

**Cambridge Courts Condominium Board of Directors Meeting
9/24/08**

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:30pm

II. Quorum Count

Board Members present: Rosemary Gorski, President (2807, #202); Lorraine Bailey (2703, #102), Vice President; Jon Fisher (2811 #101B), Secretary; Anna Santos de Dios, Treasurer (2403 #202); John Kisko, Member-at-Large (2601, #201), and Jeff Bridges, Property Manager.

III. Owners Forum

Frances McCoy 2501, #101: (1) She submitted a letter to the board with several of her concerns about landscaping on the property. **RESPONSE:** The board has received it, and will be discussing landscaping tonight at the meeting.

Ingrid Herbert, 2703 #101: (1) Our porter is using the same dirty mop to clean all of the stairwells. This could be a health concern where noxious substances from one unit could be brought to other units, where it could pose a hazard to pets. **RESPONSE:** ProCAM will be replacing our current porter with a new one shortly, since many people expressed similar concerns over the past few months.

(2) When will new higher condo fees take affect, and do owners get to vote on it?

RESPONSE: The budget was just approved, and will be sent to the owners for the annual meeting along with an explanation of why an increase was necessary.

(3) There was recently some water problems in basements, what work is being done to remedy the cause of this problem? Is the budget increase related to this work?

RESPONSE: We have done a lot to relocate drainage, waterproof foundations and basement walls, etc. to prevent water from getting to the basement. The budget increase is due to a lot of reasons, partly paying back expenses owed to the reserves from previous years, partly due to increased costs in general, and partly due to maintaining the current infrastructure

(4) She also wanted to express her thanks to the board for all of their volunteer work!

Marlene Drohan 2813, #101: (1) She is still very unhappy with our porter, and thinks that there's a lack of follow-up and good management to ensure that he is doing what he's supposed to. **RESPONSE:** Jeff said that Luis was well-liked at the last community he worked for, but the new porter should be better suited to our community.

(2) Bait boxes were not being filled until recently, why is this. **RESPONSE:** We have looked into this, it appears to Jon that they have not been filling them but it is difficult to prove. We are planning on changing our contract to a different company. We have withheld payment from Action Environmental until the situation is resolved, but in general there haven't been many problems across the property.

(3) The rise in the condo fees is extremely high and represents an undue hardship on residents. **RESPONSE:** The board did not make this decision lightly, but we simply have to raise the fees to keep up with the costs.

(4) The bushes have still not been cut down below the window sills, will they do so on the next pruning? **RESPONSE:** They are planning to come out there next week. The landscape committee is planning to talk to the supervisor at Bladerunners beforehand to make this point again. We are also looking at other contractors as alternatives to Bladerunners.

Lorraine Bailey, 2703, #102 (1) There are lights consistently going out on the property. **RESPONSE:** Vepco has been out on the property recently both to address outages throughout the property and to address individual lights. They reported that they have had trouble with power at our property. They had to temporarily cease the work when they hit a gas line. But Jeff says that he will continue to communicate the remaining problems to them.

Suzanne Evans (via Lorraine), 2703 #202 (1) She is now on her 5th installation date with Strategic Windows, and wanted to complain about their lack of communication and follow-through, and recommend their name be removed from the list of approved vendors. **RESPONSE:** Jeff had not heard that, and has been unable to reach Strategic to discuss this situation. The board agreed to send a letter to Strategic informing them that we are removing them from our approved list.

Tracy VanDuston, 2801, #201 (1) She also cancelled her order with Strategic Windows after extensive delays, and waited a month to get a refund (she had to call Citibank to reverse the charges). **RESPONSE:** See above, we are removing them from the list of vendors.

Mary Ackourey, 2813, #201 (1) Shrubs on Fillmore should be trimmed down to 3 feet or below. **RESPONSE:** Some other residents had different opinions on this, the specific details of the maintenance plan will be discussed by the contractor and the landscaping committee.

IV. Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Motion was made (Anna) and seconded (Rosemary) to approve the minutes of the 8/27/08 meeting. PASSED.

V. Reports from Officers

VI. Report from Committees

Landscape: **Motion was made (Jon) and seconded (John) to accept a proposal from Bladerunners for a cost not to exceed \$6,500. PASSED,** Lorraine and Rosemary voted against. **Motion was made (Jon) and seconded (Rosemary) to accept a proposal from the Arborist for a cost not to exceed \$2,000. PASSED,** Lorraine voted against.

Jon will email the revised proposal to Jeff so he can mention it in the newsletter.

Rosemary bought some gardening tools for the condo (a shovel, a rake, etc.), which have gone missing. No one at the meeting had removed them, so Jeff will follow up with Luis to see if he may have borrowed it. Another resident reported that a water wand she purchased has been taken as well. Christine also suggested that we could get a truckload of mulch delivered from Arlington County, but we decided to wait until we had the volunteer hours to actually use it.

VII. Management Report

Financial: Our legal fees continue to be high because we have not yet switched to retainer for legal counsel. We had to modify the contract to include email communications, so held off on approving it last month. Jeff will look into the \$615.00 for miscellaneous charges and let us know what they were for. Trash removal was high due to the roll-off dumpsters we had.

Solar water heaters: Jeff has requested a bid from two dealers to install solar water heaters. Jon will pass a couple of more contractors on to Jeff to get bids on.

Interior painting, etc.: Luis has completed the last round of touch-up painting, and will be making attempts to put existing screens in the windows where they are missing.

Concrete replacement: Dolan advised that it would be difficult to provide access to the building during the time that the stoop is being worked on; people would have to go through the basement to get in and out (for about 4-5 days, possibly more depending on weather). However, the board decided that it makes more sense to replace the whole thing and deal with the fundamental source of the problem, rather than spending a bit less for a more temporary solution. Jeff will proceed with the original proposal.

Basement Water Leaks: Jon was able to show Jeff the leak in 2807 (coming from a bad sink drain in the unit above), Jeff contacted the owner, and the owner is proceeding immediately with repairs.

Move-in fees: We need to work harder at collecting these, Jeff will follow up to check if we have been doing so in a few issues reported by Anna.

Limitation of liability: Legal counsel reviewed the amended bylaws that limit the association's liability in the event of water damage from common elements (in the absence of negligent maintenance). The board will review section 5.2 of the bylaws before the next meeting to clarify our understanding of them, as there were differences of opinion as to how it was worded and should be enforced. We need to clarify where unit owner responsibility and condo responsibility begin and end. Also, the board also decided to hire our legal counsel (Kim O'Halloran-Cordray) on a retainer basis, as there has been a substantial amount of communications with her that has been expensive.

Motion was made (Anna) and seconded (Lorraine) that we approve the retainer agreement submitted by Kim at Rees Broome.

Snow removal contract: Motion was made (Lorraine) and seconded (Anna) to accept the proposal from Cole Roofing for our snow removal contract.

VIII. Business Items

1. Roof Replacement: M.T. Masterson is still the low bidder, and our engineer is very comfortable with this firm and their work (and

recommends that we accept their bid). **Motion was made (Jon) and seconded (Anna) to proceed with awarding the contract for roof replacement to M.T. Masterson, for a cost of \$46,000, contingent upon no additional negative information coming in before signing.**

PASSED. We also need to investigate whether the unauthorized loft built by the unit owner at 2401, #201 into his attic will interfere with this work; if so he will be charged for it.

2. Annual meeting: It will be on Wednesday, November 12. John Kisko is resigning, and Jon Fisher and Rosemary Gorski are ending their terms but are running for re-election. Anna and Lorraine will be up for re-election next year in 2009.
3. Review of action items from last month (see ActionItems080827revised.doc for details)

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08PM