

**CABOTS POINT CLUSTER ASSOCIATION**  
**Annual Cluster Meeting**  
**Draft Minutes**  
**March 28, 2015**

The Annual Meeting of the Cabots Point Cluster Association was called to order by President John Norton at 10:05 AM at the Reston Association Headquarters at 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive. Board Members John Norton, Steve Cristofar, Mike Norvell and John Hills were present. Gary Caley was present prior to the meeting. 22 properties in Cabots Point were represented by at least one homeowner; 2 others were represented by proxy. A quorum (at least 16 homeowners) was present.

The agenda for this meeting was as follows:

**Opening Remarks (John Norton, President)**

- Announcements
- Highlights of the past year

**Old Business**

- Approval of the March 22nd, 2014 Annual Meeting minutes (reading if required)
- Treasurer's Report (Treasurer Steve Cristofar)
- Grounds Supervisor's Report (Grounds Supervisor Mike Norvell)
- Other old business

**New Business**

- Election of 2 Board members
- Approval of the Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2016 (April 2015 to March 2016)
- Cluster Cleanup – April 18
- Roads, sidewalks and homes
  - Alternative roofing materials
  - Darker / solid stain option
- Other new business

**Adjournment**

**OPENING REMARKS BY PRESIDENT—**

- **Announcements** – Everyone was asked to please sign in and update any information on

the sign-in and phone directory, including email addresses.

- Board members were introduced: John Norton-President, Gary Caley-VP, John Hills-Secretary, Steve Cristofar-Treasurer, and Mike Norvell-Grounds Supervisor.
- John welcomed newest residents: Jack Murphy and Andrea Demsey in 2129, and Shane Hurto and Katyah Ling in 2161.
- Two Board positions are to be filled during this meeting – Gary Caley’s position and Mike Norvell’s position. Mike is not running again, but Gary was willing to continue to serve on the Board. Kate Sherwood, who previously served as Grounds Chair volunteered to run again. John asked if anyone else was interested in running or nominate another Cluster resident. There were no additional volunteers.
- John noted the Board is always looking for help from other residents. The Grounds Committee can use some help and our roads and sidewalks can use regular oversight. The needs of the Cluster don’t demand a great deal of time, effort, or attention, just an open eye and willingness to help out occasionally. If you have just a little spare time and an interest in maintaining the beauty of Cabots Point, or if you have ideas on how we can improve the appearance of the Cluster, please contact any Board member to get involved.
- **Highlights of the Past Year** – The one major area of effort the Board addresses each and every year is Cabots Point’s grounds – our landscaping and tree care. Under Mike’s leadership, we have trimmed and cut down trees as needed and revived beds in three of the tiers. Mike will discuss this in his report. Work has included trimming, weeding and other maintained work across the cluster.
- John thanked those individuals who have helped out on particular issues: Mike Savage has continued to update our website which includes most of the available information about our Cluster, including the Handbook, the by-laws, and the Board minutes. Take a look at [www.cabotspoint.org](http://www.cabotspoint.org). Comments on the information available there are appreciated.
- John reminded the group that **all members are responsible for complying with the rules and standards in the Cluster Handbook**. The standards govern the appearance of the outsides of your homes are contained in the Cluster Handbook which is available on the Cluster website. Please do not begin any work on your house until you understand what the standards require. Virtually any change needs Board approval and probably RA approval – one of the facts of life of living in Reston. If you have any questions, please contact a Board member.
- We have a storage rack for canoes & kayaks next to the main Cluster dock, and space is available. The fee is \$25 per canoe/kayak per year, payable beginning 1 April.
- Please place trash for garbage pick-up in appropriate containers early in the morning of each collection day. Plastic bags alone are not sufficient as animals can rip them open.
- Please obey the parking rules. If you have questions about where you can park, please ask a Board member or consult the Handbook.
- Finally, the next Cluster Clean-up is scheduled for April 18. Please take some time to come outside and spruce up the Cluster.

- Steve reminded the group that brush / branch pickup is on Wednesday. The trash vendor prefers lawn bags, or you can put branches up to 4 feet in trash cans. For special pickups (such as household appliances), you can call the trash company and get a rate for a special pickup.

## OLD BUSINESS

- **Minutes** of the March 22, 2014 Annual Meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.
- **Treasurers Report** – Steve Cristofar gave the treasure’s report.
  - The financial statement was sent out with the annual meeting package, and extra copies were provided at the meeting. At the start of this FY, we estimated income for the cluster of \$62k, expenses of \$66k, and a deficit of \$4k to be covered by the checking account. However, income was higher and expenses lower, so instead of a deficit, we should have a break-even year. This was due to:
    - An underrun of \$4k on grounds, in part because of the severity of the winter, and because we had little to no tree damage from storms.
    - Underrun of \$800 in trash collection. Our new trash vendor (AAA) charges \$600/month for pickups, and they have not added any fuel surcharges.
    - Overrun on concrete work, which was budgeted at \$7,000 but came in at \$7,900. Steve noted we have been attempting to determine who is responsible for sidewalks at entrance of the community (across from tot-lot). RA stated that the Road is State of VA owned, and there is no documentation of the sidewalk itself – RA does not have it, but County might. So is not clear who owns sidewalk.
    - Overrun of \$1,900 on snow and ice removal due to the many snow and ice storms throughout the season. Residents commented that Snow vendor (Perfect Landscapes) have been very good this year.
  - Cluster checking is in good shape at over \$20k. We maintain a contingency of at least \$10k, for emergencies like snow or tree damage.
  - Cluster reserve balance is \$75k, which is being pre-funded to re-surface Cluster roads. Last resurfacing was done in 2003/2004. We expect this to cost over \$100k in 2017/2018. We put \$12k each year from Cluster dues into the reserve fund.
- **Ground Supervisor’s Report** - Mike Norvell presented Grounds Supervisor report.
  - Cardinal has given us a new proposed contract for 2016, up \$400 from last year due to mulch and their left disposal costs. The new total is \$19,510.
  - We had 25 visits in 2014. Mike expressed he thought we have a good deal with Cardinal, and the Board plans to renew the contract for upcoming year.
  - Bonilla was paid \$3,700 to remove 5 trees and several stumps. Recommended

Bonilla as easy to work with, and with good pricing.

- Mike noted that there was minimal damage this year after snow storms, which he attributed to Bonilla and good tree maintenance / pruning.
- Regarding shoreline erosion and hillside coming down from Tier 3/4. Mike had one estimate from Merrifield for \$8,300, but it came with no guarantees. Mike talked to Wetland Studies to come and walk the property. John Connelly came out, who will put a proposal together about what can be done. It will include the hillside, lakefront, dock where we are losing shoreline. Could take out affordable sections. Recommended working with them.
- Mike noted that he met Renato Holts from Merrifield who made a presentation at the Reston Garden club. Had recommendations, and Merrifield came in highly rated. Renato was brought in to look at the property, from the Tier 1-Tier 4, and settled on a couple areas that need work. A subset (\$4k) of work from the original \$17k proposal was selected and completed, which including work on Tiers 1 and 2.
- Mike brought a large map of the Cluster which gives the general boundaries of our lots. For those end units, you have about 5.5 feet at the end of your house, except for a few homes which extend to 12-13 feet.
- Mike Savage expressed concern about the expansion of the mulch in comparison with the green space. Mike N. noted Cardinal cited weeds as the reason for expanding mulch beds. Kate asked if concerned with loss of grass, or need more plants. Mike responded he desired more grass.
- Kate Sherwood (*subsequently voted in as new Grounds Chair*) added to the group that the planting and removal of plants on Cluster property is not allowed. And even on your own property you can't cut down a tree with a diameter greater than 4 inches without Reston Association approval. Also, she asked to please not direct Cardinal. If you have concerns or see things you don't like, please contact her directly.
- Ginger asked if removal of a dead tree would also require approval. John N. responded that you should take a photograph prior to removing. Rachel (RA Rep. at Large) added that RA is very quick about approving tree removal requests.
- Rachel added that voting for RA candidates at large is still open, and invited residents to look at all candidates and participate.
- Steve added that during the year (in the fall), the cluster did plant five small Norway spruce trees. Three along the path along South Lakes. One in Tier 1, and one in Tier 3. Those are small when planted, but will grow up to be big spruce trees.
- Rachel added that one issue to watch with mulch is to ensure it is not deeper than 4 inches, which can be detrimental to trees.
- Mike concluded by saying he recommended cleanup and landscaping the Cabots Point property behind Units 2101 and 2103, an area which has been neglected for

too long. The rear of the other Tier 1 units could also use a little attention, and the area along the entrance of South Lakes needs minor attention.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Election of Board Members** – Gary and Kate are both willing to run. Jill nominated candidates be voted in by acclamation. John seconded motion. By a show of hands, all households were for the motion, none opposed. Both Gary Caley and Kate Sherwood were voted unanimously onto the Board. John N. thanked Mike Norvell for his service as Grounds Chair over the past three years.
  
- **Annual Budget** –
  - Upcoming year's budget is estimated at \$63k, which is the same as last year. We expect \$65k of expenditures, equaling a planned deficit of \$1,800 accounted for by money in checking account. Largest expenditure is \$20k for grounds, slightly more than last year. One major change from this year's budget is sidewalk and road repair. We are estimating about \$6k for crack sealing and road sealing for the entire Cluster road system this year. The cracks this year have gotten worse. Otherwise, no big changes in any other line items in the budget.
  - We are required every 5 years to re-do our Cluster reserve study. Steve asked for volunteers to update the reserve study. It is an update, primarily of what it will cost us to update our roads compared to what we will have in our reserve when that time comes (2017/2018). Rachel added that RA does the same thing every 5 years, and RA might be able to provide guidance. Jill asked what it would cost to have it done professionally; Steve responded it would cost up to \$10k to have a firm do the study. Jill asked if there would be any liability issues, John N. responded that it would not.
  - Steve noted who on the Board handles what.
    - Grounds Chair (Kate) handles grounds contract.
    - Treasurer (Steve) handles the trash contract.
    - VP (Gary Caley) handles social event planning.
    - Secretary (John Hills) handles snow contract.
  - Motion to approve the budget was made and seconded. Vote to approve the budget passed unanimously.
  
- **Cluster Clean Up**— Scheduled for April 18. James Clippinger proposed a list of remaining items be sent out to the cluster afterwards, incase residents cannot attend the cleanup.
  
- **Other New Business** –

- Board has given RA permission to addle eggs on cluster property. Resident asked if that approval included private property; it does not, RA would contact you for permission for eggs on private property.
- Alternative roofing material. Steve presented “Enviroshake” (<http://www.enviroshake.com/>), which would be an alternative to the cedar shakes we have today. John N. and Steve both went to various places in NOVA where this had been installed on roofs. And from the car or sidewalk, it looks just like our Cedar shakes once they patina. Very difficult to tell the cedar shakes from this. We had invited Cedar shake representative to attend, but they could not. However, Board is planning to invite them to a future Board meeting, after which we may put the proposal to the Cluster for approval.
  - Rachel added to take it in front of the Reston Design Review Board (DRB), John N. agreed that would be the path forward.
  - Mike asked if DRB standards are dated. Rachel suggested the way to address that is to approach the DRB as a Cluster with suggestions and DRB is reasonable.
  - Jack asked about Enviroshake if there were colors, and how it might be phased in. James added quality of cedar is going down and availability over future years may be an issue. John H. said if approved, this would be an alternative to give residents the choice, but traditional cedar shake roofing would still be available.
- John N. introduced siding discussion. He stated there are many variations in the neighborhood. Added that one of the reasons to consider a new stain is for longevity – darker or opaque stains last longer than the clear. Mike N. added, South Bay (who uses an opaque / solid stain) also looks more uniform. Mike Savage added, if the timing of this siding maintenance could be coordinated, then eventually groups of homes would be on the same maintenance cycle which may allow for a vendor discount.
  - John H. gave background on the topic, stating that the current stain (ABR X-100 Cedar Gold Tone) is a transparent stain with slight red pigment. It looks nice on new wood, but is proving to not be long lasting on sun exposed siding and requires maintenance. The other problem is older wood, which is so dark the ABR X-100 does little to make it look better. Other types of stain include a semi-transparent, which has more pigment, but still allows for the grain of the wood to show through, and finally opaque or solid stain, which is almost like a paint. While it would be easiest to get uniformity across all the homes using an opaque stain (much like South Bay), it would change the look of our homes. John H. suggested the next step may be to take a semi-transparent stain to the Reston DRB for approval as an additional option along with the ABR X-100.
  - There was a lengthy discussion including Jill N., Mike N., John N., Steve,

John H., Ginger Pierson, Ryan Williams, James Clippinger and other residents. Discussion included questions around artificial siding, and if a majority of the Cluster would be interested in an opaque / solid stain option. Resident noted stains becoming weaker due to limits on VOC content. Resident noted the black is not mildew, but what leaches from wood in sun. James added that all cedar now is from tree farms, and the quality is not as good.

- John H. suggested forming a Stain Committee to take the next steps to investigate stain options. Volunteers included Ryan Williams, Ginger Pierson, Jill Norvell, Mike Savage and Rachel Muir.
- Rachel suggested going to DRB as a cluster, explaining our challenges, and the DRB are reasonable people who will work with us to find a solution.
- Rachel brought up question of visibility of house numbers, noting they are difficult to see at night. Suggested the Board could investigate how to make them uniformly more visible – possibly white.
- Rachel announced she will be moving in May, and will be having a party for the Cluster to say farewell and thank you.
- John N. thanked all residents for attending and adjourned the meeting.

**Meeting was adjourned at 11:30.**

Minutes Submitted by  
John Hills, Secretary