

Thatchmont Board Meeting – May 11, 2011

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

Financial Report (Sheryl)

1. Expenses and percentages of budget items used are normal for this time of year.
2. Our reserves currently stand at \$162,000.
3. The two Amory condominiums owe us \$3,600 for snow removal and \$1,500 for rubbish removal.

Old Business

1. The **basement cleanout** is expected to take place before the end of May, which is fast approaching. A notice will be posted the day before, and a dumpster will appear on that day. Tag everything you want saved, with your name and the unit number: all bikes and strollers as well as other items.

2. **Asbestos removal** from the basement ceiling of the furnace room at 15 Thatcher: widely varying bids (10K - 50K) have been received for this work, which are being clarified before a decision is made. The asbestos was originally sprayed on, and is now loose and flaking. We need to add a doublethick layer of plasterboard for fire protection, and may add insulation for noise reduction and heat balance. Other asbestos in the basements (around the hot-water and steam pipes) is encapsulated and safe.

3. **Renovations to 15 Thatcher basement rental unit:** the trustees voted to accept a bid by Boston's Finest for 9.8K, which includes complete painting, new carpet, washing machine, stove, bathroom renovation, and window repair.

4. **Basement entrances floor painting.** The trustees voted to accept a bid by King's painting, which did the outside painting on our buildings last summer. Just the currently-painted concrete floors leading to the entrances will be done; the paint is peeling from the basement floors from last year. About 2.7K will give us two coats of an epoxy paint.

5. **Heating and hot-water problems.** On both sides, there has been trouble with the heating system, described in earlier minutes; on Thatcher, the hot-water heater has problems with the pressure getting too high. Neil has been consulting extensively with people from Devaney (our oil supplier), Supreme, and Minglewood (an independent contractor) to get their diagnoses and opinions, and Mike has researched the newer heat timing-controllers.

The general upshot of a long discussion was that the decision was between Devaney and Minglewood, and that there were two things that needed to be done:

(a) fixing the air-vents and water-traps, in order to stop the current steady leakage and replacement of the steam-water, which should recycle indefinitely to minimize corrosion (bids for 4K and 6K, respectively);

(b) replacing our two older controllers with newer models, which should improve efficiency by around 10% (2.3K and 3.1K per controller, respectively).

The trustees in the end decided to go with Devaney, and have both jobs done before the next heating season.

New Business

1. The **25 Thatcher buzzer-intercom** has been having problems; a repairman only made things worse, and a new vendor will be tried.

27. **Bathroom renovation** Renovation approved by the trustees was carried out, but the contractor has not shown any **building permits**, meaning no inspection of the work by Brookline ever took place.

The trustees discussed this at length and viewed it as a serious violation of our by-laws requiring building permits be obtained from the Town for any work involving common areas. Our plumbing is old and can break inside the walls; plumbers who make mistakes can cause a great deal of grief (remember the hot-water troubles on Egmont a year or two ago which were traced to work done improperly in a first-floor unit).

Building codes have changed greatly over the years, and an inspection is required to guarantee that current codes are being followed in renovation work.

The trustees voted to require a building permit for this work to be produced or obtained within 90 days, after which a daily fine of up to \$100 will accrue. Unfortunately, inspection will require reopening walls, a necessity that makes no one happy.

3. **Roof renewal** is an important part of the five-year plan, but a long discussion did not reach any firm decisions. The work is costly, but extensive leaks in the end cost more. There is an “average” roof life, but some are older and have not given trouble; this includes the remaining tar-and-gravel roofs, oldest of all. It’s a question of costly preventive maintenance (which doesn’t always work with roofs), vs. waiting for warning symptoms to show up before taking action. We have had roof inspectors in the past, but they are reluctant to make predictions. For now, this seems on hold.

4. **Landscaping** on Thatcher St. was severely damaged by sidewalk plowing, and snow dumped 30 feet onto it by the roof-shovelers. Egmont St. mostly escaped damage. We are waiting to see how well the shrubs can recover; for now, only the 10-12 yew hedge plants that seem dead or hopelessly disfigured will be replaced; the rest will be pruned and watched.

5. **Parking** in the middle by the contractors seemed for a while to be spawning fellow-travelers. Abe Recht has placed notices on offenders’ cars, and Mike Springer has on occasion followed the illegal parkers off the lot. The problem seems now somewhat alleviated from its high point a month ago, and not yet warranting automatic towing.

6. **Trustee vacancies** Two of the trustees are moving with their families during the early summer: Lifei (14) and Abe (at large). The Board is sorry to see them go, and will be looking for replacements.

7. **E-mail discussion of our by-laws prohibiting roof-deck cooking** This is on-going; if there are any changes, they will be announced by e-mail.

8. **Next meeting** TBA – late August, or early September.

Arthur Mattuck
Recording Secretary