



# *The Woodlands at Islip*

To The Community, our Shareholders, and all residents  
From The Board of 2011-2012

We want to start by hoping you and your loved ones had a great holiday, notwithstanding Superstorm Sandy and the recent tragedy involving the children and teachers in Newtown, Conn.

We are happy to report that the value of our units is going up and that we have had more sales activities than even just a couple of years ago. Repairs that have been overdue for many years or mandated by our lenders have been started and/or completed. We have met with many new owners that tell us that our complex is the best they've seen in our area and, in many ways, more value for its cost than other similar communities.

Our staff worked 24/7 during the storm, our resident firefighters quickly cleared out one of our main thoroughfares, and our tree company had removed most of the debris by the time the sun came up the day after. Luckily, there was only minor damage within our complex, and the staff and members of the Board walked the streets all throughout the event. Of course, nothing is perfect in such conditions and we did receive complaints from some shareholders. The major complaint was about the leaves not being cleaned up quickly enough. We have to view issues like that in perspective. The fact is that we had light, gas/heat quicker than most, and our damage was very minor compared to what actually happened in so many other parts of the tri-state area.

As we are all aware, the very large project of conversion from oil to gas heat has been completed without any major issues. No more hot basements, large and noisy oil trucks, complaints of oil smells, or dangers of oil spills that have cost our community a lot in the past. Our staff is also freed from about 16 hours per month that they spent monitoring oil trucks and delivery, which gives them more time for working on the community's concerns. The cost of the conversion was \$500,000.00, and self-funded by the Woodlands, to be repaid over five years with savings from the gas conversion.

Our front entrance has been upgraded with a new sign and new landscaping. The dog walk has been relocated due to safety concerns, and is now once again in use in a better location for all.

Our taxes are current and, in fact, we just executed a tax check for \$275,996.67. There also are separate escrow accounts now for our tax and insurance payments so the cash burden is not too sudden a drain on our cash flow when payments are due. We are aware that there is some confusion as to how the tax laws are written and executed. Our Board President has spent some time with the town officials and would be open to sit down and talk to, and/or explain it all. If any shareholder is interested in facts about our taxes, please let us know so we can schedule the time for a group. Note that the only issue for this proposed meeting would be on "explaining" the taxes since they are mandated by the state, not by the Board.

The Building Captains committee came to fruition in 2012. Captains are shareholder representatives from each building that have volunteered their time to help the Board make this a better community for all,

(since the ratio is seven Board members to oversee 224 units). The goal is for residents of each building to bring their issues and/or ideas to the Captains, who then will be the “voice” of their building and report to the Board. Likewise, the Board looks to the Captains to help explain or disseminate information to the residents in case there are minor details that need more explanation. This is also good training for potential board members, so please make sure to interact with your building Captains as the first line of information. A list is posted on our Web site as well as at the mailboxes.

Speaking of which: we had a major overhaul of our Web site in 2012. Not only did its design get revised which made it more businesslike and user-friendly, but more information and useful links were added to it, ensuring that it is an even more valuable tool and asset to our community.

This coming year, the Board, property manager, and our staff are working together to review possible issues with the community infrastructure to avoid putting off repairs that will cost more if left unattended and that also leave many upset due to lack of proactive planning. The work to be done involves a schedule for updating many old pipes, sewer systems, brickwork, repaving, pool repairs, painting of buildings, a new fence, and trees to be removed and replaced. We also have a plan in place to ensure that we repay our loan back to ourselves in a timely manner.

As a community, we have to review the changes within our society: school and local and state budgets, increase in crime rates, and the safety of our community, our children, and the dangers that they are exposed to. An example is the need to make sure of the area where school buses are allocated to stop and enforce it, so we know if anything is out of the ordinary. We must look at the cost of security, since there has been a rise in complaints of vandalism of property and theft and it is neither possible, nor the staff's/ Board's responsibility to be out at all hours to prevent this.

We are a community that is friendly and open to pets and their owners, and we have seen the number of pets increase over the last several years. However, every pet owner must meet all set regulations, fees, and polices, including a pet having any and all medical requirements current. Remember that all pets **MUST** be registered with our Superintendent at the Woodlands, because if they are not, then they cannot stay in the complex. Visiting pets must follow all the same rules. These are in place to ensure everyone's safety and quality of life.

As a Board, we try hard to make sure of the well-being of the community as a whole and we request that shareholders enforce the rules with regard to themselves and their guests. Sometimes, issues can be resolved by courteous conversation or discussion. Consider one-on-one discussions with your neighbors before sending letters of complaint to the Property Manager or the Board. The Board cannot be, or act as, the police, nor can we expect the staff to enforce rules and regulations that shareholders and their guests are not themselves obeying. If your attempts at resolving issues fail and your neighbors negatively impact your quality of life on a regular basis, do call the non-emergency police phone number which is still available on our Web site when you mouse over the “Police” link.

Sadly, there are some that feel that our rules should not equally apply to them, but they are the first to complain about others. Some shareholders do not come to meetings to clarify their issues or try to get them resolved in an amicable way, nor do they participate in any event, committee, or activity to improve our community. Instead, they listen to or start rumors, believe misinformation, and just go about resenting necessary increases or rules they may not understand. Don't be that person. Ask your elected Board members for clarification and/or information, then make decisions based on accurate data. Go out and be an active member of the Woodlands, which is your community and your investment. Be a part of its success and work to enhance your and your neighbors' quality of life. It's a new year, after all!

