



## Rosslyn Heights East Unit Owners Assn. Arlington, Va.

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### Welcome to Rosslyn Heights East!

Dear Rosslyn Heights East community member,

Whether you are an owner or renter, we hope you will feel part of the community and will want to stay for a long time.

To help you settle in, we've put together this web site about RHE. If you are new to the condominium concept or if you have never lived in a condominium with off-site management, be sure to read this article so you'll know whom to consult if you have problems or questions.

Rosslyn Heights East has a charm that comes not only from its buildings and grounds, but also from the people who live here. We are glad you have chosen RHE as your home.

Some of the principal obligations of unit owners and tenants are listed below. Other responsibilities are described in greater detail elsewhere on this web site (for example, unit alternations).

#### **Living in a Condominium**

Condominiums have become a popular type of residence, especially in urban areas. But the condominium concept is a complex one, and for someone used to living in a single-family house or a rental apartment building, the differences can be enormous. Below we describe some of the ways that the condominium concept affects residents and owners at Rosslyn Heights East.

#### **What is a Condominium?**

A condominium is a special type of ownership arrangement that combines individual ownership and joint ownership (or ownership "in condominium"). At RHE, the space within each unit is individually owned. The common elements, such as the parking lots and hallways, belong to each owner, but only as a fractional interest based on the size of the owner's unit in relation to the other units in the condominium. Interest in the common elements is undivided, which means that a particular unit holder doesn't own any part of a common element to the exclusion of the other owners.

Because the common elements do not belong to any specific owner, all owners give control of their fractional interest in those elements to a board of directors. The board hires a condominium property manager to help it manage the common elements and to oversee the condominium's budget, including the collection of assessments from individual owners. (In our case, Gates Hudson Community Management, Fairfax, VA, is our property management company.)

Simply by purchasing a condominium unit, the owner agrees to the terms and conditions of the condominium that are set forth in its governing documents. For RHE, those documents include the Virginia Condominium Act and other relevant statutes, the condominium's Declaration and Bylaws, the House Rules & Regulations adopted by the Board of Directors, as well as other policies or decisions the board may adopt. (Many of these documents are available elsewhere on this web site via the home page.)

## **The Board of Directors and the Condominium Property Manager**

The unit owners elect a Board of Directors to oversee the condominium's common elements. The board consists of five members who volunteer their service. Our board generally meets about every six weeks in the small utility room located in the basement of the 1304 entrance. Board meetings are open to all unit owners. (If you have something you want to bring before the board, it's best if you contact the president in advance so your issue can be placed on the agenda. See the Board of Directors link on the home page for contact information.)

To look after the day-to-day management of the common elements and to carry out its decisions, the board hires a property management firm. The firm answers to the board and doesn't work for any particular owner. The management firm also doesn't manage rental units or attend to the needs of tenants, as units are individually owned property, not property held in common.

## **An Owner's Responsibilities to the Condominium**

As an owner of a unit at Rosslyn Heights East and a member of the Unit Owners Assn., you have certain obligations.

- **Annual Meeting:** It is important for each owner to attend the annual meeting of the Unit Owners Assn. held each October in Arlington, Va. At this meeting, unit owners receive reports from the Board of Directors on the status of the condominium, discuss issues facing the condominium and vote on candidates running for the board. If you do not live in the D.C. metro area or have an unavoidable scheduling conflict, you should submit a proxy form to help achieve a quorum and have your voting interest represented at the annual meeting.

- **Unit Condition:** Unit owners have a duty under the Bylaws to maintain their units in "good order." That duty applies to the equipment in your unit, such as the air conditioning air handler, electrical fixtures and lines, light fixtures, refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, disposals, ranges and/or other equipment, and the glass of all windows.

- **Tenant Behavior:** If an owner has decided to rent out his or her unit, the owner is responsible for ensuring that the tenants comply with the condominium's rules and regulations. Under the Bylaws, unit owners are liable for damages caused to condominium common areas by tenants and may be required to evict them for violations of the Bylaws or House Rules.

- **Tenant Leases:** Each Spring, the RHE Board surveys owners who rent their units by mailing the Annual Review of Rental Lease Provisions and Tenant Information Sheet. Any landlord whose documentation is not received on or before the deadline will incur a \$50 charge.

- **Insurance:** The Unit Owners Assn. holds public liability and property damage insurance that covers RHE's buildings, utility systems, common areas and the structure of all condominium units for damage from fire or certain other causes. The policy doesn't cover the personal property or personal liability of unit owners or their tenants. (If owners or tenants want such insurance, each must purchase it him or herself.)

The condominium concept may not be for everyone, but RHE has many long-time residents who appreciate its balance of individual ownership and sense of community. If you are a tenant and have questions about living here, don't hesitate to ask your landlord – he or she will want you to fit in and feel comfortable. If you are an owner, drop in on a Board of Directors meeting or bring your questions to the annual meeting. We'll be happy to make you feel at home.