

CABOTS POINT CLUSTER ASSOCIATION
Annual Cluster Meeting
Draft Minutes
March 18, 2017

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, Gary Kaley, Kare Sherwood and John Hills were present. 16 properties in Cabots Point were represented by at least one homeowner; 4 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 please sign in and update any information on the sign-in and phone directory, including email addresses.
 - Quorum checked. Had a quorum, 16 in person, 4 proxies. 2 joined late (Ryan Williams and...)
 - Now, let me introduce your Board members, for those of you who are new to the Cluster, as well as for those of you who have just been wondering who we are: JN, Gary Caley-VP, John Hills-Sec, Steve Cristofar-Treas, and Kate Sherwood-Grounds.
 - We've got two Board positions to fill at this meeting – My position is up this year. I serve as President. I am willing to serve another term on the Board – though I would welcome one or more additional candidates for this position. Steve Cristofar's position is also up this year. Steve serves as Treasurer. He does a great job. He is also willing to serve another term. Anyone who would like to run for the open Board positions is encouraged to make his or her intentions known. New members bring new ideas and approaches – that's a good thing. Also, if anyone would like to nominate another resident, please be prepared to do so when we begin to discuss election of Board members later in this meeting.
 - Also, we are always looking for help from other residents. The needs of the Cluster don't demand a great deal of time, effort, or attention, just a willingness to help out occasionally. If you have just a little spare time and an interest in maintaining the beauty of Cabots Point, come speak to one of us today or email any Board member if you are willing to help out – or if you have ideas on how we can improve the Cluster.
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- **Highlights of the Past Year** – The one major area of effort the Board addresses each and every year is Cabots Points' grounds – our landscaping and tree care. Kate has done an excellent job on Grounds this year - again. She will report on work done and on plans for this year later.
 - Also, we'd like to thank Mike Savage who 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.
 - As a reminder: **All members are responsible for complying with RA Covenants and the rules and standards in the Cluster Handbook.** The Cluster standards govern the appearance of much of the outsides of your homes. They are contained in the Cluster Handbook which is available on the Cluster website. What the standards don't address, the Reston covenants and the Reston Association's Design Review Bureau do. Virtually any change in appearance of the outside of our homes must be submitted to the DRB. A Cluster Board member's signature is required on the DRB application. Any change submitted without at least the implicit support of the Board is likely to have a tougher time before the DRB. Bottom line - Please do not begin any work on your house until you understand what the RA covenants and the Cluster standards require. If you have any questions, please contact a Board member. The Cluster Board is considering amendments to the Cluster Handbook to clarify the role of the Board and DRB in this process, as well as to provide residents with more specific instruction on how to get through the process. Please contact any Board member if you have questions.

- Kate noted that she had followed up with RA and noted there is a list of approved windows. She will be...
- Mike N noted he doesn't understand why Clusters and Homeowners are subject to antiquated rules when the rest of Reston is being built up. Kate countered that the larger RA direction does should not impact our ..
- John- the Cluster has not adopted a standard for windows, and the handbook is silent. However, RA has a series of window types, manufactures, and designs that are very close to the original design. If the original design is not available or 35 years old (for example), they will approve windows that are very close to the original design. The original design of all features is the base point for RA DRB review of any change. If you are going to make a change to the original design of your house, the original design is the base for RA to review the accessibility. The Cluster has made a few minor design changes that the RA has accepted. One is the design of the woodwork over the garage door. What we have now is not the original - what is permitted is beyond the original design, and that is now an acceptable standard.
- John H. noted there are two processes, personal and cluster forms. If you are going to submit.
- John n noted
- x? noted (tier 1)..
- Ryan noted
- *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.
- *Boats moored on the lake require a small dock, the design of which is in the Handbook. Maintenance of each dock is the responsibility of the dock user. Some of these docks are beginning to show their age. Please check your dock for maintenance issues.
- *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.
- *Also, 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 22. Please take some time to come outside and spruce up the Cluster. (Tier 1 asked about new requirements, paper bags for yard debris. You can also put branches and twigs bundled, every Wednesday from March through December.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Minutes** of the March 18, 2016 Annual Meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.
- **Treasurers Report** – Steve Cristofar gave the treasure's report.
 - Current fiscal year ends in a few weeks.

- Originally estimated we'd be in the hole \$3k, but it looks like we have a surplus of \$3k. A little under on snow and grounds. We had also estimated \$6k on crack sealing due to difficulty of getting estimates. This will be done in the next FY, major reason to under run. The reserve fund is now at \$102k, which will go mainly to road replacement, when the road is chopped up and replaced. According to the last reserve study, that will be approximately \$125k. The cluster checking account is at \$30k, so we are in good shape financially.
- Sent out several emails over the last few weeks after getting insurance quotes. State farm had originally said that they would not issue policies on wooden roofs of any kind. However, they later (as of March 1) they have changed that policy and they will now cover. However, we may be running into that problem. We had a presentation in the last few meetings as to possible substitutes that look similar, but are not wood.
 - Mark B noted that Cedar shakes are put on homes all over the world. Keep in mind the rest of the country has cedar shakes too, and the industry would be in major jeopardy.
 - Gary noted he had a home in Cedar cove burn when his neighbors house caught on fire.
 - Jill N. asked what the risk was, if fire that is higher risk than if its damage to hail and wind. Asked if there was a desire for the cluster.
 - John N noted, absent strong support for changing the rules, there is no impieties for the Board to change the standards.
 - Shane noted they were dropped by State Farm and they renewed with Earrie. At that time State Farm said they were not renewing because of hail and wind risk. Erie has policies throughout the area and has not problem with it. Found out the month that the renewal was due.
 - (Dark haired lady) Any way we could bring this to RA to see if other clusters have been experiencing this. Could have large impact to Reston. Steve agreed to contact RA and bring it to their attention.

- **Ground Supervisor's Report -**

- Limited activity last year. Most work that was done has been related to trees. Since they had not gotten as much activity in prior years, it was a focus.
- Removal of dead wood and trimming of many trees, and removal of fallen, loose

- libs removed, and road clearing to ensure trucks would not break branches.
- Kate asked if you have work that needs to be done in the cluster, let Kate know so we can put the word in the queue. Work is batched. Obviously emergencies contact Kate for urgent tree removal of fallen trees.
 - All areas are maintained by the Cluster. That also means, not unlike the homes, plants cannot be planted on common ground. That doesn't mean it will take a long time, the Board can usually get requested work done within a month or two. The best planting seasons are Spring and Fall.
 - The recently planted plants are doing well except for several rhododendron at the entrance, which were replaced. A few boxwoods on the road down to Tier 4 are looking stressed, possibly due to dog pee. Please do not let your dog pee on trees. Rocks have been strategically placed for this purpose.
 - Flowers placed around have not done well and will be replaced.
 - Vines and invasive plants are removed periodically, but if you see these please let Kate know.
 - New work includes drain clearing where it is has been plugged with silt.
 - New plants towards Tier 3 where we have a "mud slope"
 - Maintenance contract going from 19510 to 20335, haven't had an increase in 3 years so this is expected.
 - Most important thing is to let Cardinal know we are not happy with grass. No aeration, not enough seeding. Want to get better coverage. Where grass has struggled, other solutions like a wild flower clover, TBD.
 - Steve asked if Cardinal does ground testing. Kate said liming is included in the contract, but will ask the question.
 - (Dark haired Tier 1 - Quinn?). On tier 1, when have bad storms have panic about some of the trees. Asked if those were Cluster trees. Kate said when the tree companies go out, she will ask them to look at those trees and determine how much risk there is. The cluster owns over the path and up to the road. We planted all those trees, and have space to provide more cover. And the more those get treated (like Tier 3), those evergreens (Laurals), if you water them you will end up with a screen to the road.
 - Cardinal has watered, and paid them to water extra due to the erratic and dry summer / fall, but if you (residents) can provide extra water to newly planted plants and trees, it will help significantly.
 - Mike N. asked about Tier 1, if we were putting up a screen to screen homes between pathway? Kate - no, was talking about the Laurels that are already there along Southlakes. No plans to plant between the path and the houses.
 - Karen - what is Cardinal's responsibility for the plants along the lakefront? Kate noted they should be weeding twice a year. Discussed that Cardinal doesn't

always know what is a weed and what isn't. Gary noted they tend to let it grow back a little further each year.

- Mike noted that the shoreline will be destroyed if you don't make a barrier along that edge. We need to put riprap or wetlands plants in there to create a barrier. Kate noted that was the intent of the biologists. Gary noted they are still there, but also have some weeds. Karen noted that we put a lot of money in that and weeds should be removed. John N. noted it's a continuing problem and Cardinal doesn't tend to take ownership. Cardinal is responsive if we remind him, so Kate will continue this year to do so. Kate is concerned that the lakefront is steep and getting worse, and the planting done after the biology have not thrived or are gone. It needs to be managed.
- Steve - Is this the year the lake will be dredged? Mike said next year. Kate noted we should take advantage of that activity to put in riprap (piles of rocks wrapped in a barrier) which will act as erosion prevention. Steve mentioned RA may have prevented us from doing that. Kate noted we do have rocks on the two ends, which has helped with the erosion. Kate will check with Lucy at RA.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Election of Board Members** – John and Steve are both willing to run. Jill nominated candidates be voted in by acclamation. Gary seconded motion. By a show of hands, all households were for the motion, none opposed. Both John Norton and Steve Cristofar were voted unanimously onto the Board.
- **Annual Budget** –
 - Projecting a negative over expenses of just over 5k, which historically gets us to a breakeven.
 - Carrying over that road and sidewalk (blacktop and total road sealing) of \$6k. The last activity was just a crack sealing.
 - Expectation road replacement will be done in the next 3 years. We have been lucky to have limited snowfall this year.
 - Not proposing any kind of dues increase, however that may be necessary in the 2019 budget year.
 - Have plenty in the checking account to cover any deficit in the spending in the upcoming FY.
 - The Board is recommending that membership change the late fee structure. Currently it is \$25 late fee. We are proposing to keep \$25 for first month late. The proposal is to increase subsequent late fees (after the first month) to \$50. This is rare, but it becomes very difficult to manage when that happens. Asked

for a vote - proposal, first month stays at \$25, and subsequent fees raised from \$25 to \$50.

- (Tier 1 guy) asked for the reason is to create more pain to encourage people to pay? If so, why not double dues each subsequent month?
- Kate noted that may be seen as unreasonable.
- Steve added that some clusters charge an interest fee in addition to the late fee.
- Alice asked - in 10 years there have only be two late residents? No Steve clarified that only 2 late more than one month.
- This change requires a change to the Bi-Laws, which requires approval from the Cluster.
- Steve put forth the motion, it was seconded. 12 to 2, motioned passed. The language will be added to the Bi-Laws.
- Steve asked for a motion no the Budget.
 - Steve motioned to approve the budget.
 - Jill seconded with amendments to correct 0 on budget package.
 - Bill passed with 17 up votes.
- New small tax district is being proposed, of 0.02 cents per \$100 of assessed evaluation, which may contribute an increase of \$100 or more per homeowner. Steve asked residents to keep their eyes open and be aware.

- **Cluster Clean Up**— Scheduled for April 22. John N. noted if you have specific ideas for cleanup, let Kate know so we can organize. Gary noted that Cluster cleanup will be kicked off with Doughnuts and Coffee.

- Roads Sidewalks and Homes
 - Will work on roads.
 - No issues on sidewalks.
 - Question on road Sealant. Asked if there will be a requirement to move cars overnight? Yes, there may be areas where they have to dig in and patch, and cars will have to park outside of the cluster while that work is being done.
 - Kate added that parking on the Roads in the Cluster is against Cluster policy and can be against fire code. Please park in your garage or on your apron. John N. added that if parking becomes more of a problem and we have to get a fire inspection, we will end up with yellow curbs.

- **Other New Business** –

- Mike added that its time to refresh to Website. Asked if there was anyone in the Cluster that could share experience and learn, and slowly take over the site. Possibly use a blog to have access to the public and the community, to secure things like the phone list, have threaded discussions, such as with vendors. You could have access control for posting content to keep things more timely. Steve noted that if that fails, there are services we could hire. Mike will send out the email to ask for volunteers.
- John N. to follow up with Lucy at RA and see what other clusters are doing for ideas.
- Mike N. appealed his real estate taxes for 2015, and found that the accumulative increase in property taxes for Tier 4 went up a total of \$1M for that one year it went up, while the other Tiers went down. After the appeal, got a slight decrease. For anyone living on Tier 4, they do not take the sales values of homes on other tiers into consideration. Suggested residents review their taxes.
- Jill N. noted that the Reston National Golf Course is up for sale again. Keep your eyes open to help preserve that natural space. Kate added to go vote for your RA Member at large; voting closes in the next week.
- Jill N. thanked the Board for their service for the past year.
- Steve and John N. thanked all residents for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:24.

Minutes Submitted by
John Hills, Secretary