



# DC Cooperative Housing Coalition News

Representing the interests of the cooperative community in the District of Columbia since 1984

May – August | 2014

*Celebrating 30 years of service to the cooperative housing community*

## *Save the Date:*

### **Co-ops & loans:**

What you need to know about financing for capital projects and individual purchases

A Members-only Seminar

Saturday, September 13

9am – noon

Host: Harbour Square

The seminar will be a panel discussion with Q&A covering loans in cooperatives, both for major projects and individual purchases. Panelists include a senior representative from NCB (National Cooperative Bank), a finance expert who has served as the treasurer at a cooperative during major capital projects and a consultant whose business helps cooperatives find the best loan terms.

Detailed information about the seminar and how to RSVP was sent via e-mail and direct Postal mail to each member's representative to the Coalition.

## **New Coalition Website!**

The Coalition Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the Coalition's new web site is now up and running! Visit soon: [www.CoopsDC.org](http://www.CoopsDC.org). After serving the Coalition well for many years, technology advances made it time to update our web site. As announced in the last issue of *CHC News*, our former web master, Scott Seligman, retired in May. With his retirement, it was a reasonable time to update the web site as we transitioned to our new web support provided by ASAA ([www.asaa.net](http://www.asaa.net)). A contract was signed and over the summer, an updated web site was developed.

After seeking final member input, the new site went "live" on August 31. One of the most significant changes can be found on the Members page where you will find a map that displays the locations for each Coalition member co-op. You will also see a table with more information about each member cooperative that can be sorted based on different characteristics: Name, address, ZIP, Ward, number of units, and neighborhood. The idea of such a table was two-fold: In response to a suggestion from a Coalition member, Barbara Helmick, 2707 Adams Mill Road Cooperative (Thanks, Barbara!), and requests we have gotten from site visitors across the nation looking for co-ops based on these different criteria.

On the Members page, every Coalition member that has a web page (a free benefit for each and every member) has a thumbnail photo to the left of its name. When you click on the cooperative's name, you will be taken to their web page on our site. If a co-op with its Coalition web page also has a web site of its own, that co-op's web address will also appear and will be a hyperlink to their co-op's web site. If your cooperative is missing out on this free benefit, please read "*What?! Your Co-op Still Doesn't Have a Web Page on the Coalition's Web Site?!*" on page 2. The web page is free and it takes very little time to create.

We are very excited in working with ASAA to update and upgrade our web site to make it more informative and an enjoyable experience for the user.

Let us know what you think about the new site. Tell us what works, what doesn't work, and how else it can be improved and we can be more supportive of our members.

## **Co-ops in the Digital Age Seminar**

*By Jan Sten, 3020 Tilden Street Co-op  
Seminar Organizer and Moderator*

The DC/Cooperative Housing Coalition sponsored a well-attended Spring Seminar on Saturday, May 10. Forty board members, managers, and those charged with the design and use of electronic media on behalf of their co-ops, gathered at the Harbour Square Cooperative that hosted the event.

*(Continued, "Seminar", page 2)*

**Seminar** (Continued from page 1)  
The seminar, entitled *Co-ops in the Digital Age*, featured representatives from three member co-ops presenting how they are using electronic media to store records, manage their buildings, communicate with shareholders, and presents their co-ops to the public. One of the most valuable segments of the seminar was Joseph Douglass, Esq. of Whiteford, Taylor, and Preston, LLP discussing legal requirements and considerations for using electronic media in order to protect the cooperative. Other panelists covered a comprehensive set of topics.



(L-R) Ann Benefield, Mike O'Dell, Kim Martinez, Joe Douglass, Jan Sten (Seminar Organizer and Moderator)

Mike O'Dell, Director of the DC Cooperative Housing Coalition and past Board member of Harbour Square Cooperative presented the design and use of the Harbour Square external web page and Building Link, specifically identifying how Building Link is used to meet the needs of cooperative owners

Ann Benefield, General Manager of the Westchester Cooperative presented the design and use of the Westchester external web page and Building Link, specifically focusing on how Building Link supports staff management

Kim Martinez, communications professional and designer of the Web tool used by 3020 Tilden St., NW Cooperative described the use of Drop Box. Ms. Martinez described the analytical steps she used to tailor the

Drop Box platform to meet the needs of a small cooperative building.

The outline of information presented at the seminar is available to Coalition members who were unable to attend by sending an e-mail to [CooperativesDC@aol.com](mailto:CooperativesDC@aol.com).

## New Member!



### Senate Apartments

The Coalition is pleased to welcome Senate Apartments, Inc, a 16 unit building at 115 2nd Street, NE, as the Coalition's newest member!

## e-Mail surveys

The following surveys were conducted between May 1 and August 31:

- Credit Cards (May)
- Deposits for Renovations (July)
- Accountant Recommendation (August)
- Board Elections (August)
- Flooring Recommendation (August)
- Security Recommendations (August)

Member-only e-mail surveys are conducted at members' requests to enable Coalition members to share their experiences and knowledge with one another. Results for each survey are shared directly with Coalition members via e-mail.

## What?! Your Co-op Still Doesn't Have a Web Page on the Coalition's Web Site?!

Several of our members have yet to avail themselves of a free web page on the Coalition's web site, [www.CoopsDC.org](http://www.CoopsDC.org). This member profile page is a **free** membership

benefit. And, if your co-op has its own web site, we will link your Coalition web page directly to your co-op's web site.

**Why have a web page?** (1) Buyers and Real Estate agents can get information about your co-op. (2) You can refer people seeking more information about your co-op to the page. (3) People outside the DC area who want to buy a co-op can find you (the Coalition web site has gotten several such requests and we refer them to our membership page). (4) People can find you. (5) It's **free!**

In this day and age, it is essential to maximize your co-op's visibility for reasons cited, above. If your co-op doesn't have a presence on the Coalition's web site, start the process of creating one. It's easy to do: Fill in the form we have developed, write a short story describing your co-op, and provide a photo of your building(s)--we'll even take one for you if you like!

How do you get started? Send an e-mail to [CooperativesDC@aol.com](mailto:CooperativesDC@aol.com) and type "Member Web Page" in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, let us know your interest and the name of your co-op and the person we should work with to create your web page on our site. We will send you the instructions and get you started right away! In the meantime, go to <http://coopsdc.org/members/> and look at the current web pages other Coalition members have on our site to get an idea how you might like to share your co-op with site visitors.

We are saddened that Tom Rhodes, husband to Joyce Rhodes, President of the Edmund J. Flynn Company, died on September 1 as a result of a head injury he sustained from a fall while at their home. Joyce and Tom were married for over forty years. The Coalition joins the entire DC cooperative housing community in its condolences to Joyce and the Rhodes family and friends.



## 30 Years of Serving the District's Cooperative Housing Community

The D.C. Cooperative Housing Coalition exists to advance the common interests of cooperative housing associations in the District of Columbia and promote cooperative housing as a desirable form of home ownership. It is therefore both an advocacy organization that articulates the interests of members before government officials and regulatory agencies and a service organization that provides information and education to members.

Membership is open to all District housing cooperatives, regardless of size. A volunteer board of directors, elected by member co-ops, governs the Coalition. At least five seats on the board must be filled by representatives of small (50 or fewer units) cooperatives. Activities are financed through annual dues determined by the members at the annual meeting.

The Coalition grew out of an ad hoc group of District cooperatives that formed in response to a judicial ruling that had cast a cloud over many cooperatives by banning proportionate voting. By marshaling the forces of more than 3,000 units, the ad hoc group persuaded the D.C. City Council to resolve the matter.

Recognizing the importance to the cooperative housing community of speaking in a single voice and maintaining the ability to respond quickly and knowledgeably to matters affecting cooperative housing, the ad hoc group decided to form a permanent organization. The Coalition was established in 1984 and was incorporated as the DC/CHC, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization in the District of Columbia, in 1993.

The Coalition's most important accomplishment was its work toward the passage of the Cooperative Housing Procedure Act of 1988 (D.C. Law 7-205), a law that provides for uniform procedure and an equitable formula to assess real property owned by cooperatives. Up to that time, the District did not have a prescribed method to estimate fair market value, and as a result the assessments were arbitrary and unpredictable. It also successfully opposed a move to charge each cooperative association \$3.00 per unit to fund a new government agency to oversee cooperatives and condominiums. It testified before the City Council in support of a recycling tax credit in lieu of the city collecting recyclables and successfully opposed a 50 percent reduction in the trash collection tax credit, which cooperatives and condominiums receive in lieu of the city collecting their trash.

At the heart of many of these efforts was the defense of cooperatives before the City Council to maintain parity between cooperative homeowners and single-family homeowners rather than to be treated as rental complexes. Perhaps most important, the Coalition successfully defended the assessment system it had worked hard to put in

place in 1988 when it warded off proposals to change the system in recent years.

The Coalition has co-hosted mayoral candidate forums and recognized Council members who work on behalf of the interests of housing cooperatives. It has also promoted public awareness and interest in cooperative ownership by sponsoring events, most notably a tour of several D.C. housing cooperatives in 1995 to mark the 75th anniversary of the first housing cooperative in the District.

One of the most important benefits Coalition members receive is timely information. The Coalition has conducted seminars and issued newsletters covering topics as diverse as elevators, rentals, taxes and oil and gas bulk purchasing agreements, among others. As a consequence, members receive information that enables them to anticipate and address changes affecting their operations. In 2012, the Coalition published *Co-ops 101*, a well-received booklet prepared to assist buyers, sellers, and the Realtors who represent them, among others interested in market-rate cooperatives.

In anticipation of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first housing cooperatives in the District of Columbia, the Coalition has commissioned a book describing the development of cooperative living in DC.

With 30 years of history, the Coalition remains the premier organization devoted to advancing and protecting the interests of the owners of the approximately 15,000 cooperative units in the District of Columbia.

## Board of Directors

### President

Carl Gerber  
The Cathedral Avenue, 145 units

### Vice President

Fred Dyda  
Tilden Gardens, 170 units

### Secretary

Art Leabman  
1870 Wyoming Avenue, 28 units

### Treasurer

Ray Olson  
River Park Mutual Homes, 518 units

### Directors

Jeff Elefante  
Potomac Plaza Apartments, 249 units

Jeanne Gault  
Naylor Gardens, 318 units

Stephen McKeivitt  
Beverly Court, 39 units

Dottie Moskowitz  
Tiber Island, 389 units

Michael O'Dell  
Harbour Square, 447 units

Russ Rader  
The Westmoreland, 60 units

Nancy Skinkle  
The Broadmoor, 194 units

Janet Sten  
3020 Tilden Street, 20 units

Sue Stephens  
The Porter, 28 units

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## About DC/CHC, the Coalition

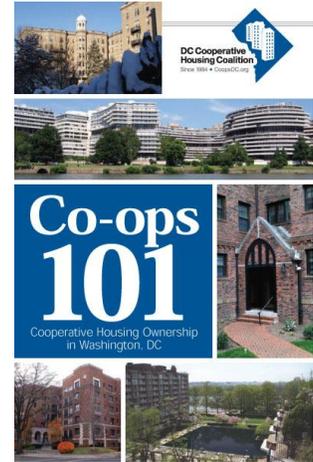
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Membership is open to all District housing cooperatives, regardless of size. A volunteer board of directors, elected by member co-ops, governs the Coalition. Activities are financed through annual dues, \$1.50 per unit per year (12.5 cents per month)

The Coalition grew out of an ad-hoc group of District cooperatives that formed in response to a judicial ruling that had cast a cloud over many cooperatives by banning proportionate voting. By marshaling the forces of more than 3,000 housing cooperative units, the ad-hoc group persuaded the District's City Council to resolve the matter.

Recognizing the importance to the cooperative housing community of speaking in a single voice and maintaining the ability to respond quickly and knowledgeably to matters affecting cooperative housing, the ad-hoc group decided to form a permanent organization.

The Coalition was established in 1984 and was incorporated as DC/CHC, Inc., a nonprofit, IRS Code Section 501(c)(6) organization in the District of Columbia, May 24, 1993.



**Co-ops 101 Free download:**  
<http://www.coopscdc.org/Co-ops101%20PDF.pdf>

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[www.CoopsDC.org](http://www.CoopsDC.org)

*The first place to look for a service provider*

## Member Profile Page

Does your cooperative have its own dedicated page on the Coalition's web site? It's free and it is one of the Coalition membership benefits. See what your co-op is missing at [www.CoopsDC.org/Membership.htm](http://www.CoopsDC.org/Membership.htm) and click on members with the

LEARN MORE +

icon next to their names.

**Don't let your co-op miss out on this members-only benefit**