

Thatchmont Board Meeting – Mar. 1, 2011

Trustees: Neil Golden, Arthur Mattuck, Mona Mowafi, Abe Recht, Michael Springer, Rosemary Trainor;
Absent: Lifei Guo G&G Mgt.: Sheryl Sarkis

Financial Report (Sheryl)

1. Our share of **snow removal** costs to date this year has been 20K – we pay 2/3 of the 30K total, the Amory condos pay 1/3. This is already well over the 15K in our budget.
2. **Oil expenses** are also rising – our budget was based on \$2.50/gal, but the current price is \$3.25, and the Mideast turmoil may continue to raise it. (We have not locked in a price for many years now, and have generally come out ahead using this policy.)
3. **Rubbish removal** is being switched to another company, which should give us substantial savings.
4. Beyond the above, other routine expenses are behaving normally, i.e., as anticipated. Our reserves currently stand at 160K.

Old Business

1. The various **problems with the heat** were investigated further by Neil who talked onsite with people from Supreme and Devaney (our oil supplier), and by Mike, who researched new controllers online. The problems occur principally in the transitional spring and fall seasons, when the outside temperature changes rapidly, and the heat controllers (which at least one consultant said were too old and should be replaced) cannot respond adequately to the changes.

Mike says the newer controllers, with various computer chips inside like our cars, are better at this – they check not only the temperature outside, but the temperature of the pipes, the amount of steam in the system, etc. to decide when to fire up the furnace and send more steam around.

The most likely candidate, the TechMar has only one day-night cycle option (our current one can switch between day and night cycles more than once in 24 hours), but more than makes up for this in its data-sensing. He estimates it could save us as much as 10% on our oil bill, as well as providing greater comfort for everyone.

The two consultants don't agree on a diagnosis; however Devaney identified 6 faulty valves that were allowing steam to escape, thus requiring water to be regularly added to the system, which is considered bad. They will be replaced; subsequent action is still uncertain, but it is likely the somewhat expensive controllers will also be replaced with the newer and better types.

It was pointed out that Devaney failed to do the routine early fall cleaning of the furnaces. Perhaps top management was still on vacation.

2. The heating problem in the **front radiators of 25 Thatcher # 1** reported in the January minutes was investigated. The heat steampipe from the basement was found to serve only that unit, so that according to the by-laws, it is not considered as belonging to the common area, even though principally in the basement. This means the owner is responsible for the work done on it to improve the steam flow, and will be billed.

3. **Center parking** continues to be a problem: there have been many parkers, some overnight, and twice recently it has prevented the truck from emptying or moving the dumpster. Abe has been putting warning signs on unidentified cars in the early morning; Mike tailed a couple crossing St. Paul St. and warned them (they moved the car). If these tactics prove ineffective, we will start towing more aggressively.

Cars of **visitors** must be **parked tandem**, unless this is impossible because of snow piles, dumpster placement, or non-tandem space. All **center-parked cars and trucks** must have a dashboard notice with the **name, unit-number, and telephone of unit being visited or worked on, and the car's cell-phone** (exception: trucks of those working for Thatchmont Condo and G&G Mgmt.)

New Business

0. A **basement cleanout** is needed to remove debris that has been steadily accumulating in some of the basements. A deadline of May 1 was agreed upon for unit-owners to remove personal items, or get permission to tag and keep them in the common area. The actual clean-out date will be announced; a notice about this has been mailed to all unit-owners.

1. The trustees approved new-owner **bathroom renovations** at 25 Thatcher #3, spurred by a leaking jacuzzi. Nothing affecting common-area piping will be involved.

The same second-floor unit requested approval for possible future **central air-conditioning**. So far only a few third floor units have installed this. It requires a roof compressor servicing only that unit, plus 4" piping, which for first or second floor units would have to run through the back stairwell, like some existing electrical piping does now.

The principal question raised was about possible noise from the roof compressor bothering the third-floor unit just below it. The trustees approved in principle, but requested that formal approval include a statement setting an upper bound on noise levels from the compressor; this will be researched in the literature and by checking with current third-floor unit-owners who have installed roof compressors.

2. The Thatcher St. **basement rental unit** has not been renovated in many years, and requires some work estimated roughly at 3-5K. G&G will prepare specifications and get quotes.

3. The **street-side landscaping** has been damaged by snow removal, especially on the Thatcher side, where a sidewalk bobcat tore many limbs off the yew hedge, virtually destroying many of the plants, and Boston's Best Residential Services shoveled wet snow off the roof in a 30-foot drop onto the shrubs below, breaking large and small branches and stripping the evergreen foliage from others that were not broken.

For the time being, the plan is to clear the debris after the snow melts, heavily prune what is left, and wait to see which shrubs start to recover and which have to be replaced.

4. The concrete **basement corridors** have a lot of peeling paint because of last year's frequent basement flooding; two bids have been obtained for repainting the twelve corridors, one twice the other, using different paint. They will be further investigated and compared before one is selected.

5. The **lead abatement** work in repainting the back stairwells has been completed and passed inspection; the rear doors to the different units still have lead, but these are the responsibility of each unit-owner.

Front lobby walls in 26 Egmont and 25 Thatcher still have some lead on their corners, which can be handled either by repainting or covering with wood molding.

The **outside basement windows** still remain to be treated. Those not for the two basement apartments could be left untreated, since there is no health issue involved; however, to get certified, we could cover the paint with removable screens screwing into the painted wood trim. Those connected with the basement apartments could be similarly screened, replaced, or have their wood stripped and repainted.

5. The **mailboxes** in the 25 Thatcher lobby are in need of repair or replacement from last year's vandalism, but the currently available box model does not fit the recessed area outlined in marble. The temporary **mailbox name labels** there and elsewhere need to be replaced with the standard labels.

6. Looking to the long-term **roof work** that is to be spaced out over the coming years, we need an inventory of the roofs – the age of their membranes, the condition of the penthouses, and whether their doors are watertight in heavy rains and close properly to avoid heat loss.

7. The trustees agreed to resume the annual **fall weekend potluck picnic** in Knyvet Park across from our Thatcher St. side, which gives an opportunity for new and older unit-owners and renters to meet and admire each other's children and grandchildren. It has been in hiatus for a number of years, but two of the trustees (Mona and Rosemary) will organize an event for a post-Labor Day weekend next fall.

Arthur Mattuck, Recording Secretary