

Sherman Garden Cooperative Apartments

A monthly publication for residents of Sherman Garden Apartments, 1856-66 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, IL

DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



The urn out front was made beautiful by a collaboration of Diane Keely and Tim Hoffman. Thank you both!



ASSOCIATION NEWS

Allen Feuerstein (1856), SGAA President

The holidays are here. I hope everyone is enjoying and appreciating now, more than ever before, the importance of family and friends.

Last month the SG Association had an amazing zoom seminar. Please read over the minutes of the event later in this newsletter. Morris Phibbs, the association secretary, has been spending a lot of time preparing these reports. Thank you, Morris.

The Officers have been meeting to revise the Building Coordinator responsibilities, Association calendar and welcome checklist. Tim Mahoney, a trustee and 1860 Building coordinator, updated the Welcome Checklist.

Mary Jo Huck, the association vice president, is moving. She will be greatly missed. Mary Jo did a lot for the association. She chaired last year's Trustee search committee and coordinated last year's Halloween gathering. Most importantly, she helped me keep on task. Reminding me of things I forgot to do. LOL...For the last few months, Mary Jo has hosted the officer meetings, she was always ready to offer a glass of wine and snacks. Thank you to Mary Jo for helping make Sherman Gardens a special place to live...

I send out emails using Allenfeuerstein@gmail.com. If you are not getting my emails, please let me know so I can update or revise my email list.

SGA HOLIDAY PARTY

The SGA Holiday Party is Dec. 12 from Noon to 3pm at Reza's Restaurant, 1557 Sherman Ave. I hope you can join us and share in our community holiday spirit. If needed, rides will be available. Wear a mask, and covid vaccination is required.

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FROM THE TRUSTEES



HAPPY HOLIDAYS to all who celebrate the season. Many thanks to Rafael and Oscar for beautifying our courtyard

once again with lights and thanks to the residents who have decorated their doorsteps with festivity. The wreaths from the Boy Scouts were updated and improved by Tim Hoffman of 1866, thank you Tim!

TRUSTEE TOURS A PARKING GARAGE BUILT BY FOCUS

On Saturday last week, Trustee Tim Mahoney met with FOCUS representatives Justin Pelej and Vic Howell in Vernon Hills for a guided tour of a parking garage the company built previously. This garage is very similar to the proposed garage SGA is reviewing. Touring bottom floor to top floor, able to be seen is the 6% incline and a 4% incline ramp between floors. The 2 % difference is mostly a matter of losing/gaining 4 – 6 parking spaces. The V.H. garage was enclosed. Ours being open space

on the outer walls between floors. One of the goals of the visit was to determine if the parking space proposed size was enough room to avoid 'dinging' the car in the next space. Plans for us call for 8' 6" width by 18' in length. The drive pathway in the center almost 25'. While touring all floors of the garage, large size vehicles (SUVs and Pick-up trucks F350) were parked inside the painted lines with room to open doors. In some instances, there were trucks parked next to SUVs. To give you an idea of length, 18 feet in length allows an economy size car to park with a motorcycle parked in front of it, and still be less than the 18 feet length.



Something FOCUS pointed out was this structure did not have individual

columns. The building is supported by outer and inner walls, which allows for more of an unobstructed view inside. This is a feature of the design they've proposed for us as well.

TRUSTEE JOB DESCRIPTION

We're working on it! It has many facets and will have to be rather general, but we felt it might help with recruitment of nominees for next spring's election.

UNITS FOR SALE

1856 - Unit 5SC - \$113,500

2BR / 1.5B

Listing Agent: Marina Jacobson

Berkshire Hathaway Home Services

Telephone No: 847/510-5000

MLS#: 11273150

1862 - Unit 1NE - \$110,000

2BR/1.5B

Listing Agent: Joe Gerber

Engel and Voelkers

Telephone: 847/441-5730

MLS#: 11271069

1864 - Unit 5NE - \$79,000

2BR/1B/Balcony

Listing Agent: Allyn Rawling

@Properties

Telephone No: 847/763-0200

MLS#: 11232506

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INTERVIEW WITH TRUSTEE

CHARLES FISHER

By Tim Mahoney (1860)



For new residents that moved in after you took office, who is Charles Fisher?

Work experience background? Hobbies?

My wife Cherie, my then 1 year old daughter Olivia (now Raven), and myself moved to Sherman Gardens in June 2013. In the past I have taught philosophy and have been a librarian. I am currently finishing my last week as the Development Assistant for the Cook County Health Foundation, a non-profit that raises money for Cook County Health, the public health system. I've loved my time at CCHF but starting December 6 I will be starting a new career as a software developer at Americaneagle.com.

When I'm not pulling my hair out debugging software, Raven and I practice Tae Kwon Do. I've also been playing Dungeons and Dragons since 1983. I'm an original Stranger Things kid!

What brought you to Sherman Garden Apartments?

What makes you stay?

We moved back to Evanston after a year and a half stint in Ohio. We didn't particularly like living in Ohio. We decided to move back, and Sherman Gardens is the most affordable downtown residence in Evanston. It's only two blocks from Cherie's work. We stay because we love the community and its proximity to downtown and Northwestern.

Why did you run for Trustee?

I had been asked for a couple of years prior, and decided I wanted to help out the best I could and learn more about how the Trust operates.

How much time do you spend each month on your duties as a Trustee?

This really varies from month to month. Sometimes it's a few hours a month, sometimes it's a few hours a week. It really depends on current projects, issues that arise, new owner interviews, inspections, etc.

What is something that has sparked joy for you in the past year?

We got two cats in January 2021, a mother and son. They have been such a fun blessing in our lives.

Which fashion trend would you want to bring back?

Flannel shirts? I still like grunge music.

What's on your to do list that's important, but not urgent?

We've been wanting to get some fresh paint in our unit for a while. It's one of those projects that always gets put on the back burner.

If money wasn't an issue, what would you do with your time?

I've always wanted to go to Bhutan, a small country near India and China that is a Buddhist monarchy.

There are a couple Trustee positions coming up soon, any advice for a potential candidate?

This coming term is going to be intense with the parking garage project. It will be a fabulous way to help the Trust and community out. It will take time and dedication. I would be prepared to learn a lot about contracts, blueprints, and construction standards. Successful trustees always have the good of the community and the Trust as a whole in mind. If you come in with a specific agenda, and are not willing to learn, you will probably be miserable.

What do other people always thank you for?

My mac-n-cheese always gets rave reviews.

PARKING LOT REQUEST

By Phil Osborne

If you and your car are going to be gone for a few days, leaving your parking space empty, please let me know. We can use parking spaces, when available, for special short-term parking requests.

For the first time in recent years, the covered spaces in our parking lot are completely occupied. And uncovered spaces aren't as usable in the winter as they are the rest of the year because of snow piles.

So, please call me if your space will be available for a

few days or even a weekend. One of your SG neighbors and/or a guest will appreciate it.

Many thanks.

Phil Osborne

847.424.9433

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WILY E. POSSUM

By Morris Phibbs (1862)

There once was a possum spelled trouble;
He pooped in the house and left rubble.
He ran out our cats
And eluded our traps,
Eviction became quite a struggle.

It was during the summer that I had my first suspicion that trouble was brewing in the Cat Chalet when I began finding an inordinately large amount of fur clinging to the edges of the entrance. I chalked it up to heavy summer shedding by Stinky and Sweetie, but I eventually noticed that the fur was very coarse and much longer than that of our cats. Something didn't smell right, but, in spite of his name, I knew I couldn't blame it on Stinky.

Stinky and Sweetie prefer to sleep outside during late spring through early fall, but when the temperatures begin falling they return to their shelter. So every fall we do a thorough cleaning of the Cat Chalet in preparation for the coming winter. We look for evidence of leakage during the previous year (thankfully, there has never been any such evidence!), clean out the two internal dens, replenish the dens with fresh bedding straw, clean the floors and walls, and test the pressure-sensitive heating pads to make sure that they still work after being off all summer. This was the first time, however, we had to clean out a pile of possum scat that had been left inside.

On November 7 I opened the Cat Chalet and found a pointy little nose sticking out of the entrance to one of the dens. The nose was attached to a full-grown adult possum. I gingerly lifted the lid and grabbed a dilapidated short-handled broom to persuade Mr. Possum to exit stage right, which he eventually did after much tussling and hissing. Upon his exit, he went scurrying by Diane's feet and then beat a retreat through a gap between the corner of 1860 and our property wall. We assumed that gap must be his private doorway, so I plugged the gap with cinderblocks and bricks, hoping that he would be discouraged from returning. But since possums can climb just about anything, I had no confidence in my plan. Our greatest

concern was that Stinky and Sweetie would not reclaim their home.



On November 12, while checking the Cat Chalet entrance, I spied something large and red in the foyer. It turned out to be a large plastic poinsettia blossom that our friend had dragged in, presumably to begin his holiday decorations. But there was a second

gift—the carcass of a half-eaten squirrel. Once again, I found his nose peeking out of a den and once again Diane P and I undertook rousting him from his new home. He was even more unhappy than the first time and hissed himself into a royal hissy-fit. He even tried to climb up the broom handle while baring all 50 of his pointy possum teeth. I overcame his challenge, and he took to the road, this time scurrying west along 1860 and presumably out of the courtyard.

We realized that we had entered a challenge of wits—possum vs human—so we blocked off the entrance to the Cat Chalet, realizing that it made the shelter inaccessible not only to the possum but to Stinky and Sweetie as well. So, to support Stinky and Sweetie, I moved one of the sleeping dens, its heating pad, and the non-freezing water dish from the Cat Chalet to Rachel Rosenberg's ground-level patio, where she could watch for whomever might inhabit it. On the night of November 14, I received a call from Rachel telling me that the possum was on her patio! Diane P, Barbara Pearson, and I went running to the courtyard and spent quite a while looking for our friend. You may have seen a strange dude shining a flashlight under every shrub and into all the courtyard's nooks and crannies. As many of you probably noticed, Stinky had, by that time, taken up residence on a padded bed in the 1862 entrance. I moved our second heating pad underneath that bed to keep him warm during his declining days and nights. Sadly, we lost him soon thereafter.

November 16: Enter the Trapper. A Smithereen representative named Mark brought us a humane trap, which we installed at the west end of 1860. With a very bright flashlight, I could see the trap from my apartment. Eureka! The trap was sprung on the very

first night and I saw two luminescent eyes blinking back at me from within the trap. I ran out only to find that we had, you guessed it, trapped Sweetie. Thankfully, our fear that we may have scared her away from the courtyard was unfounded. SGA is her home and she's not going to give it up to a possum.

Mark brought a second trap, and throughout the next two weeks we moved the traps around trying to find a place where Mr. Possum would engage them, which he never did. I had begun to hope that he had moved on, but Oscar soon found a new deposit of possum scat. During those weeks, I went out every night to inspect the traps to make sure that we hadn't inadvertently trapped Sweetie again (it took her only once to know better). I'm surprised that none of you called the police about someone snooping around with a flashlight. Meanwhile, Sweetie continued to live in the temporary den on Rachel's patio.



On Friday, December 3, Oscar spotted Mr. Possum proceeding along the 1864 wall and herded him onto Brian Smith's patio. He called for backup, so he, Rafael, Diane P, Diane K, and I kept him contained there while Mark from Smithereen dropped what he was doing and drove from Park Ridge to get our friend into a trap. Success. He

should now be enjoying a new forest preserve habitat. Adult possums lead solitary lives, so we are very hopeful that we have not been dealing with more than one.

Rachel's patio and the Cat Chalet have been restored to normal operating conditions, it has been three days since I've had to snoop around the courtyard in the middle of the night, and Sweetie has returned to her snug Cat Chalet, although she will have to make do without Mr. Possum's holiday decoration.

Many thanks to Rachel for providing Sweetie a temporary home away from home and to Rafael and Oscar for keeping their eyes on the traps and making electric power available to keep Sweetie and Stinky warm.

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AND THEN THERE WAS ONE

By Diane Petersmarck

In 2016, we realized that we were losing the war against the rat population. Our gardens were full of holes, looking like a moonscape. They killed all the plants.



Barbara Pearson and Diane Petersmarck had heard of a program through Tree House Animal Shelter called Cats At Work. The cats are rescued from the streets, neutered, chipped, wormed, and given all their shots. Barbara contacted them and arranged for SGA to adopt three feral cats. They arrived in March of 2016. They were kept in cages behind 1856 for several weeks until they were reassured that if they stayed here when set free food would be delivered twice a day and shelter would be provided.



When the big day finally came, Stinky and Sweetie stuck around the third cat took off. We never say her again.

But Stinky and Sweetie made SGA their home and saved us from the rats. They even got some publicity! The Roundtable wrote an article about them!



Stinky, a feral cat, stretches while waiting for dinner at the Sherman Gardens apartment complex in Evanston Friday, Oct. 21, 2016. (Kevin Tanaka / Pioneer Press) [Link](#)

During the fall of 2020, we noticed Stinky was getting thin and acting lethargic and actually feared that he might not make it through the winter. But he rebounded this past spring! As the summer went on, though, he appeared to be getting thin again and sleeping more, so Barbara Pearson and Morris Phibbs took him to the vet, who diagnosed him through a blood test as having stage 4 kidney disease. Bringing him home all the cat feeders were asked to observe him to gauge his quality of life. During the second week of November, he seemed to lose all energy and stopped eating. So, we called [A Gentle Goodbye Veterinary Hospice](#), recommended by Eric Mullendore (1860). Dr. Molly came out on 11/15. We gently brought him to the cat room in 1856, many of the cat feeders came to say goodbye, and he was surrounded by love as Dr. Molly first gave him a relaxant, and then later, administered the drug that would set him free.

Next spring, we hope to adopt another cat or two to keep Sweetie company. We'll keep you updated!



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PICTURES OF THE COURTYARD

Please send your pictures in for next month's edition!



Sherman Garden Trustees

Diane Petersmarck	Term ends May 2022
Keith Johnson	Term ends May 2022
Charles Fisher	Term ends May 2022
John Coughlin	Term ends May 2023
Tim Mahoney	Term ends May 2024

Sherman Garden Association

President, Allen Feuerstein, 1860
Vice-President, Mary Jo Huck, 1856
Secretary, Morris Phibbs, 1862
Treasurer, Julie Lamberti, 1860
Building Coordinators: 1856 – Sherre Brutzkus, Lisa Noble
1860 – Allen Feuerstein, Tim Mahoney
1862 – Jack Stern
1864 – Sarah Vanderwicken, Rosa Alanis
1866 – Pat Rolfs, Walter Henebry

Sherman Garden Apartments is managed by

Heil, Heil, Smart & Golee

5215 Old Orchard Road, Suite 300
Skokie, IL 60077 847.866.7400

hsd@hsg.net

Property Manager: Gregg Rithmiller

Building Engineers

Rafael Del Rio, Oscar Huazano

Boiler Room Phone: 847.864.6887

SGA Newsletter is edited by Cindee Bath. It is written by Roving Reporters Cherie Fisher, Diane Keely, Walter Henebry, Mary Jo Huck, Phil Osborne, and Jack Stern along with various other residents. Submissions are welcome. Produced by Diane Petersmarck.

Sherman Garden Apartments Association General Meeting

Senior Programs and SGA Property Values
Wednesday, November 17, 2021
ZOOM

MEETING ATTENDEES

SGAA Board

Allen Feuerstein (president), Mary Jo Huck (vice president), Julie Lamberti (treasurer), Morris Phibbs (secretary)

SGA Trustees

John Coughlin, Charles Fisher, Keith Johnson, Tim Mahoney, Diane Petersmarck

SGAA Building Coordinators

Rosa Alanis, Sherri Brutzkus, Walt Henebry, Jack Stern, Sarah Vanderwicken, Norman Weston

SGA Residents

Azaek Alanis, Rosa Alanis, Cindee Bath, Carol Boyk, Sherri Brutzkus, Frank Buzzi, John Coughlin, Peter Crumley, Jane Danielson-Rickard, Connor Feeney, Tess Feeney, Charles Fisher, Allen Feuerstein, Liesbeth Fickes, Robert Fickes, Walt Henebry, Jeanie Henry, Mary Jo Huck, Margit Joelo, Keith Johnson, Diane Keeley, Blaire Laden, Sue Lafferty, Julie Lamberti, Sarah Langridge, Tom Leavens, Tim Mahoney, Phil Osborne, Diane Petersmarck, Morris Phibbs, Moto Power, Rosemary Powers, Michael Stephens, Jack Stern, Sarah Vanderwicken, Anastasia Wehrenberg, Norman Weston, Susan Wolan, Jane Wooley

Guest Presenters

Joe Tyler Gerber
Mitzi Gibbs
Audrey Thompson

Allen Feuerstein opened an Informal pre-meeting discussion at 7:00pm.

SGAA President Allen Feuerstein called the meeting to order at 7:30pm and welcomed residents and guests. Forty residents attended.

PROGRAM

Mitzi Gibbs, Property Tax Assessment Reviewer City Manager's Office

Mitzi served as Deputy Evanston Township Assessor until 2014, when the City of Evanston created the position of Property Tax Assessment Reviewer in the City Manager's Office, to which Mitzi was appointed. Mitzi serves as the liaison between Cook County and Evanston homeowners and residents.

Homeowner Exemptions are allowed for homeowners who occupy the property and use it as their primary residence, regardless of age. Mitzi explained that it is assumed that a co-op residence is owner-occupied, so the owner exemption is automatically applied.

Senior Exemptions are allowed for owners whose age is 65+ and for whom their property is their primary residence. Since the 2017-2018 tax year, owners must apply for and qualify for the senior exemption only once; subsequent applications are not required.

Senior Freezes are reserved for owners whose age is 65+ and whose income is \$65K or less. The owner must reapply every year. After the first successful application, the assessor should send you the renewal information each year.

Disability and Veterans Exemptions are available as appropriate and must be applied for annually.

Mitzi concluded her presentation by stating that in addition to her work with co-op owners as described above, she also assists homeowners and condominium owners with appealing their assessed property tax values and other general questions.

Q: I just moved to Sherman Garden and was in the Senior Exemption and Senior Freeze programs while in the old place. How and where do I reapply? Since you just moved, you need to reapply for the Senior Exemption. You may apply on line at www.cookcountyassessor.com. She can assist you with your appeal if you are comfortable emailing her a copy of your driver's license and your certificate of share ownership. She can also assist you in-person at her office if you take those document with you. Her office is located in the Civic Center, located at 2100 Ridge Avenue. Please enter the building through the sliding doors located on the ground level of the west side of the building, then ask the security guard for Mitzi's office (Property Tax Assessment Review Office). Her office hours are MWF 9:30am-3:00pm. Please make an appointment in advance by calling her at 847.448.8168. You may also contact her through Evanston's 311 number or by emailing her at mgibbs@cityofevanston.org.

Q: When will Senior Freeze application forms become available? Contact Mitzi to see when the senior freeze applications are available in January 2022.

Comment: "Both Mitzi and Audrey are fantastic people and are extremely helpful in navigating the system and programs."

Comment: "Mitzi is an angel! She walks you right through procedures."

Comment: For many years, Jeanie Henry has been a strong advocate for working with Mitzi, and has written numerous SGA newsletter articles about these tax-related programs.

Mitzi Gibbs

Property Tax Assessment Review Office

Evanston Civic Center

2100 Ridge Avenue

847.448.8168; or call Evanston's 311 office

mgibbs@cityofevanston.org

Office hours are MWF 9:30-3:00 (call ahead to make an appointment)

Audrey Thompson, Community Services Manager
City of Evanston Health and Human Services Department

Audrey opened by stating that (a) she manages senior services and those for youth and young adults, and that (b) programs are offered not only for older adults, but also for those with disabilities.

Audrey began her position in 2010 when there were “a ton of programs” for her to coordinate and run. She designed and implemented the new comprehensive Evanston Benefits Card (EBC) to increase efficiency and the quality of service by providing access to all senior services via a single card with a single application. Basic eligibility for the EBC requires that you reside in 60202 or 60201; be age 65+, or under 65 if you have a disability; have an annual gross income of \$35K or less for a household of 1, or \$60K or less for a household of 2.

For additional information about the EBC, please visit

<https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showpublisheddocument/65228/637622887564830000>

Subsidized Transportation Program

This is one of the benefits of the EBC. If you have qualified for the EBC, the city will subsidize some costs of transportation based on your income at the time of your application.

Taxicab Coupons. You may purchase coupons for \$5 each for a one-way fare (+\$1 for each additional person). The city matches your \$5 purchase price with an additional \$5, thus the driver will receive up to \$10 per one-way ride. Coupons are valid for transportation within Evanston, Lincolnwood, and Skokie.

Subsidized Transportation Card. The city now has a ground transportation debit card program that provides you with a MasterCard that can be used for any ground transportation that will accept debit or credit cards, including, for example, Uber and Amtrak. Eligibility:

- For those whose income is \$17,500 or less, \$125 can be loaded on their card. The city will match that amount, thus providing you with up to \$250/month to spend. The card pays the full non-discounted rate, but the city subsidizes your travel by providing the up-front match.
- For those whose income is \$17,500-35,000, the amounts are \$75 doubled to \$150/month. Unused funds carry over; you can keep your card maxed at \$250 or \$150.

Paratransit Coupons. If you are eligible, you may apply for up to 25 coupons per month (with income of \$35K or less for household of 1) or up to 15 coupons per month (with income of \$60K or less for household of 2).

NOTE: Senior Ride is not an Evanston Senior Services program, but Audrey’ staff can help you with the application. The Ride Free Program is a state-run program. Those 65 and older can register for reduced fare at the Levy Center.

For additional information, please visit

<https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showpublisheddocument/65230/637622906461170000>

Handyman Program

The Handyman Program is available for those who qualify for the EBC, but with an additional income restriction that changes annually. Please check with the Evanston Health and Human Services Department for the current amount.

The Handyman Program is NOT an emergency service. You must schedule an appointment, which is normally at least 3-4 weeks prior to service. You are limited to \$250 worth of parts and labor per year. Adaptive devices are not covered in the \$250 annual budget, but if they are required to complete a repair, they will be covered. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are not covered.

For additional information, please visit

<https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showpublisheddocument/65228/637622887564830000>

Subsidized Wheel Tax

Evanston provides a Wheel Tax Discount for income-eligible seniors over the age of 65 and residents who qualify for Illinois Benefit Access due to disability. Those with an EBC will receive a 50% discount on the cost for one vehicle per household. All residents of 80+ years will receive a 50% discount, regardless of income. For additional information, please visit

<https://www.cityofevanston.org/residents/parking/wheel-tax> and

<https://www.levyseniorcenterfoundation.org/resources>

Recreation Fee Assistance

EBC holders qualify for half off Levy Center memberships and many eligible individual programs offered at the Levy Center.

New Service—UNIPER

This unique program can turn your television into an interactive communication device. The program was spurred on by the pandemic as a way to counter the digital divide for those who do not have a computer or WIFI (called the “digital divide”). If you have the EBC, the UNIPER units are free of charge and can be installed via the Handyman Program. Once installed, the device will provide you with two-way sound/video. As an example of UNIPER usage, your doctor can dial into your TV and hold an audio and visual conversation with you. Anyone you list as an approved caller can call you. Call 311 or senior services hotline. If you are eligible for the EBC, you qualify for UNIPER. But if you do not meet income-based criteria, Audrey can submit UNIPER requests on your behalf via other programs and agencies. For additional information about this new program, please visit

<https://www.cityofevanston.org/Home/Components/News/News/5436/17>

Q: How is income determined? It is total gross income from all streams.

Q: What is Senior Ride? Senior Ride is not an Evanston program; it is state-run and is the same as the CTA reduced fare program. There is no income requirement. Those 55+ are qualified for the discount.

Q. Brinks Travel Card. Drivers are required by law to accept payment via your card. If they refuse to take your card, call dispatch. This is part of every cab rider’s bill of rights; they HAVE to take your credit/debit card, even if their reader machine broken.

Q: Tips? Drivers cannot put pressure on you for tips, but Audrey encourages tips, especially when they've done extra things to help you.

Visit <https://www.levyseniorcenterfoundation.org/resources>

Audrey Thompson

Community Services Manager
City of Evanston Health and Human Services Department
300 Dodge Avenue
Evanston, IL 60202
847.866.2919
aging@cityofevanston.org
www.cityofevanston.org/residents/senior

**Joe Tyler Gerber, Realtor
Engel & Volkers Realtors, Winnetka**

Joe was invited to participate by Mary Jo, for whom he served as her selling realtor. This was done in response to several ongoing discussions about SGA property values and assessments compared to nearby comparable properties.

Joe noted that he is hearing several (sometimes contradictory) narratives from SGA residents. He will focus on two important points: Values and Time on Market.

He notes that he frequently hears statements about SGA property values being stagnant and not gaining any significant appreciation. He said this is quite normal for Co-ops, which are very different from condominiums ("They are different beasts."). Some lenders cannot provide mortgages for co-ops.

He cited some statistics that he has derived from his own observations. He is seeing some improvement in SGA's situation and thinks that the pandemic has actually had a positive effect. He compares statistics from two periods: January-October 2019-2020 and January-October 2020-2021.

- Value: In October 2020, SGA list-to-sale prices averaged 86.5% of the original list price. In October 2021, the list-to-sale value increased to 92+%, which is an improvement of 6.5%.
- Average Market Time: Historically, SGA co-op units have had really high market times. However, that has now decreased significantly. SGA's market time decreased by 32.5% during 2020-2021 (189 days down to 128 days). By comparison, listing times for Evanston condominiums decreased 23% (from 92 to 71 days). He linked these statistics to the issue of attempting to increase SGA property values by stating that "Starting your initial asking price too high, means that you will be on the market longer."

Comment: One owner wanted to keep SGA values low to avoid higher taxes and assessments. There is already a problem with affordable housing in Evanston. They are committed to keeping values low. Joe agreed that SGA's assessments are higher than those of most comparable co-ops and condominiums. Increases in assessments should be made gradually, not all at once.

Returning to the issue of property values, he offered several examples of ways we can positively increase values, either corporately or individually:

- People like laminate and hardwood flooring and prefer variations between areas. Carpet throughout a unit is no longer attractive to most buyers.
- Create partial open floor plans by removing or modifying the wall between the kitchen and living areas.
- Keep some of the mid-century cosmetics, such as older bathroom tiles and the beamed ceilings.
- Install an inviting SGA entrance sign.
- Renovate and spruce up lobbies, hallways, and common areas because buyers care very much about this visual impact. Carpet, paint, and décor must be clean, bright, and fresh. Update the lighting.
- The entrance breezeway could be brightened and more lights could be installed.

Joe commented on several aspects of SGA that prospective buyers find attractive:

- SGA has a surprisingly robust amount of activity and diversity.
- It has good accessibility and the units are nicely proportioned for their size.
- The SGA courtyard, flower gardens, trees, and patio.
- In his observations, SGA is not an undesirable property and has found that some buyers actually desire some of the negatives that he has heard expressed.

Q: How can we keep assessments steady? One way is to continually look for ways to increase energy efficiency while upgrading the property and mechanicals.

Q: Can you offer information on additional area co-op comps? SGA is unique in that it is a courtyard property, unlike most other co-ops which are walkups. SGA is “the hidden gem of Evanston” with an uncommonly good sense of community that is not seen in other places other than small boutique condominiums.

Comment: It is very frustrating that there continues to be little appreciation in value, which has remained suppressed over decades. After being an SGA property owner for approximately 30 years, my anticipated value may have increased by only \$5K. Joe offered to discuss these issues in more detail in a private conversation.

Comment: One reason SGA values continue to be depressed is the lack of competing buyers. SGA’s buyer pool is restricted by possibly as much as 75% because non-resident parents cannot invest in units to serve as housing for Northwestern students. One solution may be to institute a very large security deposit that would help control resident student activities. It was also pointed out that low purchase values offer buyers little incentive to make large investments in renovations.

Comment: Thirty thousand residents in Evanston are having problems paying rent, and when we talk about driving up purchase prices, we will significantly increase assessments and taxes, thus further constricting the amount of affordable housing.

Joe Tyler Gerber

Principal, Gerber Group
Engel & Völkers Chicago North Shore
566 Chestnut St, 2nd Floor

Winnetka IL 60093

847.544.9666

<https://chicagonorthshore.evrealstate.com/bio/JoeGerber>

Allen thanked our guest presenters and SGA residents for attending and participating.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03pm.

Submitted by
Morris Phibbs
SGAA Secretary

City of Evanston Senior Services Resources

Program, including Handyman Program, Subsidized Transportation Program, and Wheel Tax Discount Program.

- Benefit Card Program Link
<https://www.cityofevanston.org/residents/senior-services/benefit-card-program>
- Handyman Program Link
<https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showpublisheddocument/65202/637620492284200000>
- Subsidized Transportation Program Link
<https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showpublisheddocument/65230/637622906461170000>
- Wheel Tax Discount Program
<https://www.cityofevanston.org/residents/parking/wheel-tax>

Additional Information about State and Federal Benefits

- Please visit AgeOptions at <https://www.ageoptions.org/services-and-programs> for a Chart of Benefits by Income Level.



Happy Holidays From all of us here at Sherman Garden Apartments



Trustees

Back: Tim Mahoney, Keith Johnson, Charles Fisher, Gregg Rithmiller HHS&G
Front: Diane Petersmarck, John Coughlin



SGA Association

Morris Phibbs (Treasurer), Allen Feuerstein (President),
Mary Jo Huck (Vice President), Julie Lamberti (Secretary)



1856 Building Coordinators
Lisa Noble and Sherre Brutzkus

1860 Building Coordinators
Norman Weston and Tim Mahoney

1862 Building Coordinator
Jack Stern



Engineers
Rafael Del Rios, Jr. and Oscar Huazano

1864 Building Coordinators
Azael (Rosa) Alanis and Sarah Vanderwicken

1866 Building Coordinators
Walter Henebry and Patricia Rolfs



Parking Lot Coordinator
Phil Osborne

