

CAI - LI Chapter News

Serving Long Island, New York

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Issue No. 55 – Winter 2022

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BEECHWOOD HOMES IS PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNITY POWER ON LONG ISLAND AND YOUR COMMUNITY SHOULD TOO

By Jason Kaplan, COO - PowerMarket



Beechwood Homes is signed up for one of **Long Island's newest and most innovative cleaner energy initiatives:**

[Community Power Long Island](#). Every month, Beechwood will realize energy cost savings without ever investing a dollar in capital improvements, or installing any equipment on-site, or changing how energy is supplied or delivered to their communities. **How are they doing it?** Through community power.

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Continued from Page 1

small businesses to realize the benefits of cleaner energy, without any roof-top installation or long-term commitments that come with on-site solar. Renters, coop/condo owners, HOAs, business owners, and even religious institutions can all join a community power project located elsewhere on Long Island and be guaranteed to save every month on their PSEGLI expenses. The value proposition is especially beneficial for HOAs and lifestyle communities across Long Island, where the HOA is an account holder of multiple PSEGLI accounts and can save thousands each year without any investment or risk.

How it works: When you enroll, each PSEGLI utility account will receive a share of a larger power project, based on the historic annual energy used. Each month as the project produces energy and injects it directly into the grid, the energy associated with your share is applied to each utility account by PSEGLI, off-setting the energy usage in that month (just like if you actually had solar installed at that meter). Then you pay for the value of the energy applied to your bill at a guaranteed 10% discount, saving you money and directly supporting a local, cleaner energy project. There is no cost to join, fee or penalty to terminate, or long-term commitments.

At first impression, many think this value proposition is too good to be true, but the community power program has been around for over 5 years in NYS, and has saved utility customers hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. This is a program championed by the [New York State Research and Development Authority](#) and showcased by [PSEGLI](#) on its website. Recently, there has been more construction of these community power/solar projects on Long Island and lifestyle community developers, like Beechwood Homes, have already seen its benefits.

“We have been an early adopter of community solar and power

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programs on Long Island, working with PowerMarket over the past two years,” said Steven Dubb, owner of Beechwood Homes “When they approached us to add our HOA and common area accounts to the Community Power LI program, it was a no brainer for us. We are committed to a more sustainable Long Island, and to also save on our monthly energy expenses, it is a true win-win.”

Continued on Page 5



Photo credit: Anthony Pasini / EmPower Solar - The Selden Community Solar Project



Photo credit: Julian Bracero / EmPower Solar - The Grumman Community Solar Project

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CAI - LONG ISLAND NEWSLETTER

The CAI - Long Island Newsletter is published quarterly by the Long Island Chapter of Community Associations Institute (CAI-LI) and is distributed to its members and is available on the Chapter website (www.cai-li.org). This publication provides members of CAI with letters from the Chapter President, informative articles written by industry professionals and service providers, updates on current legislation, and business advertising. The Chapter strives to provide our members with timely information and tools needed to keep them informed on community association issues.

The Newsletter Committee is always looking for new articles to publish. Articles should be educational, non-promotional in nature, and have a suggested word count between 500 and 1,500 words. CAI-LI retains the right to edit articles to conform to content and space requirements.

If you are interested in submitting an article for possible inclusion, please contact Christine M. Majid, Chapter Executive Director, at info@cai-li.org.

Quarterly Deadlines

Winter Issue - January 31

Summer Issue - July 31

Spring Issue - April 30

Autumn Issue - October 31

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Continued from Page 3

Beechwood Homes is also sharing these programs with their residents as they appreciate many of them want to support cleaner energy, but can't install solar on their roofs. By offering this program to their residents, they are creating an accretive value and perk of living in their community. Along with Beechwood Homes, other community developers are doing the same, many initiated by the residents themselves that have already joined.

Where historically seeing the benefits from cleaner energy required taking on certain costs and risks, installing equipment on site and disrupting ongoing operations, programs like Community Power Long Island and other community solar projects eliminate them. HOAs, property managers, and lifestyle community developers should look to participate in these programs to create value for themselves and their residents. ■

Jason Kaplan is a Plainview resident and COO of PowerMarket, manager of the Community Power LI program, among other community

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power and solar projects across NYS. If you have any questions or want to learn more about this topic, feel free to contact Jason at jason.kaplan@powermarket.io.



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Long Island Chapter Calendar of Events

In light of the continued ever-changing health crisis, the Board is continuing to roll out a series of dates, however, some events may convert to a webinar platform. As the schedule is formalized, we will send out updates via email so you may mark your calendar and register.

*Thursday, February 24th - 6:00 p.m.
Chapter Educational Webinar via Zoom
"Executive Board Instruction"*

*Thursday, March 24th - 6:00 p.m.
Chapter Educational Program - Venue TBD
or Hosted via Zoom if Needed
"Roofing Scenarios and the Importance
of Insurance Certificates"*

*Saturday, April 23rd - 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Board Leadership Development Workshop
for Community Association Board Members
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*To REGISTER or to READ MORE,
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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

By MELISSA SCHLACTUS, ESQ. - TAYLOR, ELDRIDGE, & ENDRES, P.C. AND CAI - LI CHAPTER PRESIDENT 2022



It is my honor to serve as CAI Long Island’s President for 2022. For those who don’t know me, I am an attorney at Taylor, Eldridge & Endres, P.C., a law firm representing condominiums, co-ops, and homeowners associations across Long Island. Since I joined the firm, I have become increasingly involved with this organization. I began by attending the monthly meetings

and the annual Trade Show. Next, I joined the Trade Show Committee and worked on organizing the event for several years. I then decided to get further involved with CAI Long Island and have been on the Board of Directors for the last four years. I also serve on the New York Legislative Action Committee as a delegate from our Long Island Chapter.

As we begin the new year, and the third year of the pandemic, CAI Long Island continues to navigate these difficult times. We were able to hold two spectacular in-person events last year: our summer social at Land’s End and our holiday party at Verona R i s t o r a n t e . However, as the number of Covid cases remains high, we are returning to virtual meetings for the time being for the health and safety of our membership.

Since we know how everyone is suffering from Zoom fatigue, we are making an effort to make our virtual events m o r e interactive. Our first event of the year will address B o a r d member roles and responsibilities with breakout sessions for

Presidents/Vice Presidents, Secretaries, and Treasurers. It is our hope that the ability to meet and discuss in small group settings will help fill the void of not being able to meet in person.

We will continue to watch the numbers and hope to return to in person programming later this year. Of course, our biggest hope for 2022 is that we will be able to hold our annual Trade Show this year. We are already beginning to plan our biggest event of the year and will provide more details as they become available. If you are interested in helping us to organize the event, please consider joining the Trade Show Committee. You may contact our Chapter Executive Director, Christine Majid, at info@cai-li.org for more details.

On behalf of the entire Board of CAI Long Island, I would like to thank our sponsors for continuing to support the organization. Their support means so much and allows us to continue to provide quality programming and networking opportunities to our membership. I would also like to thank our immediate past president, Nancy Fox, for a very successful 2021, and our Chapter Executive Director, Christine Majid, who keeps this organization running smoothly.

Thank you, Melissa ■

You may reach Melissa at melissa@taylor-eldridge.com.

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10 FIRE HAZARDS TO AVOID IN YOUR HOME AND COMMUNITY

By Dana Einsidler - Einsidler Management, Inc.



Keep your co-op, condo, or HOA clear of fire hazards by avoiding these conditions and situations in your home, amenities, and common areas.

1. An Unattended Kitchen - Do not leave stoves or kitchen areas unattended while cooking or preparing food using a heat source.

2. Dryer Lint - Always check for dryer lint prior to adding a

load of laundry into the dryer. Additionally, if you have in-unit or in-home laundry units, make sure your dryer vent is cleaned a few times a year, as the accumulation of lint can become a fire hazard in your home.

3. Faulty Electronics and Appliances - Discard electronics with faulty or frayed wires. Additionally, consider having antiques or large appliances rewired if you do not wish to replace them with more modern or new versions. While they can be valuable, nostalgic, or sentimental, they can be hazardous due to their creation using outdated fire codes.

When purchasing electronics or appliances, check them for a "UL" seal, which will ensure the electronics were tested for safety purposes. Also, pay attention when electronics such as laptops, computers, etc. overheat, and give them time to cool down.

4. Heat Sources and Open Flames - Avoid placing flammable materials (i.e.- blankets, clothing, furniture) near heat sources such as vents, radiators, fireplaces, candles, space heaters (prohibited in many communities because they are fire hazards), etc. If objects are too close, they can overheat, thus creating smoke and/or flames. Additionally, swap out flame-lit candles for battery-lit candles. While everyone enjoys the scented aroma of candles, they can be dangerous if left unattended or near an object that can catch fire.

5. Loose Outlet Plates - Alert management of any loose outlet plates where prongs are not snugly fitting (or hire an electrician, depending on your responsibilities as a homeowner or shareholder. Check your governing documents to get a clear idea of what is management's responsibility vs. the homeowner or shareholder's responsibility).

6. Overloaded Extension Cords - Do not overload extension cords with high voltage items.



7. Smoking - Smoking is prohibited in many communities. However, in some cases, there may be a designated outdoor smoking area. Make sure to put out any cigarettes in their entirety so that they cannot catch any nearby shrubs or objects on fire.

8. Improper Storage of Materials - Do not store flammable materials in the garage or storage areas (many communities prohibit any storage of flammable objects). For example, propane tanks should not be stored indoors, as vapors can become hazardous. Make sure that the valve is always closed to prevent leaks, and do not store tanks in direct sunlight. Keep tanks away from objects that could potentially catch on fire in the event of a leak.

9. Clutter - Keep your home clear of excess clutter. In extreme cases, it can contribute to fire hazards and make it difficult to evacuate (or have first-responders enter) in the event of a fire.

10. Open Doors in Common Areas - Doors in common areas need to remain closed in the event of a fire. In the event of a fire, this helps slow the spread of fire. These doors include hallway doors, doors to stairwells, etc. In the event of a fire, remember to close doors behind you to slow the spread of smoke and/or flames.

Conclusion - Fire safety is critical when you are a homeowner, shareholder, or resident because it can prevent loss of property, valuables, or even life. Avoid these hazardous conditions to help prevent a fire from starting (or spreading) in your home or community. ■

For additional fire hazards to avoid, read the full article at: <https://www.einsidler.com/fire-hazards/>

Questions regarding this article? Please reach out to Dana via email at dana@einsidler.com or call her office at #631.961.1092.

VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETINGS

By JENNINE B. CULLEN, ESQ. - TAYLOR, ELDRIDGE, & ENDRES, P.C.



Virtual annual meetings are now a permanent fixture in NY. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Community Boards for Co-ops and Homeowners' Associations relied heavily on virtual platforms to stay connected, informed and conduct their business. Now, Governor Hochul has signed into law a bill, pursuant to a temporary Executive Order originally set to expire on December 31, 2021, that

eliminates the requirement of in-person meetings in a physical location.

The new law, which amends the Business Corporation Law and the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, allows members "to participate in in-person meetings via electronic communications, or for meetings of members to take place solely via electronic communications, at the discretion of the board of directors." This allows Boards to conduct meetings from anywhere, without having to physically assemble in one



common place.

Of course, Boards will have to make sure that safeguards are in place to verify the identification of members and that there is a proper mechanism to record votes. Boards also must provide an opportunity for members to ask questions and discuss issues on the virtual platform.

The flexibility to utilize virtual platforms to conduct meetings

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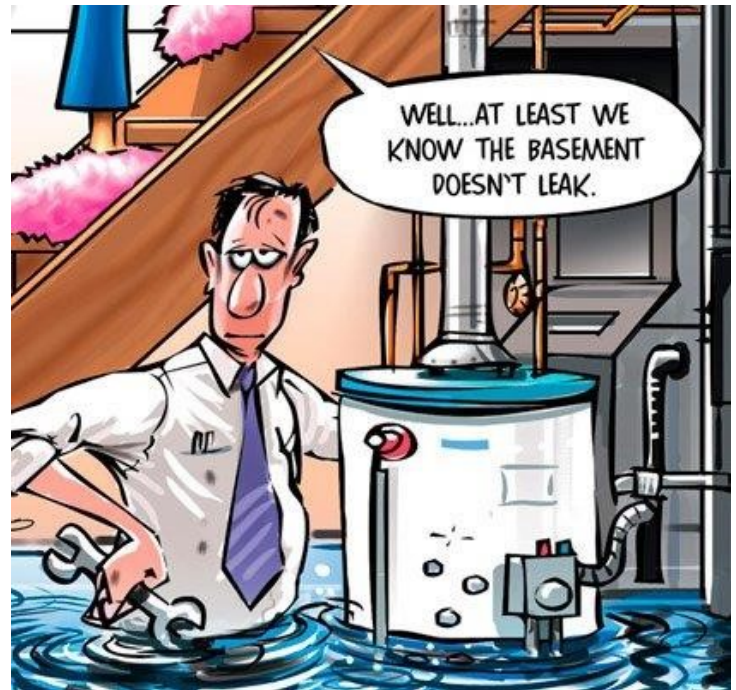
WATER HEATER LEAKS COMMON, COSTLY AND CONCERNING FOR CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATIONS

By STEVEN FIELDING - AQUAGUARD LLC



The governing boards of condominium and homeowners associations worry about many things. Reserves, rules enforcement, insurance costs, maintenance, pets, parking and COVID are on a long list of things that keep trustees and association managers up at night. Water heaters probably are not always on that list — but they should be. Here are a few hard – or soggy – facts:

- Water damage is one of the two leading property damage risks faced by homeowners, representing nearly one-third of all homeowner claims filed annually, exceeded only by wind and hail damage.
- One in every 50 insured homeowners files a water damage claim every year; the average claim cost is about \$7,000, adding up to more than \$2.5 billion in insured losses annually, according to the Insurance Information Institute.
- There are no statistics on how many of those claims are attributable to water heaters, but 75 percent of all water heaters will fail – usually without warning – within 12 years of their purchase. So it is probably safe to assume that a sizable percentage of those water damage claims result



from water heaters that leak or fail entirely.

It is also safe to assume that if a water heater leaks in a condominium building with attached units, the damage won't be confined to the unit in which the offending heater is located; the water and the damage will spread to adjacent units and common areas.

So multiply that average \$7,000 claim by 10 or 20 units; add the potential damage to common areas; consider the risk of mold (a byproduct of water damage), the cost of remediating it, and the potential legal liability for the association if mold sickens some residents. Insurance industry analysts report that water damage claims in excess of \$500,000 have doubled since 2015; claims exceeding \$1million have tripled in that time period.

Also consider that associations dealing with common area damage will be paying a large deductible and may be filing an insurance claim, which could increase the association's premium costs. And now, perhaps, you begin to understand why water heaters should be on that list of association concerns.

Preventing Damage

Why do water heaters fail? Age is the primary culprit. Water heaters have an average useful life of about 12 years. But the operative word here is "average." Some water heaters fail well before that 12-year mark; others perform like champs for much longer. The problem is – you can't predict when any given

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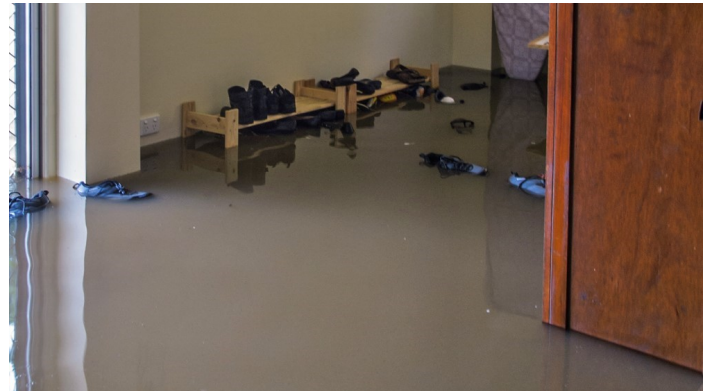
water heater is going to fail. There is no equivalent of a car's 'check engine' light to alert you to an issue you must address; you don't usually know a water heater is failing until it has dumped 80 gallons of water in your basement or your garage or your kitchen. As early warning systems go, this isn't terribly effective. Fortunately, there are some alternatives.

Automatic shut-off valves. These units typically consist of a high quality valve installed directly into the plumbing line, and moisture sensors that send a 'shut-off' signal to an electric control box. The WAGS valve my company sells works on the same general principle, but it isn't powered by electricity. We use a spring mechanism wrapped with a water soluble sensor element that is placed in a drip pan under the heater. When water hits the sensor, it weakens, releasing the high-pressure spring and shutting the heater off after no more than one inch of water has accumulated in the pan.

Water leak alarms. These units also use sensors that sound an alarm when water is detected, but owners must remember to turn the alarm on (they don't always) and someone has to be around to hear the alarm and able to act quickly, by turning off the water supply. A lot of water can leak and cause a lot of damage in a very short period of time.

Effective Maintenance

Shut-off valves and alarms can prevent damage – or reduce it – if a water heater leaks. Maintaining the heaters can go a long way toward preventing those leaks. Plumbers suggest that owners have their water heaters inspected – and drained – annually. Drainage will eliminate sediment that can build up inside a heater, reducing its effectiveness and possibly making the interior of the tank rust.



Regular inspections can also assess the condition of the temperature and pressure valve and monitor the condition of the anode rods (some units have one, others have two) that protect the tank from hard water minerals. As these rods erode over time, the protection diminishes, reducing the water heater's life and increasing the risk that it will fail prematurely. Replacing the rods when necessary can extend a water heater's life.

What HOAs Can Do

Condominium and homeowners association boards should deal with hot water heaters the same way they deal with other risks affecting the health and safety of residents or the community's property values and finances by providing information that encourages responsible behavior by owners and adopting association policies that require it. A few specific suggestions:

1. **Educate homeowners.** Explain the damage leaking water heaters can cause to individual units and common areas.
2. **Encourage owners to have their water heaters inspected** at least annually by a qualified plumber.
3. **Consider making annual inspections mandatory**, for the same reason that many associations require annual inspections of fireplaces – because poor maintenance of the equipment poses a potential risk to other residents and the entire community.
4. **Encourage – or require** owners to install automatic shut-off valves or water sensor alarms on their water heaters.
5. **Require owners to replace water heaters** older than 11 years, with an exception for those who install automatic shut-off valves. Units with these devices can operate safely until they fail.
6. **Consider making the purchase and/or installation** of shut-off valves an association expense. Leaks pose risks to other units and common

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areas — risks that owners have a shared interest in mitigating.

7. **Consult your insurance agent.** Some insurance companies require leak prevention devices on water heaters or strongly encourage them. Ask if your association's insurer is one of them. Installing shut-off valves community-wide may not reduce the association's insurance premium, although it would give your agent a strong argument for requesting a discount. But proactive risk management policies like this will improve the association's overall risk profile, which may help you secure a favorable premium rate. Preventing water heater leaks will also avoid the costly damage claims that can increase your premium and may make it more difficult to obtain the coverage the association needs. ■

About the Author: Steven Fielding is president of AQUAGUARD, LLC, which manufactures the WAGS Valve — a product he discovered as a consumer and liked so much, he bought the company that produces it. He is now on his third water heater with a WAGS valve. When the previous two heaters (operated long past their estimated useful life) failed, the valves worked perfectly, protecting his finished basement from water damage.

Questions? Please contact Stephan K. Ward-Smith, VP of Business Development, at Stephan@wagsvalve.com or at #401.419.4396.

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allows for more public participation in meetings, especially for the elderly and others who may find it difficult to attend in-person meetings. Also, more people are likely to attend and participate from the comfort of their own living rooms. This will make scheduling easier as well. Further, virtual meetings can allow for more frequent meetings, more orderly meetings, and less interruptions.

Special guests, such as attorneys and engineers will also have more accessibility to meetings and will be able to attend more frequently. Property managers are encouraged by the law, highlighting that they can now attend more than one meeting a night and still provide the same level of quality input.

It is worth noting that the law does not specifically reference condominiums and no changes were made to the Condominium Act. Some attorneys are taking the position that the new law applies to condominiums also, even without a specific legislative reference. There is a bill in the State Senate that would extend the ability to hold virtual meeting to Condominium communities, but that bill has not been made law as of this writing. ■

You may reach Jennine at jennine@taylor-eldridge.com or call her office at #631.265.5550.

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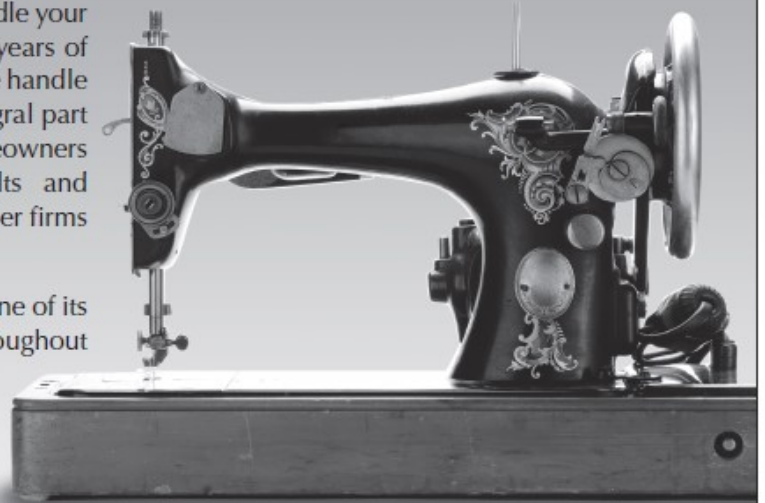
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