

Thatchmont Board Meeting – June 6, 2006

Trustees: Neil Golden, Arthur Mattuck, Martha Recht, Victor Samarov, Paul Tempest, Rosemary Trainor
Management: Larry Sawyer Absent: Victor Frank

Parking Lot

A discussion of where we are now in the parking lot project, and where we want to go.

1. **Repaving Permit** On June 9, the Town of Brookline issued us a permit for simple repaving of the lot, as described in the previous minutes. Although there are always uncertainties, we can now be optimistic that the existing assessment for the reserves (due June 30, you are reminded) will be adequate to cover the parking lot repaving and leave something over for other projects.

This agreement has come about through the efforts of Neil, who has devoted a great deal of time to this project, and to whom we are all indebted. We are also grateful for the helpful advice and assistance received from someone we connected with who understands Town operations.

2. **Scope of Work Document** Neil prepared a revised Scope of Work Document to be given to bidders; it gives as much detail as possible at this point, in order to get comparable bids from contractors. Some points were open for discussion; these are summarized below. Others depend on tests to be conducted. Since this is a technical document, it may be reviewed by someone who has experience with these.

3. **Below-surface testing** On June 9, one of the contractors (Sequoia) will spend the day making test borings, to better understand what paving materials are beneath the existing paving and what their thickness is. Results will be incorporated into the Document, to be available to bidders.

4. **Sidewalks** There are currently three sidewalks in the lot – one on each upper-end driveway, and one on the lower-end Thatcher side. All are in some need of repair. It was decided to replace the two upper-end ones with some form of asphalt paving, sloping (as now) away from the building to avoid seepage. (The one on the Thatcher side has some sort of covered well, which should be investigated). The lower-end Thatcher sidewalk has deep grated wells for the basement apartment, so will have to be repaired as is.

5. **Tree-lawns** The Trustees are determining how to keep the two trees now in the lot, without incurring great expense or giving up parking spaces. Repaving will inevitably disturb their root systems and may cause fatal damage.

If they survive, they will require ground water, Standard circular tree-lawns (unpaved areas into which water can drain) will cut into the adjacent parking spaces and reduce their number. Metal grating is a much more expensive alternative, which will be priced; or possibly the adjacent spaces could be just left not entirely paved, i.e., with some gravelled areas through which water could drain.

6. **Landscaping** Cars are supposed to be parked 10 feet from the buildings, to keep their exhaust away from the windows. This is the current distance of the concrete stops, except at the lower end (because of the trees), and the Thatcher-side upper end (because of the bulge in the building).

As an acknowledgment of current code, which requires a certain percentage of green space in parking lots, and to improve the appearance and welcoming character of the lot, the trustees propose leaving the 4-5 foot width adjacent to the building unpaved, with its fill replaced with a foot of topsoil. This would be done only in the 75-foot center sections on either side between the two stairwells. (The Egmont side already has such strips beyond the two stairwells; on the Thatcher side the bulges in the building at the two ends leave no room for such an unpaved strip there.)

The strips would be planted with low-maintenance shrubs and a bark mulch cover; a strip soaker hose on either side would be required, and plumbing for external faucets.

Separate pricing for these beds would be requested in the Scope of Work Document. Not included would be the cost of shrubs and planting, which we can estimate ourselves and get bids on, as work done professionally, or by ourselves.

7. **Lighting** The issue was raised of improving the lighting so that it shines more on the cars and less into the bedroom windows. This has relevance for the parking lot, since the wires would be buried. No conclusion was reached; a consultant would be needed.

A related issue would be burying the **cables** running between the two sides at the second floor level.

8. **Redesign of the parking spaces** There was a great deal of discussion, but no conclusion; the problem is that each choice impacts all the others, and some sort of cost-benefit analysis is needed. The principal issues discussed were:

A. Continue with tandem perpendicular parking as now vs. use angle parking, with one or two center lines of angle-parked cars. Tandem is convenient, and leaves a lot of space for snow removal, but is mostly not used, and thus a waste of productive space. Changing to center lines would require some spaces left for visitors and lead to the difficulties of regular monitoring (unit-owners would receive a parking pass to place in visitor's car); other spaces could be rented out to produce income for the Association. Center lines could make snow removal harder.

B. Placement of the dumpster and recycling bins. These are now moved seasonally between the two ends. If the center line is occupied, there would be have to be corresponding seasonal changes there also, to allow the dumpster truck to maneuver. If the dumpster were placed permanently, where would that be, nimby?

More ideas and advice is needed; the previous designer Richard Alvord may be consulted again.

9. **Scheduling of the work; parking** It could take place as early as mid-July to mid-August. Permission to park cars on the street overnight as needed has to be obtained from the Town. Unit-owners on vacation during part of that period would need to make arrangements for having their cars moved as needed.

Other business. The tenants of the basement apartment on Thatcher St. are being given a 30-day notice, to allow time for cleaning and possibly some renovation in time for the new renting season.

Next meeting. TBA

Arthur Mattuck, Recording Secretary

Two basement rental apartments

Both of these will become vacant this summer; rental from them usually pays for our ongoing capital expenses. If you know of someone looking for a Brookline apartment, or if you can post notices at work or through other affiliations, please help us find tenants.

Brookline: Two large garden-level apartments:

3-bedroom available July 1 \$1800

2-bedroom available Sept. 1 \$1650

Both apartments are located in a large, high-end, well-maintained, and quiet condominium complex in a fine neighborhood: the beautiful Cottage Farm district between Boston University and Coolidge Corner. They are a few minutes walk to the MBTA Green B Line on Commonwealth Ave. and the C Line on Beacon St.

There are three public parks, with playgrounds, playing fields, and a bird sanctuary, within one or two blocks; Devotion/Lawrence School districts.

Both apartments are recently remodeled, with 3 and 2 bedrooms respectively, living-room, bathroom, fully-applianced kitchen and gleaming hardwood floors. Private parking is available.

Rent includes heat, hot water, cooking gas, and washer/dryer.

No fee. Call Howard at 508-728-2400.