

## Thatchmont Board Meeting – Nov. 16, 2004

Trustees: Neil Golden, Karin Hobman, Deborah Lindeman, Arthur Mattuck, Martha Recht,  
Richard Yurko. Management: Larry Sawyer Absent: Ellen Frank

This was a brief meeting preliminary to the annual meeting a half-hour later. All of the items were subsequently discussed at the annual meeting, and in the minutes to follow. They were:

1. Approval of the 2005 budget to be presented.
2. Discussion of progress on heating and hot water temperature control.
3. Information on our trash removal contract.
4. Discussion of dumpster problems: placement during winter, illegal dumping.
5. Information on Christmas tree removal.

## Thatchmont Annual Meeting – Nov. 16, 2004

Including the seven trustees, there were a total of 21 units (out of 37) represented at the meeting. Neil Golden presided.

**1. Introduction.** All present were asked to identify themselves and their units, and many did so audibly.

**2. Review of 2004.** Neil Golden reviewed the highlights and concerns.

a) The two **basement apartments** were successfully rented to good tenants. The Egmont St. tenants will probably be leaving Sept. 1, 2005, and unit owners are asked to keep in mind possible replacements for them. The Thatcher St. tenants may be staying.

b) The **front-side windows and entrances** were painted.

**Correction to Oct. minutes:** it was erroneously stated that the front basement windows were painted; in fact, only those for the two apartments were painted; the others were not.

c) As a result of an initiative from unit-owners, the **cleaning contract** was switched as of Nov. 1 to a “fair-wage” cleaning company, who hired our present cleaner, Victor, and filled out our twenty hours of his time with an additional twenty elsewhere.

d) An **irrigation system** for the landscaping was installed on the Egmont side.

e) The **heating controls** were experimented with to maintain a more satisfactory temperature, and distribute the heat better. The **hot-water system** was changed from tank storage to continuous on Thatcher, and will be on Egmont as well. (See Discussion below on both items.)

f) The **Owner’s Manual** has been finalized and posted to the Thatchmont web site: [www/thatchmont.org](http://www/thatchmont.org)

g) A formal statement of the **parking policy** was approved and circulated to the unit-owners.

h) Costs have risen in various categories, with consequences to the reserve fund. (See Budget below.)

**3. 2005 Budget.** Our treasurer, Rich Yurko, presented the Budget for 2005. A copy will be posted on our web site [www.thatchmont.org](http://www.thatchmont.org).

**Comparison with 2004 Budget:** The principal features in which it differs from the 2004 Budget are:

- a) Heating oil: 22K increase (72%) (the actual expense is at this time unpredictable)
- b) Insurance: 3.5K increase (17%)
- c) Water and Sewer: 2K increase (8%)
- d) Landscaping: 2.5K decrease (50%)

**Capital Expenditures:** 4.3K increase to complete the window painting:

15.7K was added to the 2004 Budget for the front windows and entrances; 20K is needed in 2005 for the sides and back.

**Reserve Fund** This now stands at 50K; about 14K will be added at year's end. This is the second year we have not contributed enough to the reserve fund, which pays for our Capital Expenditures.

**Long-range Capital Expenditures:**

2005 completion of window painting (20K)

3 roofs (30K)

emergency lighting for back stairs, required for insurance (45K)

parking lot resurfacing, required for insurance (70K-150K)

**Proposed Fee Increases:**

Standard increase: 4%

Special assessment for heating oil: 10%

The heating-oil assessment will have the character of a fuel-adjustment charge, revisable up or down during the year if oil prices change significantly.

**4. Election of trustees.** The following three current trustees were nominated, accepted the nomination, and by a show of hands were re-elected for a 2-year term unopposed:

Neil Golden, 15 Thatcher

Arthur Mattuck, 19 Thatcher

Martha Recht, At-large

## Discussion by Unit Owners

During the meeting, various questions were raised, and information was disseminated. These are briefly summarized here.

**1. Heating:** Complaints by several unit owners (on top floors) of being cold during the middle of the day. Our heat currently is set by a sensor that responds to the outside temperature every hour; it has two settings: a "day" setting and a cooler "night" setting.

To save oil, the period 10AM-3:30PM is currently on a "night" setting; it will be changed back to the "day" setting for a two-hour period in the middle.

A new method of controlling the heat with a high-tech indoor sensor, placed in a selected top-floor unit, will be tried; since the sensor is wireless, different locations can be tried out. With the heating more closely matched in this way to the building's actual requirements, badly leaking windows or inoperative radiators will need repair.

Using the night cycle in mid-day assumes the units are insulated and can retain heat. **Older windows** have leaks and need to be weatherstripped, even though they have storm windows. It is estimated that 60% of our windows are old.

**Radiator air valves should be the newer kind, to allow unit owners to respond to the heating-level changes. See below under "Reminders".**

There were complaints about **banging radiators** from several unit owners, who said the banging was worse this year. One frequent cause of banging radiators is inadequate air-escape valves of the older type, or floor valves which are only partially open. (Again, see "Reminders" below.)

**2. Hot-water temperature** was too high, as a result of the change-over on Thatcher from tank to continuous; it has been lowered.

**3. Equity loans:** A unit-owner noted that other condominiums finance capital improvements with equity loans. The response was that this makes future residents pay for the deterioration experienced and caused by present residents; financing out of built-up reserves seems to be a fairer way of paying for capital improvements.

**4. Parking lot:** Can't we just continue to patch it as needed? Underneath the blacktop are concrete squares which shift and tilt; consultants will have to advise what is possible.

**5. Trash removal and dumpster:** There were complaints of the truck coming at 5:15AM. This is not supposed to happen; Larry will transmit the complaint. Persistent infraction could be a basis for early canceling of the contract, due to run until May. After that, we hope to switch to another company, as in the October minutes. The problem of dumpster placement during the snow months is unresolved.

**6. Trustee terms:** After the election of trustees, it was noted that one re-elected trustee will be starting on his third consecutive two-year term, though it will be only the second two-year term of his current position as the trustee representing his building. Hitherto, trustees have served at most two consecutive terms.

The Owner's Manual (which is not a legal document) states that there are 7 trustees, one from each unit, plus one at-large, serving for a two-year term, renewable for a second two-year term; this is presumably to guarantee each building is represented, and to involve more unit-owners in the operations of the Trust.

The By-Laws (a legal document) only state there shall be between 3 and 7 trustees, elected for a two-year term; a majority vote of the unit-owners can change this By-Law.

There was some discussion of whether or not we should aim at continuing with the 30-year "common-law" practice described in the Owner's Manual. There was no motion presented, or sense-of-the-meeting vote, however.

**7. Attempted break-in:** At 19 Thatcher, #6, from the back stairs – attempt to jimmy rear door.

**8. Open meetings:** As a result of a unit-owner's complaint, it was reaffirmed that trustee meetings are open to unit-owners, who can stay after the initial "unit-owner's time" if they wish, participating in discussions and sustenance, if not in voting.

## Reminders

**1. Heating reminder:** Unit owners are responsible for the proper operation of their radiators and windows. This means that air-escape valves must permit the entire radiator to heat up when the boiler is operating, and windows must minimize cold air infiltration. Floor valves must be either fully open or fully closed.

**2. Saturday Dec. 11 Plumber:** From 9-12 he will install the newer air-escape valves on radiators (all radiators in use should have these), at \$25 for a normal installation. He will also inspect for leaking faucets and toilets, if asked; the Association will pay for minor leak repairs. **Contact Larry Sawyer (Management) by Dec. 4** to be put on the list.

**3. Web site and E-mail list:** Our web site is *www.thatchmont.org*; it has a lot of useful information (archived minutes, owner's manual, recommended service providers, etc.)

Send e-mail to Stephan at *sdeibel@wingware.com* asking to be placed on our e-mail list, to receive news and timely information about the condominium, and join discussions about Thatchmont issues.

**4. Christmas-tree removal.** The Town does this, if trees are placed curbside at the appropriate time. A memo will be circulated.

**5. Next meeting:** Monday, January 31 7:00 PM 15 Thatcher, #3 (Golden).

Arthur Mattuck  
Recording Secretary