



November 2019 - The Sharper Focus



Thank you for reading our newsletter to all homeowners in Associations managed by Sharper Management. The goal of this newsletter is to touch on general ideas and helpful topics as they relate to living in a common interest community. We hope you find this information useful.

Advertising Directory

We strive to continually add valuable content and resources in our newsletters. Starting this month, you will see promotional ads from local businesses within the newsletter and on our website. Click the ads to view more from each business or view other promotions on our website, by [clicking here](#). We will be adding to the list throughout the year.



Snow Contracts and Expectations

Winter in Minnesota is quickly approaching! When the white stuff starts to fall, it's important to understand how specifications in snow contracts will affect when snow is removed from your roadways, driveways and sidewalks.

Just like snowflakes, every snow contract is unique. To better understand the nuances of your contract, check with your Board or contact Sharper Management. We are happy to share this information with you.



While unique, there are some common specifications of a snow removal contract. Some of these specifications are:

Trigger Depth - Your contract likely states an accumulation total that must be met before snow

service will commence. This can be anywhere from a trace up to multiple inches. For most, it is somewhere between 1 - 2 inches. This can be one of the biggest variables in the pricing of your snow contract and the definition of "trigger depth" is important. Does your contract state that service will happen when the trigger depth has been met for a single snow event/storm, or is it vague regarding at what point trigger depth is met? There is a significant difference between the definitions. For example, you could have a winter where less than 1 inch of snow accumulates per event, but there may be many events like this in a relatively short period of days thus creating heavily packed drives in your association. Most contracts are written "by event".

Timing - The second most important component of your contract is the time in which snow service must be completed. For most contracts, "final cleanup" is somewhere between 6 - 12 hours after the snow has stopped falling. This timeline is also subject to snow accumulation totals. The more snow received, the more time allowed for cleanup.

Open-Ups - Most contracts provide for an open-up during snowfall events that exceed a particular total. For example, if 4 -6 inches of snow depth is met, but the event has not stopped, it is common for an open up to happen. Open-ups are simply done to allow vehicles to come in and out of the community. They are not the same as a final clean up and generally consist of a single pass through the roadways with the plow. One thing to define in your snow contract is whether open-ups include driveways, or just main roadways. Typical language states that an open-up will occur prior to __AM and/or after __PM. Then the final cleanup will occur per the contract as discussed in the "timing" section above.

We realize that snow is inevitable and, while often beautiful, can create some frustrations. Knowing a bit more about how your snow contract is written may alleviate some of these frustrations over the coming months. Stay safe this winter!

Packages, Gifts, Security, Oh My!

With the holidays comes packages! We've all seen those doorbell videos of package thieves grabbing your gifts. Just like kids, these thieves look forward to the holidays. Unattended packages on doorsteps are an irresistible temptation, and many communities struggle with crime during the holidays. The association itself is not responsible for delivered package, yet individual homeowners can play a part in protecting the community.



These tips may help reduce crime in your association:

- Deliver to work/friend/neighbor. Utilize different delivery options during the holiday season. Have packages delivered where someone can accept them, or require a signature.
- Delivery instructions. FedEx and UPS drivers will often honor requests to place packages behind a gate, shrub, or other location; contact your carrier to find out the options.
- Track packages. Package tracking has come a long way, you can often receive a text message when their package is delivered.

Standard security options such as cameras and HOA funded patrols may help but, as we've seen on those videos, sometimes they do not. In addition, frequent security patrols can be very expensive, may not be in the association's budget and, ultimately, impact dues. One main deterrent is a strong community.

Strong communities can reduce crime. Owners who know their neighbors are more likely to report suspicious behavior. If you haven't already, during this holiday season and beyond, get to know your neighbors. It's all about community!

Sharper Rolls Out Client Care Center

Earlier this year, Sharper Management rolled out a new department designed to streamline



communication efforts and increase customer service, and thus increase client satisfaction. The Client Care Center is a "call center" like setup where every call from homeowners, vendors, realtors, insurance agents, etc will receive a live body in the Sharper office. Perhaps more importantly, those staff members answering calls and emails are equipped with the information and tools to satisfy even the most difficult of questions, and to help facilitate resolution on just about any matter.

The reality is an overwhelming majority of the 75 calls received on average each day are very basic questions. Are pets allowed? What is garbage pickup day? How much are my monthly dues? Can you send me a certificate of insurance? All of these questions can be handled by the team of individuals making up Client Care. Such calls and emails need not be sent to a Community Manager or an Assistant Community Manager, interrupting their workflow, or worse, going to voicemail because they are unavailable to take the call or unable to respond to the email quickly. Even more difficult inquires such as maintenance requests (ex: a piece siding blows off) and even vendor service issues (ex: they missed my driveway when they plowed) can be facilitated directly by a Client Care team member.

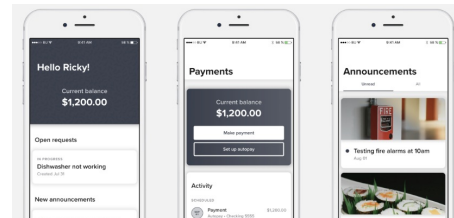
Finally, another focus and purpose of the Client Care Center is to more thoroughly document communications. Actionable items such as maintenance requests can be put into a Task and our Task system can be better utilized. Call logs can be generated for association reporting purposes - and for important historical documentation record keeping. Overall, better administrative tracking will result from the Client Care system.

"At the end of the day, we recognize this is a customer service industry. We also realize that our overall goal is to help enhance property values for the clients that entrust us with management services for their association," said Matt Froehlich, owner and chief operating officer. "Our goals with the Client Care Center is two-fold. First, it clearly provides an enhanced customer service experience for the nearly 13,000 homes we are responsible for assisting. Secondly, it frees up our Community Managers and Assistant Managers to be working on bigger picture things like building budgets, getting bids, contract negotiations, and enables them to spend more time "in the field" focusing on things such as vendor and project management, site inspections and rule enforcement efforts. The Client Care Center will be a win-win for everybody and we are extremely excited about it."

Client Care is staffed by Sam Crowther, previously having spent the past year as the receptionist at Sharper and comes with a vast background in customer service positions - and Grant Peterson, having spent over a year as an assistant community manager at Sharper and whom also has significant background in communications and customer service.

New Resident Center App

Sharper Management is excited to announce the new Resident Center mobile app powered by our software system, Buildium! A new mobile app made specifically for you and your members. Resident Center is designed with simplicity in mind. Homeowners can make payments, submit maintenance requests, contact your property manager and more--with just a few taps. The features available vary based on the permissions granted, but some of the key features are:



- One-time and recurring online dues payments
- Maintenance requests with photo attachments
- Announcements, texting, and other communication features
- Ability to provide proof of insurance coverage (when required)
- Access to governing documents

Be sure to check it out!

Things to Do Around Town

We've highlighted some of the things we think will be fun to do this winter. We've also included a link to the City of Minneapolis for upcoming local events. Enjoy!



Sea Life at Mall of America

Escape the cold and go on an underwater adventure at Sea Life in the Mall of America. Between feeding sting rays, getting a behind-the-scenes look of how the aquarium runs, and snorkeling with the fish there is something to do for all ages! Looking for something even more exciting? Spend a night in the Ocean Tunnel underneath sharks, sea turtles, and more!

When: Opens at 10 am every day; closes at 6 pm on Sundays, 7 pm on Thursdays, and 8 pm on Friday and Saturdays

Walker Art Center

Come visit the Walker Art Center on the first Saturday of the month for FREE family day! Every month there are performances, art-making, games, and kids' films from 10 am to 3 pm at no cost for the entire family. They also have family friendly food options, or you could pack your own lunch to enjoy in the lounge! If night life is more your scene, every Thursday night is FREE from 5pm to 9pm. During this time there are exhibition-related events in the galleries, art-making designed by local artists, lectures, film screenings, performances, and more! Bring anyone you want and immerse yourself into Minnesota's finest contemporary art center.

Where: 725 Vineland Place, Minneapolis, MN 55403

Holidazzle

Holidazzle creates a community gathering place and holiday destination for people of all ages to come together and celebrate winter in Downtown Mpls. This year's Holidazzle features stories highlighting local people, products and places that showcase the food scene, art district, park system, active lifestyle, local entertainers and community groups that make our city and our region unique and special.

When: Nov. 29 - Dec. 22; Thursdays through Sundays. Hours vary.

Where: Loring Park, Minneapolis

Como Park Conservatory Holiday Flower Show

Escape the cold at The Como Park Conservatory's most well-attended event of the year. The conservatory annually showcases hundreds of poinsettias at its Holiday Flower Show. This year's show will feature ice punch poinsettia along with kalanchoe cher, eucalyptus and Persian shield. The Holiday Flower Show began in 1925 and is an honored tradition.

When: Dec. 07 - Dec. 31

Need Help Renting and Managing a Townhome or Condo?

Think Advantage Home



A sister company to Sharper Management, Advantage Home helps homeowners and investors manage their single-family residences.

Since your Association is already affiliated with Sharper Management, renting your home through Advantage would have extra benefits you wouldn't find in another property management company. Those benefits include:

- A thorough understanding of Associations
- Information sharing regarding governing documents, rules, and regulations is efficient between Sharper and Advantage Home - Advantage is literally right down the hall
- The Sharper Management maintenance staff is already familiar with your Association's property
- Our emergency response team is fast and effective

If you or someone you know is interested in renting their townhome or condominium, have them contact jeff@advantagehomemn.com.

Learn more at advantagehomemn.com

