grant making program that helps build community and strengthen connections right where people live.

Would you like to make an even bigger impact in the neighbourhood with the children's carnival; thinking about starting up a community garden; or maybe you'd like to have a block wide-garage sale, clothing and toy swap, or to coordinate collecting donations for the less fortunate members of our community?

The Vancouver Foundation believes that the best people to effect change in a community are the ones within it. And when they make money less of an issue in doing so, it allows so many more kinds of ideas to shine. Grants for up to \$500 (with some exceptions) are available, and all you need to do is to have a great idea and to connect with a neighbour and apply!

Application for small grants are available at www.neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca and are open until **April 9th, 2020**. Although there is some time between then and now, early applicants often get better consideration. The paperwork involved is minimal. For more information and project ideas, please [visit the website](#) and attend an **Info Session: Tuesday, March 31st at 12:30-1:30pm at the Burnaby North House, 4908 Hastings Street.**

To ensure co-op proposals are complementary or coordinated, kindly share your idea at a GM, post it on our facebook page, or send it to our webmaster Michael Ilushin for email to all.



Co-Operative Housing Learning Corner – Replacement Reserve and Maintenance Planning

Sarah, Board President for 2019-2020

One of the big topics that the Garden Square community has been discussing for at least a year or so is the maintenance of our buildings, our replacement reserve, and planning for the future. The housing charges we all pay support what the Co-Op is able to plan to do next and what we can afford to repair moving forward.

For me, it's hard to know exactly how we are doing sometimes. One way to think about it is to compare our story with the stories of other Co-Op's. Our operating agreement and our current relationship with **The Agency for Co-Operative Housing** (part of CMHC), allows us to access some resources that can help us see how we are doing right now, compared to other Co-Ops in Canada.

Below is a web article from the Agency's "HomeRun" website. The site is available to Co-Ops as a resource for planning. This story comes from the page describing the best practices for replacement reserve contributing and balances.

It is important to note that Garden Square currently budgets and contributes at least **\$2000.00 per unit** to our replacement reserve every year. Our replacement reserve balance per unit measurement is (as of July 31, 2019) **\$10,099.00 per unit**. Remember that this amount will change across the year as different building repairs are completed (like our purchase of boiler spare parts just recently).

The hard work of the last Board of Directors group has led to us having some engineering and planning reports now finished and available. These are posted on the member website now and they will help us plan for our future. Inside the Building Condition Assessment, there is a cost breakdown of major repair options, like new electrical wiring, or doing the exterior surfaces (called the "building envelope"). The Preliminary Site Investigation looks at the historic use of the land that our Co-Op sits on, looking for any potential problems like contamination. It also may help us understand the drainage challenges here at the Co-Op.

See these links on the Members-Only website (www.gardensquare.org) for access to these reports:

- Building Condition Assessment
- Preliminary Site Investigation Report

On the next page is a case study from the Agency's HomeRun website about a Vancouver Co-Op that dealt with challenges in maintaining their units, and building up a healthy replacement reserve.

Sunny Days Housing Co-operative

Good Practices in Replacement Reserve Contributions and Balance

“Running a co-op is running a business.”

Who We Are

Sunny Days is a housing co-operative in Vancouver’s False Creek area. The co-op has 79 units, including four disabled units. It is wood-frame construction.



Our Story

Our co-op was one of BC’s leaky co-ops, but our problems went further than building envelope failure. The co-op had relied on volunteer labor for repairs and maintenance for many years and had routinely purchased the cheapest products and services.

We knew we needed to make urgent repairs to the building membrane but found we didn’t have sufficient funds. We had never made any significant contributions to our capital replacement reserve fund. Housing charges had been kept low, many members were in arrears, and some were not paying at all.

Housing charges were increased in the first year and have gone up 2% to 3.5% each year since. Member arrears were paid back within the year, and the co-op had to charge all members a levy to help cover the cost of urgent repairs. Further, our capital reserve plan was renewed with contributions of \$220,000 to \$260,000 per year (\$2,784–\$3,291 per unit). As a result, our co-op has gone from high to above-average to low risk.

As well as building up our reserves, we’ve been able to make significant capital repairs to the building. In addition to the membrane-repair work, we’ve installed a new roof, replaced fridges and flooring, painted the exterior and installed safety gates at the parking garage and entryway. We were also able to secure additional funding, including a federal retrofit grant. We have contracted professional repair and maintenance services, rather than letting members do the work. We also no longer purchase the cheapest products automatically but

will buy mid-range appliances, for example, if they will stand up better and last longer. We also developed a replacement plan to ensure that we will have the funds available when repairs and replacements are needed.

We use our general meetings as an opportunity to make members aware of the need to plan and budget for replacements. Housing charges are still at the low end of market but members are no longer paying extremely low charges. Members feel more secure living in a well-maintained building and appreciate it.

Capital Reserve Contributions and Balance Year by Year

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Annual contributions per unit	\$2,677	\$3,128	\$3,144	\$3,000	\$3,291
Balance at year end per unit	\$2,985	\$5,008	\$6,769	\$7,492	\$9,031

How Could We Have Done Better?

- We should have started putting money in our reserves earlier.
- We should not have relied on volunteers to do repairs and maintenance.

What Others Can Learn from the Sunny Days Story

- Use comprehensive inspections and engineering studies to develop a long-term replacement plan.
- Don't rely on members doing repair work; hire a professional.
- Make planning decisions in an open and transparent way so that members are well-informed and understand the need for reserves.

Background

Co-op name: Sunny Days
Location: Vancouver, BC
Program: Section 95
Number of Units: 79
Unit Type: Apartments
Date of Occupancy: 1984
Management Model: Management Company

Our Newsletter

The newsletter was created to help keep members informed of Co-op news and issues in a positive manner, by providing education, information and entertainment. What would you like to see in the newsletter? A recipe corner, kids corner, joke/riddles, pet corner? Give us your thoughts and ideas.

Are you celebrating an important anniversary or birthday? The newsletter is a great way to share important moments. We would love to receive tips about great local business and services for our local gems column. If you would like to put something in the newsletter, please let Donna know either by e-mail craftymum02@gmail.com or drop off at 3871 Burke St. The newsletter will

go out every few months. If you would like to help with the newsletter please let Donna know.

How would you like to receive your newsletter?

Please choose one of the options below:

Unit #: _____

E-mail: _____

Or

Paper Copy

Your thoughts or ideas:
