

# Pittsfield Village News

April 2011 Edition

<http://sites.google.com/site/thevillageexchange/>

Pittsfield Village Communications Committee

## The Final Days of Arborland Borders



**Jason Beckerleg**  
*Editor*

As most of us already know, the Borders location in Arborland Mall is now in its final days. Although no official closing date has been set, it is rumored that April will be the final month the store will be open for business. With markdowns now at 50 to 70 percent off list price, the end is now clearly in sight.

I think it's safe to say most Pittsfield Village residents are sad to see it go. When my wife and I moved here a few years ago, we were so excited to live within walking distance of this great store. I can't tell you how many afternoons we have spent browsing the massive selection of books, CDs, DVDs, and magazines.

The financial troubles the Ann Arbor-based company has seen in the past few years have been no secret. And in February this year the company announced it would be filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. They also announced they would be closing roughly 200 stores, and laying off an estimated 1,500 workers.

With three Ann Arbor location in operation it was no surprise that at least one of those would be closing. Unfortunately for Village residents it was the one closest to home that got the axe. With the still-vacant space where Circuit City once stood, the future for a large chunk of Arborland now seems uncertain. We can only hope for the best.

## Another Budget Season

**Ken Sylvester**  
*Treasurer*

**A**nother budget season came to a close in February, when the board voted to approve a plan for the coming fiscal year, which begins May 1st, 2011. The new budget will see a modest increase in monthly fees for co-owners, an average of \$1.50 per unit this coming year and a planned increase of \$1.50 per unit in the following fiscal year.



Two developments led to the small increases. The first was a decision to contribute more aggressively to our long-term savings. The funds are set aside in an account known as the 'future funding reserve'. The second was a decision not to delay a new capital project that will begin in 2013, a re-roofing program recommended in a recent reserve study. To achieve the higher savings this coming year and to make room the following year for the cost of the roofing project, the board implemented a number of cuts to other planned capital spending.

To implement the reallocation of capital spending the board asked the committees (which make the initial drafts of the capital spending budgets) to develop budgets that held spending flat and to develop scenarios for 5% reductions. In effect, we asked the committees for a bottom-up appraisal of each line item in the budget. The planning process typically starts in the early fall and line items are estimated by the respective committees based on budgeted and actual rates of spending in previous years.

The biggest budgets are drafted by the Maintenance & Modification and the Landscape Committees, and reviewed by the Finance Committee, prior to being presented to the board. This year, the board asked the committees to provide documents that gave a more detailed breakdown of the individual line items. These budget justification documents provided unit costs on planned activity for the coming year. For instance, if concrete work has historically been budgeted at \$48,000, rather than assuming a continuation at the recent level, the board wanted to know a

**See "Budget" Next Page**



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## Committee Chairs

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## "Budget" from Front Page

breakdown of the sidewalk replacements planned for the coming year and the cost of each replacement.

At the annual budget meeting, chaired by the Finance Committee, the board asked for several reductions in the historical line items for Landscape and Maintenance & Modification. In most cases, the reductions in capital budget line items were achieved by lowering anticipated spending, limiting it to levels that included only planned or anticipated activity, and shifting funds meant to cover contingencies to the future funding reserve. The net effect of these changes raised the contribution to long-term savings from \$23,200 in 2010-11 to \$135,415 in 2011-12. These 'rainy day' funds will carry forward and can continue to grow in future years.

As in past budgets, a financial cushion still exists for use during the year. However, rather than residing in individual line items, the contingent portions of capital funding are reallocated to the future funding reserve. In practice, we hope this means there will be less emphasis on spending-out the capital budget, and more on growing long-term savings.

The second reason for the small increase is to ease the transition to the roofing project in two years. Rather than face a large increase two years from now, a small increase this coming year, and another the

next, will create the budget room needed to begin the roofing project. By making a large contribution to the future funding reserve in the coming year and then reducing the planned contribution to future funding in the following year (2012-2013), we can begin the roofing project on the schedule recommended in a recent reserve study. If we follow a 15-year cycle, the anticipated cost is about \$82,900 per year. Without the changes made in this year's budget, however, the cost of the roofing project would likely have been added to historical spending levels, and fees risen an average of \$16 per month.

In the end, the board agreed at its February meeting to use the spending reductions developed at the budget meeting earlier in February to press ahead with the transition to the roofing project. The benefit of this strategy, we feel, is several-fold: we add substantially to our 'rainy day' fund, we ease concerns about underfunding reserves (through spending cuts), we don't unnecessarily delay a capital project called for in a recent reserve study, and we keep fee increases down as we make the transition to the roofing project.

The board would like to thank everyone who participated in a very productive budgeting process this year. We look forward to your feedback on the budget process and decisions.



*4 Million Homeowners United in Savings*

The Associa Advantage program is a FREE program available to members of the Associa Family. By leveraging the purchasing power of Associa's 7,000 communities and 2 million households, we are able to negotiate exceptional savings on household goods and services commonly used by our clients, maintenance groups and employees.

Through the Associa Exclusive Offers area members will find trade partners that are icons in their industry such as Lowe's, Sherwin-Williams, DoodyCalls, 1800-GOT-JUNK?, Budget Blinds and Bulbs.com to name a few.

In addition, the Associa Online Shopping Network combines the convenience of online shopping for discounts and coupons to more than 3,000 retail outlets across the country.

To start using Associa Advantage, simply type [www.associaadvantage.com](http://www.associaadvantage.com) in your browser bar and click on the "Start Savings" tab. Registration is required one time only and the creation of a unique Username and Password for future visits. Enter your zip code and a list of goods and services in your area will appear.



Save time and save money with Associa Advantage.

[www.associaadvantage.com](http://www.associaadvantage.com)



## Back To School Basics

The start of school is just around the corner, so now's the time to make sure everything is in order at your house. When school starts money is needed for basic school supplies, along with school pictures, fund raisers, field trips, and extracurricular activities. When it comes to the basics, that is really all you need, just the basics. Check the school's web site for the activities' calendar to aid in planning the family calendar.

Will your child need after school transportation, are emergency numbers in your cell phone and are the contacts up to date? Do you need additional people available as contacts?

When planning the "school" shopping, get the printed "School Supply" list for each grade. Split the list into categories, reusable items (book bag, rulers, notebooks, etc.), Just as good as new (clothing, books and PC's), and must have new (clothing, books, etc). Most school supplies are inexpensive. Check magazines and the local newspaper ads, grocery flier (some grocery stores have their school supplies available at the check-out lanes), also have the kids to go online to compare prices of needed items, and print coupons. Check resale shops and the dollar stores. Remember to revamp, renew, and redo by having a "get ready for school" craft night, this can included family and friends. Instead of paying double price for "newest look" of book bags, notebooks or t-shirts, get the group together to decorate using their own creative pizzazz.

Set expectations and routines, save time and frustration by getting kids ready for the school year by preparing ahead of time, beginning with a family schedule one to two weeks before school begins, i.e. home work habits, have them to read at an assigned time each evening. Have a night time routine and stick to it. One author suggest: no television Sunday to Thursday nights, instant messages only after home work is done, not texting or instant messaging after a certain hour. If a routine is new to the family, talk to older children and get their input. My daughter liked to start her homework as soon as she walked in the door but my son liked to "chill" for a short time.

During the school year prepare everything the night before i.e., clothing, backpacks, and lunches are readied, this will make the morning easier. Also showers and baths can be taken right before bed time. Be sure to check the back packs/book bags every evening for notes that need to be signed and/or a forgotten homework paper.

Homework is an important component to a child's educational experience. Lend support and guidance, but let your child do the work. You may need to create a work station for studying and homework. Decide on the best spot in your home to set it up, or you may need to give up dining room or kitchen table for a couple of hours each day. Studies show that children develop good study/work habits and will stay more focused if they have a specific area to study and do their homework.

May you have a blessed school year!

Brenda Webster

## Condo Board Hard at Work

### Hosting New Blog & Information Session

**Jason Beckerleg**  
*Editor*

The Condo Board has a couple of exciting new developments they would like residents to know about this month.

The first is a new blog designed specifically to improve communication between the Board and Pittsfield Village residents. The new blog can be viewed at [www.pvcondoboard.wordpress.com](http://www.pvcondoboard.wordpress.com). By utilizing this blog, the Condo Board hopes to receive feedback and have discussions with a greater number of residents than is currently possible. In addition to the blog, the site also has a directory of people involved in the community, along with contact information and a page to leave replies. You will also find links to our official website ([www.pittsfieldvillage.com](http://www.pittsfieldvillage.com)) and the Pittsfield Village Exchange ([www.sites.google.com/site/thevillageexchange](http://www.sites.google.com/site/thevillageexchange)).

The second item the board would like residents to know about this month is an information session they are planning for residents interested in possibly becoming a member of the Board of Directors. Two seats on the Condo Board are up for election at the Annual Meeting in May. If you think you may be interested in running for the Board, but you're not sure what's involved, you are encouraged to attend this educational meeting hosted by current Condo Board President, Justin Ferguson and Vice President, Laura Zeitlin. The meeting will take place on April 14th from 7 to 8PM at the Community Building (2220 Pittsfield Blvd.). Interested residents should RSVP to the Pittsfield Village office by 5PM on April 13th (734-971-0233).



**Imagine Great Windowboxes!**

Windowbox planted (your materials): \$25.00  
Custom boxes, maintenance: fee arranged



Susan Yasi  
[susanyasi@tds.net](mailto:susanyasi@tds.net)  
please put "windowboxes" in the subject line



Pittsfield Village  
Communications  
Committee

# ... Bulletin

## Couple Seeking One Bedroom Unit To Rent

Responsible young couple looking to rent a one bedroom unit in The Village. Hoping to spend between \$750 and \$850 for a rental and would be moving in August. Will commit to a 12 month lease. Please email Michael Kellogg at m.kellogg86@gmail.com.

## Seeking Unit To Rent in Pittsfield Village

Young couple moving to Ann Arbor for master's program at U of M. No pets, non-smokers, and very responsible. We would like to rent a one bedroom (or 2 bedroom if the rent is right), one bathroom from August 2011 to August 2012. We would like to rent for no more than \$800 per month. I can be contacted at n.hickman06@gmail.com or by phone at (231)350-0092.

## Anonymous Notes From Your Neighbors

*One of our neighbors, who wishes to remain anonymous writes...*

"I was pleased when the snow piles on the lawn in front of my house melted. Then I noticed many piles of dog poop. I do not have a dog so it is annoying that my Village residents don't pick up after their pets. Even more annoying is that there are many new piles that I have to clean up if I want to do something like walk to my car or have guests over. It is disrespectful and unsanitary for people to leave dog poop on the lawns. If a dog owner finds themselves without a disposal bag, I imagine a quick knock on the door of whoever's lawn it is would result in a free bag and an appreciative smile."

## Get Your Newsletter Quicker By Email

To sign up to receive this newsletter electronically via email, simply send a request to pittsfieldvillage@gmail.com.

# April - Early May 2011 Community Calendar

## April 5<sup>th</sup>

### Modification & Maintenance Committee Meeting

6:30PM - 8:30PM @ The Community Building

## April 14<sup>th</sup> **CANCELLED**

### Communications Committee Meeting

7:00PM - 9:00PM @ The Community Building

## April 14<sup>th</sup>

### "Becoming A Board Member" Meeting (see Pg. 3)

7:00PM - 8:00PM @ The Community Building

## April 19<sup>th</sup>

### Landscape Committee Meeting

6:30PM - 8:30PM @ The Community Building

## April 21<sup>st</sup>

### Finance Committee Meeting

6:00PM - 9:00PM @ The Community Building

## April 29<sup>th</sup>

### Board of Directors Meeting & Open Forum

6:15PM - Open Forum, 6:45PM - Meeting @  
The Community Building

## May 3<sup>rd</sup>

### Modification & Maintenance Committee Meeting

6:30PM - 8:30PM @ The Community Building

## May 12<sup>th</sup>

### Communications Committee Meeting

7:00PM - 9:00PM @ The Community Building