

**VILLAGE
CONDOMINIUM
ASSOCIATION**

**RESIDENT AND
UNIT OWNER
HANDBOOK**

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
The Board of Managers.....	2
Village Governance	2
The Management Company	3
Unit Owner Responsibilities	3
Monthly Condominium Fee	4
Special Assessments.	4
Master Deed and By-Laws.....	5
Insurance	5
Clubhouse	5
Pool	6
Trash/Recycling	6
Parking	7
About Your Unit	9
Water Meters.....	9
Air Conditioners.....	9
Kitchen Stove Fan.....	9
Floor Drain.....	10
Furnace.....	10
Water heater	10
Electrical System	10
Hot and Cold Water Shutoffs.....	10
Attics	11
Patios.....	11
Front and Rear Entry Doors.....	11
Front and Rear Storm Doors	12
Windows	12
Gardens	12
Window Well Covers.....	13
Procedures	Addendum

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information helpful to make your life at the Village a pleasant experience. We hope you will find the information provided by this book to be informative and useful as a guide to condominium living.

In addition to this guide you will periodically receive other condominium information such as newsletters, notices, pool rules and regulations, snow removal and parking information. It's in your best interest that you read these and be familiar with them.

Some general information about the Village community is also provided.

In addition, it is important to be familiar with the Village Condominium Association Master Deed, By-laws and Rules and Regulations for these are our governing documents. Copies are available at the Village office, 36A Pierce Road, 617-923-1684.

The Village Condominiums were converted from existing garden apartments in 1972. The value of the land and property, making up the Village, has grown significantly through the years and impacting our tax contributions to the town. When we vote in great numbers the town tends to listen.

The Village has been active on issues affecting all condominiums. As a matter of fact, other condominium associations in Watertown and throughout Massachusetts look to the Village for leadership on vital issues.

The Village is representative of the American urban community today. We have a diverse ethnic population and attract a wide variety of people. This diversity and the variety of professional experiences of the residents contribute significantly to the strength of the Board of Managers and the residents that make up our Association.

The Board of Managers

The Board of Managers consists of five unit owners, elected at the Annual Meeting held on the second Monday in May. They serve staggered two-year terms. The Board is mandated by law to make all decisions on behalf of the Association and oversee all that is involved in managing the Village. They work together in a close relationship with the management company.

The Board meets at the clubhouse on the second Monday of most months. Dates and times of meetings are announced in the Village newsletter. All residents of the Village are welcome and encouraged to attend, ask questions and make suggestions.

It is extremely important that all unit owners attend the Annual Meeting at which election of Board members and by-law revisions take place. NO business can be conducted unless a quorum of 155 unit owners is present or represented by proxy. If there is not a quorum, the Annual Meeting must be rescheduled at a great expense to the Association.

Village Governance

Owning a condominium is different from individual home ownership and apartment dwelling.

Concerned with the stability and successful operation of a condominium, state and federal law regulate many aspects of condominium life. The Village Condominiums, like all condominiums, cannot exist without a Master Deed and By-laws spelling out the specifics of how we operate with 308 owners who must share the joint ownership and expense of all the common areas. These documents are filed at the Registry of Deeds in Cambridge. The Board of Managers has the responsibility to conduct all business activity and uphold all condominium laws and all condominium documents.

The Board of Managers cannot neglect these responsibilities. Therefore, the Board of Managers cannot overlook deviations from the Master Deed or By-laws.

The Association retains an attorney who makes sure the Board of Managers follows state and federal laws as well as interpreting our Master Deed and By-laws. The Association retains a Certified Public Accountant to make sure that the Village's financial position is sound and that our business practices are proper.

The Management Company

The Village provides an on-site office for the Management Company located at 36A Pierce Road (617-923-1684). The management company acts only as an agent for the Board of Managers. The office is on the second floor of the Clubhouse. Office hours are usually Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm. There is also a 24-hour a day answering service for emergencies when the office is closed. The management company handles the concerns of the residents on a day-to-day basis. They log each day's activity to keep the Board of Managers informed.

They maintain all Village records and supervise landscaping, snow removal, repair of common areas, assigned parking, oversee the pool and clubhouse, plus many other functions.

Contact the management company with any problems or questions you have about the **outside** of your unit; maintenance of the inside of the unit is the unit owner's responsibility

Unit Owner Responsibilities

The major responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Provide name, address, telephone number of unit owner(s)
- Provide name, address of first and second mortgagee
- If rental property- name, address, telephone number of person who oversees maintenance of the unit
- Name, address, and telephone number of tenants- no less than a one-year lease is allowed pursuant to the Village's By-laws'. Tenant must abide by the Rules and Regulations of the Village.

- Obtain an assigned parking space and parking sticker
- Provide registration of car and license plate number
- Obtain a copy of the Condominium documents
- Make sure your tenants know the rules and regulations because you are responsible.
- Know that the Board of Managers must approve any structural and architectural changes to the unit or common areas in writing. This includes replacement windows and all doors, air conditioners, outside lighting and patios.

Monthly Condominium Fee

The monthly condominium fee is to be paid on the 1st day of each month. Delinquent unit owners are charged a late fee that cannot by law be forgiven. State law requires the Condominium to notify the mortgagee when you are 60 days delinquent. The Village does not send reminders or notice of payment. It is the unit owner's responsibility to pay the fee on time.

Do not put your check in the clubhouse mailbox. Checks must be mailed to the bank. The Village office supplies account number labels and P.O. Box labels. Affix the account number label to the top center of your check. Only monthly payments are to be sent to this address.

The monthly condominium fee covers, but not limited to, the following items; management fee, snow removal, landscaping, insurance, repair and maintenance of common areas, pool repair and supervision and any common expense defined by law.

Special Assessments.

Special assessments at the Village have been rare in recent years. The Board of Managers' practice is to do predictable repair and maintenance on a rotating basis built into the operational budget. Although rare, special assessments are still possible.

Master Deed and By-Laws

It is important that as soon as you move into the Village that you obtain a copy of the Master Deed, By-laws and rules and regulations from the Village office if the previous owner has not given them to you.

These are the documents we live by. A few prominent examples are:

- No pets are allowed.
- No decorations of any kind may be hung on the outside of any portion of the unit or plantings.
- No structural or architectural changes may be made without written permission of the Board of Managers.
- No bush or tree planting or removal may be done without written permission of the Board of Managers.

Insurance

The Village maintains an umbrella insurance policy covering the building and common areas, it does not cover personal belongings. Whenever there is a new insurance policy each unit owner is given an insurance coverage fact sheet that will help each unit owner to interface with their own condominium owner's policy. If you have any questions about insurance coverage please direct them to the Village office.

Clubhouse

Located at 36A Pierce Road, it is available to all Village resident and their guests. Residents can rent it for social occasions for a fee. The management company will provide you with a rental agreement form and explain the noise restrictions, parking and cleanup rules that apply and are strictly enforced. Children must have an adult present when using the Clubhouse.

Pool

The pool is open from Memorial Day Weekend until Labor Day. Town law doesn't allow swimming unless a lifeguard is on duty. The pool operates on weekends only until the school term is over and lifeguards are available and then daily till Labor Day. Pool regulations and application for pool passes are given to all residents prior to the opening day of the pool and must be followed. Resident and guest passes are obtained at the Village office. Pool passes are not delivered to the unit. The Board of Managers considers the operation of a pool as serious as does the Watertown Health Department. Some of the rules are prominently displayed at the pool per order of the Watertown health Department among those listed is NO food or glass is allowed in the pool area at any time NO alcohol is allowed at the pool at anytime. You must have a resident pool pass to use the pool. The number of guests is strictly regulated. Pool hours are determined annually and you will be informed. Only U.S. Coast Guard approved life vests are allowed in the pool. **No other flotation devices are allowed.** Further information is available at the Village office.

Trash/Recycling

Garbage and trash is currently picked up twice weekly from the dumpsters, located in the Village parking lots. If the dumpster is already full, please use another one. Overloaded dumpsters attract stray animals, rodents, insects and look unsightly and smell. Garbage should be bagged and tied closed. Yard waste is to be put in the green covered barrels beside the dumpster. Call the office for information on how to dispose of unwanted items.

The Town of Watertown has instructions on trash and recycling. Please abide by them. Contaminated dumpsters and recycling totes will be rejected by the town and the village could be fined. Alternate vendors would have to dispose of our garbage and trash at considerable cost to the Association.

By Massachusetts Law “white goods” such as washers dryers, water heaters, stoves, air conditioners, and dehumidifiers cannot be put in the dumpster. They require a \$15 orange sticker which may be purchased from the Village office, for your convenience.

Construction debris, paints, automobile batteries, propane tanks, TV’s, computers, monitors, printers, etc. may not be placed in the dumpsters and are classified as hazardous materials. Please do not leave these items in the dumpster enclosure. The disposal of these items is the responsibility of the individual residents.

The Town of Watertown may update these regulations from time to time.

When contracting for work in your unit you must make arrangements with the contractor to remove all the debris. Call the office for information on how to dispose of these items.

The Village recycles as required by State and Town law. There are totes next to the dumpsters for items to be recycled. There are also yard waste barrels available during the gardening season. It is against Massachusetts law to put yard waste and house plants in the dumpster. When using the dumpster please break down boxes and throw them to the rear of the dumpster. It is important for everyone to cooperate. Call the office for further information.

Parking

There are NO deeded parking spaces at the Village. Each unit is assigned a single free parking space. These spaces are located either adjacent to the street or in the parking lot closest to your unit. Commercial vehicles are permitted as long as they don’t exceed three quarter ton, are not wider than six feet five inches or seventeen feet in length. No trailers or boats or other attachments are allowed.

There are no spaces assigned for guest parking. Any non-resident car parked on Village property is subject to towing at the owners expense. Parking spaces shall not be used for any purpose other than to park vehicles.

A second space may be obtained, when available, for a monthly fee. You should contact the management company regarding your space and to obtain your parking sticker(s). Watertown's all-night street parking ban is usually enforced from mid-November until the end of March. Call the Village office for information about winter parking.

If you are going to be away for more than 24 hours, especially in wintertime, it is advisable to leave a key to your vehicle with a neighbor in case of a snow storm or an emergency, which requires moving your vehicle.

About Your Unit

Here is some helpful information about your unit:

Water Meters

If you have a water meter in your basement area, it is common property and access must be provided.

The Management Company will notify you in advance of the meter readings.

Air Conditioners

Written permission from the Board of Managers must be obtained. Call the Village office for specifics **before** you purchase an air conditioner. Individual window units are not allowed.

Kitchen Stove Fan

If you have a fan in the hood over your kitchen stove, the following maintenance may apply:

- If the filter is a washable type wash it in warm soapy water, otherwise replace it periodically.
- Check the hood or bulb shield for maximum wattage bulb; generally it's 60W.

Floor Drain

Every other unit's cellar floor has a hole for access to the pipes. When there is excess moisture outside and a possibility of cellar flooding, the cover of the hole should be removed when possible to allow for drainage. Please do not put carpets or furniture over this hole. **"The basements of the units were not intended for habitation and have at best a moisture and ventilation problem. It is unfortunate that many were finished and concrete floor slabs were covered with a nonventilating type of carpet. Carpet used in basements should be open and have no backing."** (David Lesky, Consulting Engineer, 1981)

Furnace

Unit owners wanting to replace a furnace must notify and receive **prior** approval from the Board of Managers. This will avoid installation problems and possible extra cost to the unit owner. Some high efficiency furnaces can't be vented into our existing chimneys and require special exhaust pipes through the walls. These exhaust pipes can be potentially dangerous as well as unsightly. Medium efficiency furnaces require a certain volume of air space in the basement area for safe operation. Outside intake vents are not allowed. Unit owners must make the changes in the area of the furnace.

Nothing may be installed on the outside of the buildings without prior approval of the Board of Managers. Chimney liners also require prior approval of the Board of managers. Inform the contractor of these limitations. The unit owner will be responsible for the removal of any unapproved addition and for any expense this entails.

Water heater

To extend the life of your water heater, several times a year drain a pail of water from the faucet located near the bottom of the heater.

Electrical System

A circuit breaker box is located on the wall on your side of the bulkhead area. If your electricity fails, first check your circuit box.

Hot and Cold Water Shutoffs

The hot water shutoff valve for the unit is located at the top of your water heater. The cold water shutoff is located in the bulkhead area near the ceiling, facing the bulkhead stairs (a shutoff for the unit on the left is located at the left, one for the unit on the right is at the right).

Attics

Every other unit has an access to the attic. It's an opening in the ceiling located in the closet of the master bedroom. Some unit owners may have also put in a pull down stairway in the upstairs hallway. Written permission from the Board of Managers must be obtained if you wish to use the attic space for storage. **Under no circumstances should living spaces be vented directly into the attic. Doing so is a violation of Massachusetts state law and can cause serious problems.**

Patios

A request to install or rebuild an existing patio must be made in writing to the Board of Managers. The contractor must demonstrate (e.g. references, license number and certificate of insurance) (s)he is capable of performing the work without causing harm to the surrounding construction.

Any unit owner who installs a patio without written permission of the Board of Managers will be subject to a fine and the patio must be removed. The repair of any damage to common area will be charged to the unit owner.

Patios not maintained by the unit owner will be repaired by authorization of the Board of Managers and billed to the unit owner. For further information call the Village office. See included Procedure and Unit Owner Responsibility.

Front and Rear Entry Doors

A request to replace doors must be made in writing to the Board of Managers. The contractor must demonstrate (references, license number and certificate of insurance) (s)he is capable of performing the work without causing harm to the surrounding construction. For further information call the Village office. See included Procedure and Unit Owner Responsibility.

Any unit owner who installs a door without written permission from the Board of Managers will be subject to a per door fine. If the door installed doesn't conform to Board approved entry doors there will be a fine and then the proper door must be installed. The repair of any damage to the common area will be charged to the unit owner. For further information call the Village office. See included Procedure and Unit Owner Responsibility.

Front and Rear Storm Doors

Same as above. For further information call the Village office. See included Procedure and Unit Owner Responsibility.

Windows

Same as above. For further information call the Village office. Work cannot be started before you receive written permission from the Board. See included Procedure and Unit Owner Responsibility.

Gardens

The Association maintains the landscaped areas within the confines of the Village. You may do limited gardening but you must request permission in writing from the Board of Managers. Be aware that sometimes the groundskeepers may inadvertently damage your garden. There is no reimbursement for the damage. If gardens are not maintained they will be cleaned up and restored to green areas. You must fill out a form and obtain the appropriate color garden stake from the office. Unit owners may remove no shrubs or trees unless prior approval in writing is obtained from the Board of Managers.

Window Well Covers

Plastic bubbles (covers) may be put over the window wells to prevent water and other things from entering the window. You may purchase these and the Association will install them. Call the Village office for further information.

