

## Thatchmont Trustees Meeting April 11, 2017

**Present:** Vincent Froncek, Sandeep Ghael, Neil Golden, Liz Leeds, Stu Rubinow, Mike Springer; Sheryl Sarkis for G&G

**Absent:** Susan Gilman

**Financials:** Sheryl reported that as of today the reserve fund was at \$448,500 and the operating account is approximately \$15,000. Both these numbers are in line with our expectations and plan.

### Old Business

**Dry Wells:** Several of the dry wells outside the cellar doors have been overflowing during strong rain storms; occasionally the water has risen over the bottom of the door frame and has entered the cellars. Finding the cause of the problem is not an easy matter. We have gotten a proposal for repair. The dry well can be opened, material removed and back filled with new stone and concrete for \$900. Should this prove not to be adequate, the contractor can add a sump pump that would pump the water into the garden alongside the building. This would cost an additional \$2400. There is a price advantage if both are done at the same time, but it's small.

The Trustees decided unanimously to try the \$900 option first, on the well at the high side of 20 Egmont - that's the one that has created the most problems. If that fix works we'll do the same thing on other wells; if it doesn't, we'll add a sump pump.

**Fire Alarms:** Our system is badly out of date and has malfunctioned in a couple of buildings in the last two years. The code requirements have changed, and bringing the system into compliance would be a huge undertaking, involving control boxes in the lobbies, placing sensors in every bedroom and inside each unit's doors, two new dedicated phone lines per entry, 24/7 monitoring, electrical conduits in the stairwells, and more. A rough estimate of costs is \$30K per entry plus close to \$10K per entry for repair after construction - figure well over \$200K in total. While we have anticipated this in the budget and reserves, we would much prefer not to have to spend it.

An alternative would be replacing all of our existing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in the halls with an AC electrical system and battery backup. The cost for that would probably be not much more than \$10K maximum. The critical question is whether that solution would satisfy the town building and fire departments, and the company that provides our master condo insurance policy. We are exploring this and hope to be able to get quotes soon.

→ **IMPORTANT!** Whichever option we choose, your unit must have smoke alarms inside the front and rear doors and inside every bedroom, and one carbon monoxide detector. You need to replace the batteries in all of them once a year. Once the main alarm system is fixed, you will have a reasonable amount of time

to add detectors to your unit if you need to. The Trustees will then check each unit for compliance – this is a critical safety issue for all of us.

**Communication with Great North:** There are still some glitches to work out, particularly for times when Sheryl is not available. Ideally, if Sheryl is out a phone or email auto-response will indicate that, and direct the person to the emergency number if needed. Voicemail messages when Sheryl is out are routed to another property manager covering for her. It doesn't all operate this smoothly yet – a recent work order disappeared into a 'black hole' – but we and they are working to improve the system. For urgent matters you should always call the emergency number. Emails are not monitored outside normal business hours.

### **New Business**

**Cellar storage units:** Many of the buildings' water pipes run inside cellar storage bins. Recently we needed access because of a leak and the unit owners were not available. This leak was rather small, but future ones wouldn't necessarily be; we need access to all bins in case of emergency. G&G will soon be attaching a locked box in each of the cellars. When that happens, your building rep will need to get from you a copy of your bin's key or combination, which will be stored in the box. Your possessions remain secure because only the management company can get access to the boxes.

**Routine maintenance:** The electrical conduit outside 25 Thatcher has failed from age and needs to be replaced. The one at 14 Egmont needs some additional clips to hold it.

**Detritus:** The strip of land at the St. Paul end of our parking lot is a mess, with branches, rubble, and other crap that needs to be cleaned up. The land belongs to the St. Paul condos, and we've been unable to determine who the property managers are. The stakes here have recently gone up, as at least two of our owners have seen rats in that area. Prompted by us, the Board of Health is now requiring those condos to fix the rodent and trash problems.

**Insurance:** Three recent incidents have raised insurance issues, involving either an owner's individual policy or the Association's master policy. The Trustees agreed unanimously to reimburse one owner for a loss that exceeded our deductible, rather than file a low value claim. In discussing this, however, it was clear that an individual homeowner's policy and the master policy interact in complex ways we do not well understand. We are going to have an insurance expert come talk to us about it; afterwards we will distribute to all owners an explanation of the two insurances, and their connection, in clear language.

Stu Rubinow  
Recording Secretary