



(photo submitted by Anne Holland)

**January 20, 2023**  
**Sterling Woods II – Master Association**  
**Monthly Newsletter**  
**Website: [www.sterlingwoods2.org](http://www.sterlingwoods2.org)**

Dear Unit Owners:

Below are operational highlights here at Sterling Woods and important information and reminders...

### **Home Repairs and Improvements (building permits and board approval)**

Please see the attached document providing important information regarding building permits and board approval that are required for certain repairs and home improvements.

### **Landscaping Committee Update – Pine Tree Project**

During the past few years, the Landscaping Committee has been receiving an increased number of requests for pruning of overgrown spruce and pine trees located on the side and rear of units. The reasons for these requests include – branches banging against the siding, growing over roofs and gutters allowing vermin to climb branches to enter attics, pine needles clogging gutters, tree roots causing sewer and drain pipe problems, disease and storm damage resulting in fallen trees. To find solutions to these problems, the Master Board asked the Landscaping Committee to provide recommendations.

As a result, the Landscaping Committee has been developing plans for these large, overgrown trees. Two options have been discussed. Option 1 - pruning some trees and removing some trees (those that pose the most danger). Option 2 - removing all the spruces and pines planted in areas too close to units and decks. There are 308 trees in question. This project was put out for bids and, after interviewing and checking the credentials of the three lowest bidders, the Landscaping Committee was in agreement that the lowest bidder be awarded the project and that that the project should be done in stages over the next two to five years.

All of the arborists we have consulted are in agreement that these large trees should not have been planted in these areas. Periodic pruning is done however, the growth rate is approximately one to one and a half feet per year. Our major concern is that storms can cause these trees to fall posing a danger to residents and the buildings. The larger these trees get the more damage they can do and it will be more costly to remove them.

We understand that unit owners may be concerned with the loss of privacy, shade and aesthetics and the Landscaping Committee will consider planting lawn areas, ornamental grasses, shrubs or a species of trees that will be less problematic over time.

We cannot ignore the problem that these large overgrown trees represent, and we need to act responsibly to eliminate the potential danger.

The Landscaping Committee is still in the process of obtaining additional information from the lowest bidder. Once the committee has a consensus on the proposed solution to the board, they will present it to the master board.

### Fitness Center – Request Regarding the Free Weights

If you use the free weights in the fitness center, please put the weights back on the rack and return the bench to the area in which it is normally stored (up against the far wall near the metal door). Please do not leave weights on the bench.

### Water Shut Off Valve in your Unit

It is particularly important that you know where the water shut off valve is in your unit. If you have an emergency, and do not know how to shut off the water in your unit, you could end up with unnecessary damage. If you cannot find the water shut off valve, you can hire a plumber to locate it for you. If it is in a location that is not easily accessible, or if your shut off valve is not working properly, a plumber will be able to repair or move the valve if necessary.

In one of the units in each building (in most buildings it is in one of the end units), there is also a main water shut off valve that shuts the water off to the entire building. Please make sure you know if you have the building water shut off valve in your unit, but you should also know where the shut off valve is for just your unit.

**If your unit is rented, please make sure your tenant knows where the water shut off valve is.**

### Snowstorm Parking Reminder

The snow removal vendor uses visitor parking areas during storms for the temporary placement of snow. The availability of these areas is critical during a snowstorm. Do NOT move your car from your driveway to the visitor's lot during a storm to make it "easier" for the vendor to clean your driveway. It actually hinders the snow removal effort and is a violation of association rules.

### Reminder to Dog Owners

**Please pick up after your dog.** There is a lot of dog feces around the community and even brightly colored bags filled with feces tossed on sidewalks and in the woods. Per the rules, all

pet owners or attendants are responsible to immediately pick up after their pet and **properly dispose of the waste.**



Please see the attached recycling flyers from Oak Ridge Waste.



At the December 2022 Open Session Board meeting, the Board voted on Master Board positions as follows:

Steve Griffing, President (Willows Representative)  
Andrew Bayer, Vice President (Summit Representative)  
Stan Kishner, Treasurer (Birches Representative)  
Fred Ravetto, Secretary (Oaks Representative)  
Maureen Dunkerton, Director (Elms Representative)  
Valerie Dawson, Director (Maples Representative)

## February Board Meeting

The next board meeting is Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM. It will be held in person at the clubhouse (you may attend in person if you sign the Amenity Use Agreement Form) or you can attend electronically. If you choose to attend electronically, call (203) 666-8107 and then enter the conference ID number which is 224 521 216#. When you call in, you will be put into a “lobby” and when the meeting is ready to begin you will be “brought” into the meeting.

Please note – if you join via conference call, you will be muted during the meeting. However, you can listen in. If you have any questions, you would like the board to answer, you should e-mail your questions to Kim Murray at [kmurray@rei-pm.net](mailto:kmurray@rei-pm.net) a week prior to the meeting. Your questions will be addressed at the end of the open session. The board also gives those in attendance either in person or via conference call an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the meeting.

## Some routine reminders...

The next holiday that will impact trash pickup is Memorial Day. That week, the pickup will be on Tuesday, May 30, 2023.

Holiday Related Information - per the Rules & Regulations, decorations may be installed only up to 30 days prior to holiday observance, and they must be removed within ten days after the holiday.

Currently, there are 321 unit owners (out of 358) who receive correspondence via e-mail versus receiving correspondence through U.S. mail. The board is requesting that all unit owners who are not currently signed up to receive correspondence via e-mail do so. At times, the board would like to provide information quickly to owners and sending an e-mail blast is the best way to do that. By receiving correspondence via e-mail, you will also save the association money. If you would like to provide your e-mail address, please contact Kim Murray.

If Kim or I can assist you in any way, please let us know. Kim's hours are approximately 7:30 AM until 2:30 PM. Her email address is [kmurray@rei-pm.net](mailto:kmurray@rei-pm.net) and the on-site phone number is (203) 748-0859 or she can be reached at 203-744-8400 ext. 153. If you have an emergency, you can call 203-744-8400 and hit zero.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Art Stueck', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Art Stueck  
President  
REI Property and Asset Management

Attachments

# Building Permits & Board Approval for Home Improvements

In accordance with the Sterling Woods Governing Documents and the City of Danbury Building Department, there are many improvements and modifications a unit owner can make to the inside of their units without the need for Board approval and/or a building permit from the City of Danbury. **Everything else requires both.**

Below is a brief listing of each. More complete information is available from Kim Murray at 203-744-8400 or [KMurray@rei-pm.net](mailto:KMurray@rei-pm.net).

Permits and Board approval are **not** required for painting, wallpapering, tiling, carpeting, cabinetry, countertop replacement and similar work not involving structural or mechanical alterations, minor electrical maintenance, plumbing work, and replacement or repair of minor parts of HVAC systems and gas fireplaces.

## **Some examples of when Board approval & city permit are needed:**

- Replacing a hot water heater (tank or tankless) or HVAC equipment.
- Replacing a gas fireplace.
- **Any electrical work** other than repair of existing outlets, switches, etc.
- Installation of additional lighting (i.e., track, recessed).
- **Any plumbing work** other than immediate leak repair and general maintenance. This includes replacement of sinks, faucets, drains, garbage disposals. Permission is **not** needed to replace countertops with identical footprint replacements, but a plumber and building permit **are** required to reinstall existing sink or a replacement sink.
- Installation of a radon abatement system.
- Any renovations that will have an impact on the structure of the unit/building.

**Comments:** It is, unfortunately, quite common for contractors to tell customers that permits are not needed for many of these projects. This is absolutely not correct according to the Danbury Building Department. Every licensed contractor is keenly aware of the few items that do not require a permit as outlined in the CT building code and often choose not to inform the customers because it adds time and expense.

It remains the unit owner's responsibility to know when these are required and to get proper approvals and permits before work is started. REI can provide more detailed information and references to the Danbury Building Department and the pertinent Sterling Woods II Governing Documents. Failure to follow the procedures can result in fines, insurance deductibles being charged to the unit owner, and/or requirements to reverse the work.

## **Per the City of Danbury Building Department and State Building Code:**

**Where equipment replacement and repairs must be performed in an emergency situation, the permit applications shall be submitted within the next business day to the building official.**

When in doubt, ask Kim!

## References:

Sterling Woods II Rules and Regulations Article IX, Section 9.2 Compliance with state and city regulations. <https://sterlingwoods2.org/rulesregulations.htm>

Sterling Woods Master Documents Article 13, Section 13.1 – Additions, Alterations, and improvements by Unit Owners: <https://sterlingwoods2.org/rulesregulations.htm>

Excerpts from 2018 Connecticut State Building Code: <https://sterlingwoods2.org/information.htm>