



## Ann Arbor Christmas Tree Drop-off Locations and Composting Updates

### Christmas Trees

The City of Ann Arbor provides drop-off disposal locations for used, undecorated Christmas trees through Monday, Jan. 15, 2024. The city provides four free drop-off locations at city parks. No wreaths, garland, tree stands, lights or decorations are accepted.

The four park locations will be open for Christmas tree drop offs 6 a.m.–10 p.m.:

**Bicentennial Park** (Southeast Area Park) located on Ellsworth at Platt. Trees may be left at the dirt lot north of the basketball courts.

**West Park** parking lot off Chapin near West Huron Street.

**Gallup** boat launch parking lot (not the Gallup livery), on the southeast side of Geddes Road, East of Huron Parkway.

**Olson Park** parking lot, 1515 Dhu Varren Road, near Pontiac Trail.

All tree stands, nails, lights, ornaments, tinsel and plastic items must be removed from the trees and discarded before drop off. The collected Christmas trees are chipped into mulch or composted. Any lights, metal, glass or plastic ornaments left on the tree can ruin the processing equipment, harm the operators, and spoil the landscaping mulch. Since wreaths and evergreen roping (garland) are generally made with wire or plastic backing, these items should be discarded by placing inside trash carts.

After Jan. 15, 2024, Christmas tree branches, less than 6 inches in diameter, can be cut and placed in compost carts for monthly winter compost service or saved for regular curbside compost service, which resumes in April 2024.

### Big Change in Composting for 2024!

No more “compostable plastic” in the Compost Carts! That’s the word from the City’s Solid Waste Department. Up until now, many of us have used CMA-W or BPI-certified plastic bags to line our kitchen food scrap containers. This has made periodically emptying containers into carts relatively mess-free, and we have had the comforting belief that the plastic would safely decompose in the commercial composting process. Turns out this is an illusion. Plastic is plastic, and these bags while they do break down, are not breaking down into organic material, they are just changing from liners into micro-plastics. Not good. Not good at all.

So no more plastic liners! What are the alternatives? Well, we can simply do without and let our food scrap containers become slops buckets that we periodically empty directly into a large paper bag to go into our carts, or—if they’re lined with a yard waste bag—we can dump them directly into our carts. Alternatively, we can find an acceptable truly compostable liner. Kraft paper bags fit the bill if they are unlined. The City provides online links to a couple of acceptable candidates. The drawback is that they must be bought in bulk, so a group purchase would make the best sense.

Here are the links from the City: (to copy & paste)

<https://www.dkhardware.com/bag-25-squat-50bw-narrow-base-kraft-sq50np5c25hd-product-594227.html>

and [https://www.webstaurantstore.com/choice-10-x-5-x-13-natural-kraft-paper-shopping-bag-with-handles-case/433BR10513C.html?](https://www.webstaurantstore.com/choice-10-x-5-x-13-natural-kraft-paper-shopping-bag-with-handles-case/433BR10513C.html?gclid=CjwKCAiAjrArBhAWEiwA2qWdCAuVCckjgG7NxT1JDQUgLOKg6LxSG1cV9mYlj80g-s40rLrbxtfuOxoCJLwQAvD_BwE)

[gclid=CjwKCAiAjrArBhAWEiwA2qWdCAuVCckjgG7NxT1JDQUgLOKg6LxSG1cV9mYlj80g-s40rLrbxtfuOxoCJLwQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.webstaurantstore.com/choice-10-x-5-x-13-natural-kraft-paper-shopping-bag-with-handles-case/433BR10513C.html?gclid=CjwKCAiAjrArBhAWEiwA2qWdCAuVCckjgG7NxT1JDQUgLOKg6LxSG1cV9mYlj80g-s40rLrbxtfuOxoCJLwQAvD_BwE)

## Winter Food Scrap Composting

The City of Ann Arbor regular seasonal curbside composting pickups concluded Dec. 15, 2023

Compost cart pickups will take place the weeks of Jan. 8, Feb. 5, and March 4, 2024.

Please keep the following guidance in mind to help prevent material from freezing to carts:

Drain as much liquid as possible from food scraps.

Place an opened paper yard-waste bag inside the compost cart to hold the food scraps or yard material.

Put pieces of flattened cardboard (one–two large pizza boxes are perfect) at the bottom of the compost cart before adding produce. This buffer at the bottom of the cart allows the materials to slide out more easily and not freeze to the cart.

To keep the compost cart from getting messy, wrap drippy, wet items (e.g., coffee grounds, melon rinds) in one–two sheets of compostable paper towels before putting into the compost cart.

If material is frozen to the cart when the city attempts service, it won't be serviced again until the following month. Use bungee cords to thwart clever raccoons; remember to remove them at the curb.

Rinse out carts, if temperatures allow, with non-toxic soap and water and empty onto your grass or gravel, never down the storm drain.

Residents who do not have a compost cart can obtain one for free by contacting the city customer service center at 734.794.6320 or [customerservice@a2gov.org](mailto:customerservice@a2gov.org).

For more information on this program, visit [www.a2gov.org/wintercompost](http://www.a2gov.org/wintercompost).



## For Laughs



## Coloring Fun



## We Are Celebrating Our Eightieth Year

Note: Eighty years ago next month, the first tenants began moving into what was to become Pittsfield Village, still very much under construction at that point. In commemoration of this anniversary, we are reprinting the following article which has hung for a number of years on the wall of the Village Community Building just opposite the front entry door.

We do not have information about the author, date, or original place of publication. Internal evidence makes clear that it came out in 1982 or 1983 when the Village was still a thriving rental community and much in demand by young families, graduate students, retirees, and others. The author pays special tribute to Charles Noble, visionary designer who laid out our beautiful community as homes clustered around spacious grassy park-like courtyards, shared common spaces that encouraged neighborly interaction. Each apartment, though part of a larger building, was designed to feel like a separate private home, and renters were encouraged to decorate and make them their own. We can see this vision and its legacy in full force still as we gaze around our modern condo version of Noble's "Village in the City." –David Brassfield

Mike Wytychak (wytychaksupportA@gmail.com) went to the trouble of transcribing the article and has provided this note: A friend told me about an article in the Association's Office that describes the Village. One day I read the life-size article and was impressed. I volunteered to type it up so that more people could enjoy it. I hope you find it as worthwhile as I did.

[If any reader has information about the author and original place of publication, please contact the Office. We want to give credit where it is due.]



### A VILLAGE IN THE CITY

There is a club in town with a vast and varied membership. Its passwords are bracketed dates. "Our years in the village were '53 to '56," someone will say. Then another comes back with "For us it was '64 to '70," and more chime in, calling out dates like alumni identifying their graduation classes. They jump with surprise and let out yips of pleasure as they find people with the same golden memory of their shared experience. They tell anecdotes that effectively shut out nonmembers of the "club."

"Remember that Malcolm Stamper? The guy who used to mow a big block M into his lawn. He's just been made president of Boeing."

"Remember the doctor whose father-in-law bought him a hospital when he finished up his residency?"

They are talking about Pittsfield Village, the thirty-eight-year-old, four-hundred-and-twenty-two-unit rental housing project at the east end of the city. Since the time tenants first started to move into it in the mid-forties, Pittsfield Village has had characteristics that go beyond mere housing amenities. Partly for historical reasons, and most importantly because of the sensitive planning and design a brilliant architect lavished on it, Pittsfield Village was instantly loved by everyone lucky enough to live there. "Getting into the Village" was the number-one hope of housing-starved young Ann Arborites of the immediate post-war period and of the married veterans arriving during those years to pursue their educations under the GI Bill of Rights.

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Pittsfield Village is the creation of Charles Noble, a respected architect who lived in Ann Arbor with his family for many years. Trained at the Beaux Arts in Paris and winner of the Prix de Rome, he joined Albert Kahn Associates of Detroit as an associate designer, later rising to the position of chief designer.

As a young man fresh from having passed his AIA exams, he worked for the leading architectural firm of the day, Kim, Mead, and White in New York. He designed the Piping Rock Club on Long Island's North Shore. After brief connections with two other firms, Noble joined Albert Kahn Associates in Detroit as an associate designer in the early 1920's, then moved quickly to the position of chief designer. As such, he designed the ornate U-M Clements Library.

Noble left Kahn in 1927 to accept two large commissions for apartments in Detroit. He prospered for a while, and then like many other Detroiters during the depression, he went bankrupt. Taking a job as Architectural Director of State Public Works Administration, he designed Strawberry Hospital in Northern Michigan, and then once again formed the firm of Charles Nobel Architect, Inc., which went on to design New Grace Hospital in Detroit and Ypsilanti State Hospital. Then, joining forces with Ann Arbor banker Earl Cress, he entered the single-family housing development field, first with houses on Birk Ave, off Pauline Boulevard and later at Iroquois, a street which they created. The Pittsfield Village project was headed by Noble alone, however. After Pittsfield Village was built, the first dozen or so houses of Darlington subdivision to the immediate east went up before Noble's generosity and soft-hearted businesses practices brought him down again. Pittsfield Village, though, was always a success. In spite of bargain rents, it has always repaid its owners well. Today the rents there are decidedly competitive, though perhaps no longer the steal they were in the early years.

The facts of Charles Noble's life illustrate his flexibility and broad capabilities, but they don't begin to hint at the charm or humanity of this man, whom most people adored. On top of everything else, he was a fantastic cook, an unstinting host, and the kind of guest whose witty and urbane presence made the reputation of many an Ann Arbor hostess.

During the thirties, Noble commuted to Detroit, each day passing the large tract of vacant land that lay between Washtenaw Avenue and Packard Road at the top of the Washtenaw hill, midway between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. The area in completely open country was part of Pittsfield Township. On his drives to work, Noble fiddled with an idea that was revolutionary for its time. He envisioned a complete self-contained, small rural town in which all the housing units would be rented at low to moderate rates. In 1940, Noble bought the land from farmers Oscar and Otto Haab and forged a group to put the plan into effect, keeping control of the corporation himself.

In the early forties Washtenaw was still a two-lane road. There was no Frank's, no Arborland, no business of any sort near the village site until you got to Tom Bali's greenhouse at the bottom of the hill, where the Crystal House Motel now stands. After that, there was nothing but the County Farm all the way to the Tuomy Hills gas station. Pittsfield Village had its own water tower, its own fire engine, and a school built by the developers. Wallace Frost, Noble's good friend and a well-known architect in his own right, designed the school and the building at Washtenaw and Pittsfield Boulevard that housed a few necessary businesses. Both are much altered now. (Frost was the architect for two of Ann Arbor's most beautiful residences—the Buhrman house off Geddes near Arlington and the Eugene Powers' home in Barton Hills.) In the business block were the rental office, Dick Coleman's Pittsfield Market with its superior meats, and All Coudron's Pittsfield Pharmacy. Nearby, in regular apartment units, were the office suites of dentist Bill Burd, Richard Aiken's beauty salon, and Leo Lirette's barber shop. (Leo favored a rakish, slanting cut for trimming little boys' bangs. You could spot a Pittsfield kid anywhere.) Before long the State Savings Bank (now National Bank and Trust) opened one of the first bank branches in this area, across from the rental office.

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In the fifties it was entirely possible for the women and children of a family in Pittsfield Village to spend weeks on end without ever leaving the Village.

Charles Noble was a man of sophisticated taste and generous spirit, and he was lavish in apportioning the sixty-three acres on which Pittsfield Village stands. He ranged the two- to six-unit buildings around enormous grass courts, some of them several acres in area. A typical developer of such a tract today would plan on a population density four times that of Pittsfield Village.

The post-war housing shortage in Ann Arbor was extremely severe, and a development of cracker box structures laid out foursquare would have filled up with tenants just as quickly. Yet Noble designed multi-level apartments that exhibited his unusual sensitivity to the principles of proportion. The ground floor rooms had lofty ceilings which lent them a feeling of dignity. Very large windows, mullioned because Noble hated the blank look of "picture windows" when seen from the outside, flooded the ground-level rooms with sunshine during the winter. Deep overhangs shaded them in the summer when the sun was high. In contrast to developers who skimp on landscaping, Noble planted thousands of shade trees, flowering trees and shrubs, and vast lawns. He curved the streets of the Village, not to make them look quaint, but to follow the groupings of buildings which were angled in such a way as to avoid point-blank views from one apartment into another. For the same reason the windows of opposing facades are offset from one another.

Charles Noble and his wife Jean, a prominent social worker, liked the place enough to move in themselves in the fifties. At their own expense they installed a fireplace, a bay window, and a screened porch, and they finished the basement. The apartment remains as they remodeled it at 3526 Edgewood, renting for a little more than the standard two-bedroom unit.

Many of the early tenants who made it to the top of Pittsfield Village's six-to-eight-month waiting list moved over from Willow Village in Superior Township. Willow Village was the knocked-together housing that had sprung up almost overnight to accommodate workers at the Willow run bomber plant. It was never intended for permanent occupancy. Young families were so desperate for housing that they were glad to find vacancies there, even though the walls were so thin they could hear a baby nursing in the apartment next door. On cold nights they lay wakeful, worried that the Dixie No-Smoke space heaters would blast that whistle through the walls and burn the place down around them.

Nob Hill Apartments took a little of the housing shortage pressure off when it opened in 1952, but only a few units were made available to families with children. University Terrace Apartments past the U. Hospital were small; most tenants there started looking for an alternative when the first baby came. Managers of many older apartment complexes, aghast at the unbridled breeding of post-war young adults, simply said "No Children Allowed." Pittsfield Village, by contrast, accepted children. It gloried in children. It was planned with children in mind.

The apartment hunters of the late forties and fifties were expert at waiting. They had waited for the war to end and were now waiting to start earning a living while they continued their educations. They waited to catch up on career timetables disrupted by the war. They waited for the day when they could move into a house of their own. The lucky ones who got into Pittsfield Village found the next best thing. Each apartment felt like a real little house, with a regular front door and a back door, and upstairs and a downstairs, and a dry, clean basement with a finished floor where the kids could play. (Many families with four and five children turned the basement into a kids' dormitory, although it was against code to do so.)

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The proportions of the rooms set off tenants' creative decorating impulses, and most tenants repainted before they moved in, choosing colors of fifties chic—dark brown, dark green, and deep blue with chalk-white trim. They spent a lot of time applying paste wax to the beautiful oak floors and then buffing them with rented Regina floor-polishing machines. East Ann Arbor Hardware clerks were baffled by the quantities of wax they sold. "What do you girls over in Pittsfield do with the stuff?" they wanted to know. "Do you eat it?"

The Village's ambiance encouraged residents to treat their apartments like their own homes. Its intensely domestic mood led tenants to beautify their yards with elaborate flower gardens and even small backyard patios at their own expense. Management mowed those many acres of grass but born grass lovers spread sheep manure on their lawns, hand weeded them, and mowed them themselves, after issuing strict orders to the Village mowers to leave their lawns alone. Management plowed a large plat for tenants to grow vegetables in. It provided swing sets and picnic tables and plenty of sand boxes for every court. Once in a while a tenant would outclass his neighbors by replacing Management sand with fine, imported, snow-white sand from Hudson's in Detroit. Against the background of Charles Noble's beautifully realized concept, tenants "played house."

All kinds of people lived in the Village, beginning and mid-level corporate executives, law students, residents in various branches of medicine, people who owned small businesses, a few people in the building trades, and a few blue-collar workers. There were just enough retirees to remind people that not everyone in the world was between the ages of twenty and thirty-five. Here and there you could find a cantankerous neighbor or an intriguing eccentric. It was a yeasty social mix.

(Racially, however, it was white. Like almost every planned development of the day, Pittsfield Village used a standard lease form stating the project was limited to members of the Caucasian race.)

It seems incredible that only thirty years ago our society and its regional styles were as yet so unhomogenized that a young Pittsfield resident in medicine from California would eye a colleague from the East dressed in the lean J. Press-Brooks Brothers style and ask, "Why does that guy buy all his clothes too small for him?" The easterner, for his part, wondered if all Californians "dressed like Bing Crosby."

Many families in the Village felt poor during those early days as they scraped along on incomes derived from GI Bill benefits and some part-time work. But no one was badly off in any real sense. The Village management has always screened applicants closely to determine their ability to pay the rent. In cases where there seemed to be a problem, they required that leases be countersigned. They do so today. The result was that some residents who were technically poor nevertheless clearly had the habit of wealth. It showed in the way they dressed, in the way they furnished their apartments, and in the kinds of cars they drove. What else could you say when a medical school family moved in and the young wife summarily ordered the removal of the set tubs in the basement. "I always send the wash out," she explained. Then she called in a decorator and had him turn the basement into a recreation room. In spite of the visible differences in income levels among tenants, there was seldom a spirit of competition between them. People merely marveled at one another's lifestyles. People-watching in the Village always provided the fascination of living soap opera. For years neighbors watched the progress of a shaky marriage by keeping an eye on a certain couple's roof. When the husband moved out, he took the television aerial with him. When he moved back in, he put it up again. One learned in the Village not to assume one's own concerns were shared by others.

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A resident with a lively interest in politics volunteered to canvass the Village in 1952 and asked a female respondent about her husband's party leanings. "I really don't know," was the reply. "It's just never come up." Everyone collected "young bride" stories, too. The most celebrated of these was the one about the rich young Pittsfield bride who wept when she burned the dinner. "You have to understand, it's especially hard for me," she sobbed. "I've never even seen raw food before."

One particular tenant outclasses all the rest. Prince Andrei Lobonov-Rostovsky, a professor of history at the University, had been a member of the Imperial Guard in Russia before he made good his escape during the Revolution. The Lobonov family of which he was a part could be traced in an unbroken line back to the ninth century. To him, the Romanoffs were mere upstarts and social climbers. A loveable, brilliant, and versatile man, Prince Lobonov-Rostovsky was also a notable eccentric. Deeply interested in the spirit world, he held seances right there in his Pittsfield apartment, where occasionally, for variety, he also performed feats of levitation or sat down at the piano and tossed off a weighty number with professional skill and aplomb.

The buoyant optimism of people picking up their lives again after the delays of the war had imposed on them accounts for some of Pittsfield Village's spirit in its early years, but it doesn't account for the fact that that spirit persisted well into the sixties. To some extent it is still present today. The Village's physical characteristics still encourage house pride and neighborliness, but changes in our society in recent years are clearly reflected there, too. Whereas almost every unit once housed a married couple, plenty of less formally linked couples live there now, along with many singles. Once there were two and a half children per apartment, but today the figure is closer to half a child per unit. In the old days, one car was parked in front of each address; now there are more often two parked there plus, in some cases, a boat. Fifteen years ago on a walk through the Village during the day, you saw hundreds of children driving their sidewalk toys up and down along the streets. Their mothers lazily took in the sun or gathered to gossip while keeping an eye on their offspring. Today almost all the women who live in the Village work. "I sometimes think only doctors' wives stay home with their kids anymore," an older resident observes plaintively. Today's Village is quieter.

In all the years of its operation Pittsfield Village has had only two managers: Rex Perrin until 1965 and Robert Scott, who took over then and is still on the job today. Strong and conscientious management has always been a feature of the operation. The rental agent takes care to place tenants with sensitivity. She does not place people who work at night and must sleep during the day next door to boisterous tenants. She knows who the occasional cranky tenants are and takes care to surround them with easy-going types as best she can.

Upkeep is a high-priority concern at Pittsfield Village. New roofs went up on all units recently, and outside painting is kept up on a strict schedule. Floria Bell, whose husband, Tom Ball, Jr., headed the paint crew for many years before his death, thinks the place doesn't look quite as spiffy as it once did, and she is right. In general, though, Pittsfield bears its thirty-eight years lightly. The workmen responsible for upkeep and repair have remained on the job even longer than the two long-term managers. Carpenter Lloyd Turner, known to all generations of Pittsfield residents, still works there. Well into his eighties, Lloyd makes new bifold doors for the closets. Tony Skodak, the electrician, worked there for decades until his death not long ago. Russ Schouwenaar, the plumber everyone remembers, only recently retired after working in the Village since it was built.

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The Village still has a sixty to ninety-day waiting list, and vacancies never exceed three-tenths of one percent. Those few are accounted for by the normal turnover time between tenants, during which the apartments are completely repainted inside from the basement up. Old-timers will be pleased to learn that the stoves now have oven controls on them, frost-free refrigerators have replaced the originals, bathrooms are gradually being modernized to eliminate those old war-time plastic tiles that kept falling off. There are still no dishwashers or garbage disposals, but judging from the continuing demand for Village apartments, many people consider this a minor matter.

"We have wonderful tenants," manager Robert Scott reports. "We return 95% of all security money. People really take good care of their places. Most of them leave here to go to homes of their own. They are beautiful payers! Only occasionally someone has a little temporary difficulty coming up with the rent. In those cases we work out a plan with them to tide them over."

Rents have, of course, risen. The two bedroom inside unit that cost \$63 in 1950 went up to \$117 by 1966. It now rents for \$295. Tenants pay for their own heat. The original furnaces, with their cast-iron fireboxes that were all converted from coal to gas by the fifties, still work just fine.

"The kinds of people who live here haven't changed much over the years," Scott says. "We have graduate students, hospital personnel, medical and dental students, retirees, and a few blue collar workers. One problem we have is new. We have to ask that couples who move in both sign the lease whether they are married or not. That's because of the higher probability today that they'll split up while they are here. One of the continuing nuisances we face is the changing of the locks on the apartments when these break-ups occur under less than friendly circumstances."

The Village is presently owned by the Semmler family of Detroit. It has changed hands several times since it was built, but it doesn't show the tell-tale signs of neglect often seen on property used in the depreciation game. Once or twice a new owner-group has been tempted to make major changes. There has been talk of turning the apartments into condominiums, which would alter the character of the Village population drastically. Tenants who lived there have always been interested in a two-to-four year stay, and few of them have been in a position as yet to buy any property at all. The Village's low population density has stimulated some discussion along the line of putting up high rises at one end and giving over part of each court to off-street parking, both horrifying ideas to people who love the place. So far nothing has come of these plans. Pittsfield Village will probably be around in its present form for a while yet.

A bulletin board in the rental office is crowded with notes from satisfied tenants who take the trouble to thank Pittsfield's management for its part in making their stay there a pleasant one.



On the wall in the office is an architect's drawing showing a view looking south on Pittsfield Boulevard. It is signed "Charles Noble, architect." He deserves a lot of credit too.



## Spec of the Month

# Outdoor Storage Containers

*This series of articles is intended to help co-owners understand what additions and improvements to our townhouses need approval, why, and how to proceed. Each specification is easily found on the [pittsfieldvillage.com](http://pittsfieldvillage.com) website. Take a look before spending your time and money.*

**Not every condo community allows outdoor storage containers.** Every community like ours has rules about keeping outside areas looking tidy. (Sorry about sounding like your grandma, but that mindset is probably a good guide here). Many communities simply say, “Store it inside.” As in Period. No outdoor storage.

**Why Pittsfield Village allows outdoor storage.** Partly because we have no garages and small basements, there is general agreement that allowing some enclosed outdoor storage is a good idea. Some people still prefer to keep items typically used outside—gardening tools and other summer items such as chair cushions and decorations—inside their homes to prolong their useful life and to avoid the upkeep of outdoor storage units. And there are also bicycles. (More on that to follow).

**What it is NOT for.** It is important to be aware that the basic purpose for these containers is **not** to store excess possessions used inside your home like clothing, furniture, and general household goods. We all live in essentially the same size home, so we all understand the struggle is real, but we knew these homes are small before we decided to move in. No surprise there.

**What’s allowed.** The current container specification takes the (small) scale of our homes into consideration. While it does not specifically limit the size, the height and location are limited, so many commercially available containers are too large to be approved. The full specification is here, [Exterior Storage Unit Spec.pdf \(pittsfieldvillage.com\)](http://pittsfieldvillage.com). Briefly, it says.

- Containers must be approved by the Maintenance & Modification Committee, and any outdoor storage not approved and not in compliance must be brought into compliance or removed.
- The request for approval must include a photo and a drawing showing the proposed location.
- Height is limited to the height of the deck railing, whether placed on the ground next to the deck or on the deck, EXCEPT that tall containers may be placed on the deck just in front of the building wall.
- No windows or mechanical equipment can be covered/obstructed.
- Earth tone colors and non-decaying material is required.
- Containers placed on the ground must be on pavers/blocks to be kept level.
- The co-owner must empty and move the container if required for maintenance projects.

**Bicycles.** Some people have containers specifically for storing one or more bikes. Such containers are available, but there are few that work well, and bicycles may be stored on front porches when in active use.

**SHOULD THIS SPECIFICATION BE CHANGED?** A recent committee survey of our property found quite a few storage containers that do not meet our current specification. The single biggest problem is height. Usually, that means the container is very large, which can block the view from adjacent homes and often looks quite out of scale with our homes. Other common issues are improper placement and poor condition.

The Maintenance & Modification Committee has received at least one request to allow a non-conforming container to remain. While specifications are often researched and written by M&M Committee members, they are approved by the Board of Directors and the Committee has no ability to give approval for requests that do not comply. The Committee can, however, review a specification and consider proposing changes which the Board could adopt. So, we are going to research what other communities do, look ourselves at what containers are on our grounds, and consider whether to propose changes.

Current thoughts for possible updates to the specification include:

- Short (seat height) deck boxes that fit behind the front door when fully opened may be placed on front porches. (These can be useful for more secure package delivery).
- Applications must also list the container dimensions.
- Each unit is limited to one rear storage container and one front porch container.
- Containers must be maintained to be visually attractive, e.g. kept level, clean of algae growth, in good repair, etc.
- Pavers or blocks used to keep containers level on the ground may be no more than 4" in height.
- Storage containers placed on or next to decks without railings may be up to \_\_?\_\_ inches above grade.

While there is currently no plan to include an increase in the allowed height of containers, we would like to hear from anyone who has constructive comments about any part of the specification. Feel free to ask questions, too, as that will help us know whether we need to make the current language clearer. Comments can range from containers that you like (or at least don't mind looking at), options we may not have considered, and how another community you are familiar with handles this. Please email comments to [lisalemble@gmail.com](mailto:lisalemble@gmail.com) or [office@pittsfieldVillage.com](mailto:office@pittsfieldVillage.com). Thank you!

*--Lisa Lemble, Chair, Maintenance and Modification Committee*

## Board Beat: Holidays Hiatus

Submitted by David Brassfield, Member of the Board



Members of the Board and of our Committees are all volunteers, and throughout the year they do a lot of work on our behalf. So when the Holidays roll around, we try to give them a break if we can, and if possible, meetings for November and December are combined into one. I reported on both the December 6 Board of Directors Meeting and the December 5 Maintenance and Modification Meeting in our December Newsletter. Since then just a few matters of significance have come up.

### *Board and Committee Doings (or Not)*

**The Board:** Outside of its regular monthly meetings, business inevitably arises that requires Board action, generally via email. During December most of this business was of a confidential nature involving disputes between residents, standards violations, contract negotiations, and the like. The exception was an urgent request to replace failed water service lines for two units on Pittsfield. This is pricey work, to the tune of almost \$14,000. Fortunately, although the Village pays the contractor, we are then reimbursed by the City for the full amount of the expenses incurred. The Board gave the contractor permission to move full steam ahead.

**Our Committees:** **The Maintenance and Modification Committee** met at its usual time, the first Tuesday of this month. On the agenda was an elaborate proposal for a kitchen remodel, which after much discussion was approved, to the great delight of all concerned. Another request was more routine, seeking permission to carry out a number of corrective measures to address substandard work by a prior owner, including some dangerous electrical arrangements. It was promptly approved. The M & M Committee's final item of business was a continuing discussion of our standards and specifications for Outside Storage Units. The matter has arisen as Village walk-throughs have revealed quite a few units that are out of compliance. Members of the committee felt that a full review of the issue is in order and in the next couple of months will work on drafting an updated specification for consideration by the Board. Residents will be encouraged to weigh in. As a first step, Lisa Lemble has written up a "Spec of the Month" article for inclusion in this issue. It outlines the issues, presents a number of possible improvements to our standards, and invites comment.

**The Landscape Committee** did not meet in December, but will be back at it next week on Tuesday, January 16.

**Go-Doc Committee** members will reconvene at the end of this month, on the 29th, having taken a break in December.

**Next Board Meeting:** As of this month, the Board will be moving its regular meetings from the third to the fourth Wednesday of each month. For January that will be the 24th at 6:00 pm, in person at the Village Office or remotely online. Login information will be provided via email before the meeting. All Village residents are welcome to attend.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
2023-2024**

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[irenehayes03@yahoo.com](mailto:irenehayes03@yahoo.com)



# January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 NYD OFFICE CLOSED	2 M&M Committee Meeting 6pm	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 MLK DAY OFFICE CLOSED	16 Landscape Committee Meeting 6pm	17	18	19	20
21 Sustainability 2pm	22	23	24 BOD Meeting 6pm open forum	25	26	27
28	29 Go-Doc Meeting	30	31			