

## Thatchmont Trustees Meeting – Apr. 17, 2014

Present: Neil Golden, Jennifer Havlicek, Andrew Liteplo, Arthur Mattuck, Stuart Rubinow,  
Mike Springer, Nick Yoder; Sheryl Sarkis, Mgmt.

### Financial Report

**Bank accounts** Sheryl reported that our two accounts currently stand at:

Reserves: 339K                      Operating: 21K

**Variable expenses** Our two major unpredictable expenses have been in 2014 (up to end of March):

**Snow removal** 22.6K – 1/3 will be paid by the two Amory St. Associations, and we should end up in Dec. at or under budget for 2014.

**Gas (heat and hot water)** 22.2K – our 2014 budget for this is 53K.

This is roughly 10-15% lower than what our average oil expenses for this period have been (but see gas-related items below).

**Five-year plan:** Mike reported that the 5-year plan is overall around 50K ahead of what was expected, but uncertainty about looming Phase 2 masonry expenses should dampen our enthusiasm somewhat.

If it turns out that masonry work can be held off until at least 2015, the cheering can resume.

The plan allowed for 150K for the cost of conversion to gas, but the actual expense was under 100K. He estimates that since the November conversion, we have paid about 50K less for gas than we would have for oil, and therefore have already paid off half the actual cost of conversion.

### Old and New Business

**1. Hot water** The problems of fluctuating water temperatures in some **Egmont units** have finally been resolved – the trouble turned out to lie in faulty installation directions for the hot water heater.

It was also discovered that the Egmont hot water pressure was twice the cold water pressure; this too has now been corrected.

There are still remaining problems in some buildings with **Thatcher hot water**, where the initial user of the hot water after a quiet period of no use in the 3-story lineup gets water that is above the normal temperature. This is being investigated.

**2. Gas consumption** For some as yet unexplained reason, the Egmont side is burning an excessive amount of gas, compared with the Thatcher side, even though the Egmont burners are operating only on average about 10% more hours than the Thatcher burners.

At present, it seems likely that the problem lies in the hot-water heating or consumption, the latter perhaps in just an individual unit – if so, item 3 below may be relevant.

**3. Water consumption** The price of water is steadily rising, because of the need to cover the massive costs of redoing the deteriorating sewer and water pipes in some areas (like the multi-year job on Beacon St. near the St. Mary's stop). Meanwhile the price of heating has declined, due to the gas conversion.

**Water and gas** are now in the same league as two major expenses.

Unit-owners are urged to conserve water. Continually leaking faucets can be very expensive to the Association, and in the past we have had to both fine individual unit-owners and in addition charge them for the estimated water expense. If it is hot water, there can be a charge for the gas expense as well.

Unit-owners are reminded that any heating, or cold or hot water, troubles resulting from defects or improper installation of **pipes or valves in the walls which deliver steam or water to only a single unit** are according to our by-laws the responsibility of the current owner of that unit; if to more than one unit, the costs are borne by the Association.

**4. Front Entrances** The six entrances have cracking in the cylindrical columns, and leaking porticos (the roofs over the columns). Three bids of around 20K were received for the work, and the trustees voted to accept the one from Fitzgerald Restoration, which G&G has used in the past.

The front doors are looking worn and will be stripped and repainted; the brass kick plates at the bottom will be replaced if they cannot be repolished satisfactorily by the cleaning company. It was suggested that the doors be repainted green to make more of a statement; various shades of green and red were tried out by photoshopping a digital image of one of our front entrances with its surrounding environment; in a split vote, the trustees decided to go with a red close to the one we now have. The total cost will be around 4-6K, depending on whether the brass plates need to be replaced.

**5. Front vents for the hot-water burners** These are to the side of the front entrances at 14 Egmont and 15 Thatcher, and have been criticized for their appearance and possible damage to the landscaping from the escaping steam.

The emissions are water vapor at about 140 F, and should be visible only during the cold months. The plantings will have to be accommodated to this if they seem to be getting damaged. (The big Pieris at 15 Thatcher has died from its rough uprooting and poor replanting by the gas company when the larger gas line was laid last August.)

The Brookline code for external venting is elaborate and strict about distance from windows, sidewalks, and walkways; going over the site with the Brookline inspectors gave the present front locations as the only ones possible for the vents.

The venting boards will be painted brick red for now; We will look into making them less conspicuous and more attractive.

**6. Parking-lot cracks** New ones have developed and they should be repaired before moisture gets in and freezes next winter to give us trouble. Quotes will be obtained.

**7. September picnic** Stu Rubinow agreed to organize a picnic in mid-September like last year's successful one: pizza and salad provided by the Association; additional pot-luck by any unit-owner who wants to contribute something.

**8. Nanny parking.** A unit owner asked whether a five-day all-day nanny could park in the center regularly. Current regulations allow center parking only short-term, and only for Thatchmont contractors identifying themselves by a note on their dashboard, plus an occasional unit-owner or guest with a good reason, also with a dashboard note.

After considerable discussion, the trustees decided that nannies would have to abide by the current rules and tandem park in the unit-owner's space, since this is likely to be a problem for more unit-owners in the future, and there have been times when the entire center is taken up by contractors.

**9. Elections and Annual Nov.meeting** This coming November, all seven Trustee positions will be open at the Annual Meeting. Last November we did not have a quorum, so the elections could not be held. To avoid this, in November, each trustee will be asking unit-owners in their building if they will be at the meeting, and if not, if they are willing to give the trustee a proxy, either with or without voting instructions if the candidates are known in advance.

**10. Next meeting** TBD, probably in mid-June.

Arthur Mattuck  
Recording Secretary