

## Thatchmont Board Meeting – Oct. 9, 2007

Trustees: Victor Frank, Neil Golden, Arthur Mattuck, Victor Samarov, Paul Tempest, Rosemary Trainor  
G&G Management: Peter Deforge      Absent: Lifei Guo

This was the first Thatchmont trustees meeting for Peter, our G&G property manager for several months now, replacing Mike Weinstein who left for law school.

### Financial Report.

1. At the end of the third quarter, we were **8K over 75%-budget**: 5K under budget in rental and parking income partly compensating for 13K over budget in the broad category “General Maintenance and Repairs”; this will be subdivided, or some of its entries placed elsewhere, to help see where the 13K went. (The financial report is still being experimented with to find a format which gives the needed information in the most readable and concise form.)

2. The Egmont St. basement apartment has a new tenant, with a lease, as of Sept. 1.

3. We have not yet received for this year trash-removal payments from the Amory condominiums.

4. Looking to next year, there may be a steep increase in our **heating oil** bill – one estimate is for a 28% price rise. Peter advises not locking-in the price (in effect buying insurance); in the long run it seems to cost less to buy at market prices – this has been our recent experience also.

5. How should G&G **decide on expenditures** when they seem to be going over budget? The current practice is to take care of urgent matters regardless, but consult with the trustees on non-crisis expenditures of over \$1,000. A subcommittee of Peter, Neil, and Victor Frank will devise a procedure, perhaps formalizing this process, for presentation to the trustees and at the annual meeting.

5. As reported previously, our **reserves** at the beginning of January stood at a healthy \$112,000; however in the near future we have expensive items: three half-roofs awaiting conversion to rubber, masonry to be repointed, and older rubber roofs nearing the end of their expected 20-year lifetime. To adopt **pay-as-you-consume**, rather than **wait-for-collapse-and-assess**, would mean budgeting to build up the reserves steadily and aggressively, rather than just adding what’s left over at the end of the year. It would require regular increases in the condominium fees. The next budget will probably reflect this, for discussion at the annual meeting.

### Old Business

1. The May minutes reported that a roof drain over Unit 5 at 25 Thatcher was reset to avoid **roof puddles** from forming during heavy rains, which could lead to leaks. The unit owner reported at the meeting that the puddles continue to form. This will be looked into when we finally get a heavy rain.

2. Plans for **reconfiguring the parking lot** at the upper and lower ends were presented and adopted 5-2 (Tempest and *in absentia* Guo dissenting).

The parallel space at the upper end was removed and others moved closer to the buildings, in order to allow sufficient room for the winter snow-removal piles. (The dissenter present felt that there would be adequate room even if the space were not removed.) At the lower end, a parallel space was added on the Thatcher side; the other two were moved closer to the building, to give enough room for the winter dumpster. Both ends will be repainted and the concrete bumpers reset before cold weather arrives.

3. **Refurbishing the entryways** was again up for discussion, with no uniform opinion on what needed to be done. Peter recommended, as a procedure which had been successful in other properties, to give each of the entryways the same fixed budget, and let the six unit-owners decide how they want to spend it (possible items are listed below). If they wish, they can contribute money of their own to raise the entryway up to their standards.

This was tentatively adopted as a principle. The next step is to estimate the cost of the possible principal items (painting the entryway only, painting all the way up, replacing or removing wallpaper, cleaning marble, refinishing bannisters and railings), and use this as a guide to the entryway budgets. The annual meeting can discuss this proposal.

The outside black railings will be repainted, as previously announced.

5. The **basement cleanout** took place during the summer, and the basements look better. There is still to be completed the preparing of a floor plan and ownership list of the bins.

6. **Parking-lot landscaping.** Six arborvitae were planted on the Egmont side and three hollies on the Thatcher side. The summer flowers are going and will disappear with the first frost (the global warning might help here). Some small shrubs will be transplanted on the Thatcher side from the street to the shady parking lot side; on the sunny Egmont parking lot side, a few shrubs will be added, leaving some room for summer flowers.

### **New business**

1. **Renovations** of kitchen area and back bedroom at 15 Thatcher, Unit 3 (Golden) were approved.

2. 25 Thatcher Unit 5 had had a leak in the master bedroom wall that was apparently stopped by repointing the outside masonry. The unit owner present complained of a **musty, moldy odor** in the room during rainy weather (it had not been there in a previous visit by the Manager in dry weather). It will again be looked into.

3. There have been complaints of **tandem-parked SUV's and vans** at the Amory condominiums, which extend out so far that the available driveway is several feet less than the mandatory 12' dictated by the fire laws. Neil advised that we have an easement over the Amory half of the driveway, which requires in effect that the driveway maintain a clear width of 25'. This would make their tandem-parking illegal, if enforced; the matter will be pursued, perhaps leading to some livable agreement.

4. A **scooter** has appeared, parked regularly in the walkway on the Egmont side of the parking lot. The walkway should be left clear of obstructions; small children are often in that vicinity of the lot. A motorcycle has in the past been parked against the stairwell railing behind 26 Egmont; the trustees are designating that railing for scooters as well (with an alternative space, to be outlined with stripes, alongside the building beyond that stairwell). If motorized two-wheelers continue to appear, a future parking fee was not excluded.

### **E-mail business**

1. The unit-owner at **25 Thatcher #2** submitted a plan for renovations, which were approved by e-mail vote, and are underway.

2. The unit-owner at **14 Egmont #6** undertook bathroom renovations without prior approval from the trustees or Brookline permits, and with unlicensed workmen. Plumbing damage flooded some basement bins. The trustees recently provided emergency approval so permits could be obtained.

Unit owners are reminded that our by-laws and the Town of Brookline require **submitting plans and obtaining prior approval from the trustees** for all work that will involve common areas – the spaces behind walls or between floors, or any other spaces not inside the unit: roofs, basement, back stairs – or work that will involve items visible from the exterior, such as windows or outside vents.

3. E-mail that **smoke alarms and fire extinguishers** have not been inspected for two years.

4. Zen Associates pruned the landscaping; all of the large shrubs survived their damage from last winter's unseasonable warming and freezing spells. Hedge and weed trimmers were bought so that we can take care of these needs ourselves.

White taxus scale insects attacked for the first time ever the Thatcher St. yews and yew hedges (they also appeared elsewhere in the neighborhood); very expensive spraying by Bartlett was rejected in favor of a less expensive systemic insecticide we could apply ourselves; it is supposed to be effective for 12 months, but a new localized outbreak on two branches at 25 has just appeared—we will try spraying.

5. G&G is looking into a **recent unauthorized shearing** of a large yew at 15 Thatcher. A unit-owner held responsible may be subject to a fine and the cost of repairing the damage, once a plan for this is approved.

6. **Annual Meeting: Wed. Nov. 14, 6:30, Coolidge Corner Library; Trustees meeting 5:30.**

Four trustee positions to be filled: 14 Egmont, 20 Egmont, 26 Egmont, and 25 Thatcher.

Arthur Mattuck  
Recording Secretary