

CABOTS POINT CLUSTER ASSOCIATION
Annual Cluster Meeting
Draft Minutes
March 17, 2018

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, Kate Sherwood, Gary Caley, and John Hills were present. 20 homes 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 18, 2018 Annual Meeting minutes (reading if required)
- Treasurer's Report (Treasurer Steve Cristofar)
- Grounds Supervisor's Report
- Other old business

New Business

- Election of 2 Board members
- Approval of the Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2019 (April 2018 to March 2019)
- Cluster Cleanup – April 21
- Roads, sidewalks and homes
- 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.

Your Board members are: John Norton - President, Gary Caley - VP, John Hills - Secretary, Steve Cristofar - Treasurer, and Kate Sherwood - Grounds.

We've got two Board positions to fill at this meeting – Kate and Gary's terms are up this year. Both are willing to run again. In addition, Daryl Pendleton is running for one of the two positions. So we actually have a contested election this year, which is wonderful. Anyone else who would like to run for the open Board positions is encouraged to make his or her intentions known this morning.

Also, anyone who would like to participate more actively in the running of the cluster, please let us know. Board meetings are held monthly and are open to all residents. Or if you just have ideas on how we can improve the Cluster please contact a board member to discuss.

Mike Savage handles 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. Comments on the information available there are appreciated. Mike has indicated he is working on new software (WordPress) for the site to make it more user friendly. So, we are in the market for another volunteer to take over the site. That effort mostly involves posting board minutes and changes to our standards. If anyone comfortable with a computer is willing to help out, we would appreciate it.

Just a reminder: All members are responsible for complying with RA Covenants and the rules and standards in the Cluster Handbook. The Cluster rules and 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 Handbook rules and 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 Design Review Board. Please do not begin any work on your house until you understand what the RA covenants and the Cluster rules and standards require. The Cluster Board is working on changes to the Handbook to clarify what residents must know and do before making exterior changes to their houses and property.

- 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.
- 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 21. Please take some time to come outside and spruce up the Cluster.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Minutes** of the March 18, 2017 Annual Meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.
- **Treasurers Report** – Steve Cristofar gave the treasurer’s report.
 - Cleanup day for next month is April 21st, however there are many loose branches and debris. Don’t wait until April 21 to clean that up, if you make a pile our trash people can pick that up. John H. asked about debris pickup. Steve replied that debris pickup has begun; they pickup on Wednesday.
 - We budgeted a small deficit of \$1000 for the year, but came in under budget. We were projecting a \$5000 under-run.
 - Our reserve fund is in good shape at \$116k, so we are ready to repave our roads in the next few years. We did not do any road work this fiscal year (i.e. crack sealing) since it was not determined to be essential. We may be doing this in the coming fiscal year.
 - There may be additional expenses, with possibility of snow in the coming weeks (there are about 2 weeks left in the fiscal year).
- **Ground Supervisor’s Report** -
 - We’ve put in a number of new plants this year.
 - The Board tries to follow a rule “lose a tree, plant a tree.” Several giant white pines throughout the Cluster have been coming down due to their shallow root systems. After losing a large tree, it takes several years before that area can be planted. If residents have ideas for new trees, please let Kate know.
 - Many hollies were damaged over the year, many have died. We are waiting to see so we can have them replaced by Cardinal under the guarantee.
 - The flowers at the entrance will be replanted in mid-April.
 - Kate asked if anyone would enjoy / support having solar lights to illuminate the signs at the entrance of Cabots point. John H. mentioned that we’d done this before, but that they were stolen. However, there was interest by the cluster to try again.
 - Daryl asked how difficult it would be to run electricity. Kate said difficult since we’d have to run it under a paved path. Daryl noted it would look nice to have lighting to improve the entrance at night. Residents supported moving forward with lighting for the sign.
 - Kate added that we’ve lost two major trees on tier 2. It is very expensive when they come down, \$2,550 for removal + \$350 to have the stump ground down. It

was another \$2,000 for the large (leaning) tree on Tier 1 that came down.

- John N. noted that one of the trees that came down luckily missed his house, but recommended that we get an Arborist to check the remaining white pines throughout the Cluster. Kate said we use “Thrive” (now “Save a Tree”), or another arborist that RA recommends. Bonilla takes out the fallen trees but are not arborists.
- The new contract with Cardinal has one big change - we’ve switched to organic fertilizing and weed control. The proposed yearly price has increased from \$20,335 to \$22,735, but the contracted work will be safer for us and our environments with use of organic herbicides and fertilizers. Kate has researched the alternative organic chemicals Greg (from Cardinal) has recommended and they also are more effective than their non-organic counterparts.
- Kate has asked that Cardinal aerate all the lawns this year (making small holes in the lawns to loosen the density) and improve grass coverage through the cluster. If you have patches of grass or other grounds issues you are concerned about please let the Board know.
- Daryl asked if we trim the trees. Kate replied that we do Cluster wide tree trimming every 3-4 years with an arborist. They look to see if there is anything dangerous, or if anything can be improved. However, this process is very expensive. Daryl asked about limbs hanging over the road. Kate said Bonilla can trim along the roads, however, an arborist is needed when you are trying to preserve them or shape a tree. The last trimming was done recently, primarily to the maples where they were thinned to help them during wind storms. The arborist said you can’t take more than 10% of a tree w/o hurting it. Daryl asked about limbs hanging over our homes; Kate said that could be done by Bonilla. Daryl, Ginger and the Norvells expressed they had specific cases for review. Mark also expressed concerns about a tree in front of his home.
- Mike N. added that a few years ago a large tree came down (a large maple) in Tier 4 which Bonilla removed. But thought it might make sense to take trees out sooner rather than after they fall.
- Kate added that a tree that comes down on its own (that is not risking any property damage) is cheaper to remove.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Election of Board Members** – Since Daryl Pendleton was running Gary Caley removed himself from the ballot, leaving Daryl and Kate as two candidates for two positions. John asked if we wanted to vote in Kate and Daryl by acclamation. It was agreed. The vote was seconded, and passed unanimously. Daryl Pendleton and Kate Sherwood were won three year terms on the Board.

- **Annual Budget –**
 - Steve noted the fiscal year is April 1 through March 31. So final day of FY18 ends on the March 31 2018. FY19 begins April 1, 2018.
 - Projecting a budget income about the same as last year. The only change is the number of late fees and disclosure document fees. No change in dues. It has been 6 years since a change in dues.
 - Projecting income of \$61k, expenses of \$63k, even with small decrease on grounds (fewer new plantings). Grounds is over 50% of our budget, but it is difficult to forecast due to changes in weather.
 - Steve gave an example of the huge snowstorm a few years ago that was very expensive and required a special assessment. Daryl asked about the special assessment. Steve replied the regular dues continue, but a special assessment (one time fee) may be required to cover additional work. Ginger added that residents could choose either a one time payment or spread out payments over the year.
 - Karen R. asked about the sign at Tier 3/4. Kate replied that the numbered part of the sign can be reused. The Board will reach out to someone to replace the base, but may be difficult to match the paint color. Kate asked ~~about~~ if we could remove the additional signs. Kate asked if we should be replacing all the Cluster signs, or just get the one fixed. Daryl noted that the wood was rotted and had termites.
 - Steve noted that expenditures budgeted for the new fiscal year are greater than income by \$2k, which was less that forecasted for this current fiscal year. We are obliged each year to review the reserve fund. Every 5 years, we are required to get the reserve fund (reserve study) professionally completed. That was done 2 years ago. The reserve fund is currently invested in CDs at 1.2%.
 - The main thing our reserve fund is accumulating for is the repaving of our cluster roads. The last time that was done was 2004, 14 years ago. Our roads are approaching the end of their lifespan. We are seeing alligator cracks. We will soon need to remove the top few inches and get it re-asphalted. That will likely be over \$100k. From time to time we have to do concrete work on a few sidewalks. Already, we've seen where a tree-root has damaged newly installed concrete.
 - No dues increase is planned, however the reserve study that we had done 2 years ago did recommend increasing dues to increase contributions to the reserve fund. Steve asked if there were questions. There were none.
 - Steve asked for approval for the FY19 Cluster Budget. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

- Open Business
 - Ginger asked about the barrels along the hills around the Cluster. John H explained the barrels were for sanding during the winter to get traction. And that we could save money if we replaced the barrels, filled them with salt or sand, and relied on them rather than having the Snow Plow company come for small ices. There was no interest in keeping the barrels. Kate will ask Cardinal to remove them.
 - Daryl asked if conversation has come up on types of roofs and replacements for cedar shake. John N. mentioned that we've gone through the process to look at artificial cedar shake from year to year, and took a poll which indicated not a lot of support in the cluster. Daryl's insurance company has asked questions about his cedar roof. Steve added that a few years ago, an insurance company had issued a prohibition on cedar shake roofs, but they ultimately reversed that policy. He is not aware of issues with insurance companies covering cedar roofs currently.
 - John H. added the steps to going to a non-cedar roof would be like any other option. Residents should do the due-diligence to develop a plan and request, and then work that request through the Reston Design Review Board for approval. The Cluster Board would like to be involved, and can either support or not support a request, but ultimately it is the DRB that makes such decisions.
 - Steve added that there is now a 30% increase in cedar imported to this country. So the prices of siding and roofing are more expensive.
 - Ryan added that the board brought in samples for review several years ago, but people were not impressed with the samples. Steve said no 2 roofs are alike.
 - John H. explained that there are two different processes RA has for getting changes to your home approved.
 - There is an individual process that a resident can use to request a specific change to their home. It requires signatures from a Board member and neighbors.
 - There is a Cluster process which can be initiated by either the Cluster Board or a resident with backing by the Cluster Board. If approved, requests that go through the Cluster process would change the standards and be available to all residents without having to re-apply to the DRB. (These changes are tracked in the Cluster Handbook).
 - John N. added that we will be working on improving the Cluster handbook. Kate added our RA rep is Mark Voytka, who is very responsive. You can email or call him. He is very helpful and a good resource. Steve noted that Mark from RA has been digitizing all the RA /DRB decisions for each cluster. We put in a request in

Nov/Dec, and we recently received back RA-observed standards for Cabots Point in electronic format.

- Mike N. commented that South Bay has much less maintenance. Added that Fairfax County wants to increase density in Reston which would include high-rises. Somewhere there has to be some adapting to new materials. Noted an experience where resident had trim around windows which was rejected by DRB.
 - Ryan added that RA is using these standards, and if they are not very specific that can be difficult to enforce.
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- **Cluster Clean Up**— Scheduled for April 21. .

 - **Other New Business** –
 - John N. asked if there was any new business to discuss.
 - Steve added that there is a new RA phone answering system that doesn't work well. Added there is a significant wait to get to voicemail. Jill Norvell added that the navigation of the Reston website is very poor. Kate suggested emailing Mike V. from RA for help.
 - Jill added there are three RA director positions. Was interested in input from Cluster into candidates.
 - Daryl asked about the drain by his home. Noted that all the rain from Tier 4 comes down, and the water puddles by his home. Kate noted that could be corrected with the re-paving.
 - Steve added that the streams in Reston have been undergoing restoration. The one between Cedar Cove and Southbay. Asked if the Owl Cove stream was under consideration from RA. Mike N. added that is the responsibility of RA since they have a 10 foot easement. Speaking to Larry Butler, they are now going to dredge Lake Thoreau, not Audubon. He suggested in reviewing the published draft use of lakes and policy for the lakes.
 - Kate added that within the past year she did inquire to RA if there was any planning to fix that area and the answer was no.
 - Karen asked if it help if we made a Cluster request, like a petition from the Cluster? John N. asked if the residents supported having the Board approach RA with a formal request to do something about the Owl Cove stream. Cluster voted and approved.
 - Mike added there is lakefront erosion. Suggested a boat speed limit.
 - Ginger added about end units with storage. Can we convert those into part of the living space? John N. added you would need design review Board approval.
 - John H. mentioned that one home extended the crawl space behind the laundry

room that's under the kitchen.

- Phyllis noted that she had copies of the floor plans for the whole Cluster. Offered them to the Cluster, noted that you can't get them to the county any more.
- Jill Norvell said if anyone walks down the sidewalk to the end of lake Audubon (snake-den branch where the bridge is), and take the path back to Southlakes. In the wooded area is a small fawn, and at 5pm in the evening, you'll see pie-balled fawn (white deer).
- John also mentioned that most of our basements should have waterlines that are capped, since one of the options was a wet bar down in the basement.
- Bill added a thank you to the Board, especially Gary for his 13 years of service.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30.

Minutes Submitted by
John Hills, Secretary