

Thatchmont Trustees Meeting (via Zoom) January 6, 2021

Present: Chris Bolinger, Sandeep Ghael, Neil Golden, Alec Holliday, Liz Leeds, Stu Rubinow, Mike Springer; Sheryl Sarkis for Great North

At the start of the meeting Jennifer Havlicek said she needed to resign her seat on the Board. The Trustees unanimously elected Liz Leeds to replace her as the representative from 25 Thatcher.

Finances: At the first of the year our reserves stood at \$612,500, and the operating account balance was \$37,850. We made all of our scheduled 2020 transfers into the reserves. We still have outstanding bills for masonry work to repair the leak at 25 Thatcher (about \$8500) and for plumbing work in 26 Egmont (about \$3000.)

Old Business

1. Smoke detectors: A detector in 26 Egmont has been causing problems for some time: periodically it will begin 'chirping' the way it does when the battery is failing, and it has occasionally gone off. We've replaced the battery several times, replaced the unit, and checked it more than once without permanently fixing the problem. We hired a new vendor who replaced the detector, and we will have an electrician come to examine the wiring and electrical connections for any additional problems.

2. Window painting: The outside window frames were last painted in 2010. We have gotten estimates from four vendors, in the \$70-80,000 range. For context, that covers work on more than 600 windows, and the amount is already earmarked in the reserves. Glazing compound is failing on some windows and needs to be replaced as part of the project. We will get estimates from the vendors for this added work, and will then make a decision on a vendor and agree on a schedule.

3. Landscaping: This will involve determining what plants are salvageable, removing dead or unsightly items from the fronts of both buildings, then adding 120-140 plants. We got one very detailed proposal that we rejected as far too expensive. We've gotten bids from two other vendors that are more within our range, and now need to get from them references, a clear idea of what they propose, and if possible before-and-after photos of projects they've done. We will have to pay for a detailed plan but it's necessary to visualize the work and make a decision. Sheryl will also check with other Great North property managers to identify other good vendors.

4. Entries, etc.: Completion of this project has been on hold for some time because we were, and continue to be, unwilling to have workmen in the buildings until the COVID risk is much less. We still have to do some tile and marble repair, make vestibule railings ADA compliant, and replace 2nd and 3rd floor hall light fixtures.

We discussed unit front doors at the annual meeting. We are now getting a volume estimate to replace unit front doors, and when we have a firm number we will survey owners to find out interest in replacing their door at their expense.

Sheryl will get proposals to repair the concrete in front of the outer door to 19 Thatcher, and then we can make a decision.

New Business

1. **Officers:** The Trustees elected officers for this year: President – Neil Golden, Treasurer – Mike Springer, Recording Secretary – Stu Rubinow.

2. **Illegal parking:** Some people have been parking illegally in our lot, both overnight and in empty spaces during the day. This is tricky to monitor and deal with, because owners need flexibility to let others use their space, sometimes on fairly short notice, without a burdensome notification process. At the same time, we want to enforce that outsiders cannot park here with abandon. We discussed a number of different approaches to dealing with this, each of which has some complications.

UPDATE 1-12-21: A white Honda Accord has parked illegally in the lot several times, both during the day and overnight. We put a note under the wiper telling them they are parked illegally and need to contact the property manager; they ignored the note. *This morning we had the car towed.*

3. **Parking lot security:** At the annual meeting we discussed putting video cameras in the parking lot, as protection against vandalism and theft. Since then we have looked at research studies on the effectiveness of CCTV systems in parking lots and garages, and have talked with three vendors.

The research is equivocal. While some studies show a significant effect in reducing theft of and from vehicles in parking lots and garages, others find the effect to be small or absent. Without more research it is hard to predict the effect of cameras on crime deterrence for our situation, and it might be worthwhile to investigate whether other condos or apartments in the area have experience with cameras in their parking lots. While the police want to know about vandalism and theft in parking areas, we suspect that following up on these incidents is not a priority for them.

We have informal estimates, from all three vendors, of the cost of equipment and installation, without fees for maintenance of the system. From those numbers a CCTV system for the entire lot appears to be quite expensive for the degree of added protection it would provide. We are now considering some much less costly 'do-it-yourself' solutions (like owners putting a camera in their unit aimed at and monitoring their vehicle.) This has to be researched more to find out privacy requirements in state law and other possible legal liabilities.

4. **Electric car charging:** The question of charging stations has come up again. We will check with Eversource to see whether their subsidy program is operating this year. If we were to put in charging stations, the project would have to be coordinated with parking lot re-surfacing because of the trenching required to install chargers.

5. **Bird hazard:** Several bird nests have been noticed in dryer vents behind the buildings. These are a potential fire hazard since they cause a backup of lint that would otherwise escape out the vent. We will photograph them and arrange for their removal.

6. **Food for critters:** Do not feed pigeons, squirrels, sparrows, turkeys, or any other animals!

That encourages them to hang around our buildings, fouling sidewalks and planting areas, and disrupts their normal feeding patterns. The town strongly advises against it:

Do not feed wildlife, including coyotes and other mammals. Many wildlife conflicts are caused by people directly or indirectly feeding wildlife. Wildlife do not need our assistance to find food, and feeding them ultimately hurts the wildlife, the environment, and the community. [<https://www.brooklinema.gov/701/Specific-Wildlife-Information>]

Stu Rubinow
Recording Secretary