

Thatchmont Board Meeting – Sept. 7, 2004

Trustees: Ellen Frank, Neil Golden, Karin Hobman, Arthur Mattuck, Martha Recht, Richard Yurko.
Management: Larry Sawyer
Unit owners (start only): J. & J. Alper, R. & S. Memolo, I. Christiansen, F. Schachter, E. Tamayo

FINANCIAL

1. The one-page **Treasurer's report** was presented, in the same format as the June report, summarizing where we are in the current budget as of the end of August. The report is posted on the Thatchmont web page *www.thatchmont.org* in pdf format.

Income is normal and on schedule.

Expenses. Heating Oil is already 2.3K (\$2,300) over budget, and with possible price increases, is estimated to be 5K over by year's end.

Water usage is running higher than budgeted and could be 2.5K over by year's end; a plumber will be asked to check for leaks and drips.

Other large overruns (plumbing leaks, roof leaks, pest control) have had only a small effect on the budget and have been previously mentioned.

2. **End-of-year Projections.** The Treasurer (Rich Yurko) predicts a budget overrun of 10K.

Reserves: Currently 41K. The current front window and doorway painting (about 13.5K total, but possibly more – see below) is being paid from the reserves.

3. **Next Year's Expenses:** The main increases are expected in Heating Oil (perhaps as much as 40%), and Insurance; a smaller increase in Water. Our insurance agent is soliciting bids from four companies. An effort is being made to reduce heating expenses by relocating sensors; unit-owners can expect to be wearing sweaters indoors this winter.

4. **Capital Budget:** Ellen Frank will review the 5-year plan alternatives for our next meeting, in October.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Exterior Painting:** What we contracted for this year – the street-side windows in the three floors and the lintels and columns of the doorways – has been done. Unit-owners at the meeting pointed out that this has made the doors and their trim look shabby, as well as the basement apartment windows and the storage bin windows. The painters' price for the six doorways is \$750; Larry will get an estimate for the basement windows also.

Unit-owners commented on the large paint chips left on the ground; the painters will be asked to clean these up.

There was concern expressed about the poor condition of the basement apartment windows on the sides of the buildings; it looks like this will wait until next year, when the rest will be done (parking-lot and side windows). Larry will get an estimate for next year's painting.

2. **Cleaning company** Most of the unit-owners at the meeting were there to find out what the progress had been on this issue, and what the action would be.

Enrique Tamayo prepared a table with detailed comparative information on four companies – our present company (CCS - 78CLEAN) vs. three others (Rufo, Cleanco, OneSource). Larry had information on a fourth: AM-PM. The four companies all pay union scale wages, as the unit-owners' petition requested (not all are union companies, however) – about \$2.50 above what our current cleaner Victoriano Gutierrez earns now after four years at CCS.

During the subsequent trustees' meeting, the principal issues were

1. Victor's salary (as above)

2. Victor's benefits. CCS pays for sick days and vacations, but there is no health benefit. The other companies presumably include the health benefit, at least for the employee (Victor's family is big).

3. Hiring Victor: all agreed to hire him, if his papers and background check were in order; all except AM-PM agreed to give him another 20 hours/week to make up a full 40/hour week (assuming we would use him 20 hours/week, as now).

4. Price for 20 hours/week: AM-PM is the cheapest, Rufo and CCS cost about 2K more per year, the other two another 1.5-2K on top of that.

5. Victor's preferences: Rufo has a largely Hispanic cleaning staff, with whom he would feel comfortable. Tamayo explained to him the risks in switching companies, and he reports they were accepted.

6. Do we need 20 hours/week? Outside opinion has been that 15 should be enough; on the other hand, whether the companies would hire him with only 15 hours commitment from us is unclear.

The trustees continued the discussion by e-mail, finally voting to go with Rufo, try to negotiate on the price, aim for a target transfer date of Nov. 1, and keep the 20 hours for now and try to find other useful work around Thatchmont to fill Victor's hours.

The hours situation will be reviewed early next year. In the meantime, unit-owners should tell their Trustee or write to Neil any suggestions for Thatchmont projects that would use another five hours/week of Victor's time on a regular, ongoing basis (i.e., preferably not one-time things, though it would help to have a list of these also).

3. **Rental units** Both basement apartments have been rented for a Sept.– Sept. lease, removing that uncertainty from next year's budget. The Egmont St. tenants are new this Sept.; the Thatcher St. tenants are continuing.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Unit renovations** The unit owner at 20 Egmont # 6 requested permission to vent a stove through the roof, and to put a drain line through the units below for a relocated washer. The trustees approved, subject to the usual conditions (adequate roof-seal, consent of neighbors below, etc.) spelled out in a subsequent memo to the owner.

2. **Pest problem** Unit-owners and renters at 15 Thatcher report rat evidence – pellets in the basement, damage in a storage bin, discovery of a dead animal. They believe it to be exacerbated by the condition of the nearby overflowing dumpster (see below) and a leaky shower draining into the basement.

Exterminators set traps indoors and a bait box by the dumpster, with no results.

The trustees decided to see if finding the leak and moving the dumpster (see below) would help solve the problem.

3. **Dumpster and trash removal** The dumpster has been this year constantly overflowing, filled with huge pieces of furniture, refuse from contractors, the refuse from the cleanout of a Thatchmont storage bin. All these things are illegal: it is **for ordinary household trash only**. Dangerous liquids, and TVs or computer monitors are also excluded. For all these other things one has to contact a removal company (our management company can make suggestions).

When the dumpster is full, the household trash has to be left outside it in plastic bags, which invite pests. Though certain individual unit-owners have been very helpful in spotting offenders, it seems impractical to mount surveillance cameras, or enclose or lock the dumpster.

The trustees decided to try moving the dumpster and recycling bins to the upper end of the lot where they are less conspicuous to outsiders and less available to the rats at 15 Thatcher. If the snow removal problem can be solved (the upper end is usually where the snow is piled in a heavy storm), two extra parking spaces at the lower-end site would be available for rental income.

4. **Next meeting:** Tuesday, Oct. 26, 7:00 PM; 15 Thatcher No. 3 (Golden).

5. **Annual meeting:** Tuesday, Nov. 16, 7:00 PM; Holiday Inn (1200 Beacon St.)

Expiring two-year terms: N. Golden (15 Thatcher), A. Mattuck (19 Thatcher), M. Recht (At-large).

Arthur Mattuck, Recording Secretary