

# Barque Hill Association - 2009 Annual Meeting

Church Hill Parish Hall, Norwell, MA

10 June 2009

## Minutes of the Annual Meeting

Attendees: Copy of sign-in sheet incorporated herein as *Article 1*. Number of attendees: 36 physical headcount (34 names appear on sign-in list)

Tom Poor, President called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and requested association member Steve Lynch to act as Temporary Secretary at the meeting in the absence of Kris Buckley, Secretary.

### 1. Minutes.

Tom Poor asked if Temporary Secretary would read the 2008 Annual Meeting minutes to the assembled.

- A. Motion to waive the reading of the 2008 Annual Meeting minutes was made and seconded. Carried unanimously.
- B. Motion to accept the 2008 Annual Meeting minutes as submitted was made and seconded. Carried unanimously.
- C. A copy of 2008 Barque Hill Association Annual Meeting minutes is incorporated herein as *Article 2*.

### 2. Financial Statements.

Tom Poor summarized our current financial condition as being "in good shape" with 86 of 107 households, or 80.4%, making voluntary contributions this year taking the Association to a current total cash position of \$17,100. Landscaping, taxes and the annual picnic expenses continue to constitute the largest three line items in our budget and combined equate to \$13,000, or over 75%, of our total annual outlay. At this time Tom said he anticipates a potential 2010 deficit of \$1,000 that requires further discussion at the next board meeting to develop possible solutions.

- A. Motion to accept the Barque Hill Association Income statement as submitted was made but not seconded.
- B. A copy of the Income Statement is incorporated herein as *Article 3*.

### 3. Grounds.

Tom Poor summarized the overall state of the grounds in Barque Hill as improving. Due to the unusually hard winter suffered in Norwell, debris clean up and tree removal/mitigation work is still in progress at this time.

#### a. Mowing and Clean-up

- i. The Association has been contracting for several years with the firm On The Green for our lawn-mowing and landscaping work. Our agreement pays them \$1,000 per month for fulfillment of services to keep the common grounds clean, well-kept and orderly. As a result of this arrangement we see more activity in spring and fall when rainfall and climate is more conducive to rapid growth, less so in the heat of the summer months when grass is drier and slower growing. In addition, the vendor performs a twice-annual major clean-up of the common areas - once in the spring, once in the fall.

#### b. Fences

- i. The Association contracts with Armstrong Fence to maintain and replace fence posts and rails as necessary. You may have noticed some rotted elements being changed out in the common areas as a result of this program.

- c. Flowers and Rocks
  - i. Tom Poor commented on the attractive vegetation that has been placed this year at the Barque Hill Drive entry. Thanks to Jessie Chai for the very pretty "flowers" or whatever it is they are called from a horticultural perspective. Between the summer plantings and the holiday wreaths on fencing in the common areas, it is these differentiating touches that form part of the ambience and charm that constitutes the Barque Hill neighborhood's ongoing value proposition to owners and prospective buyers alike.
  - ii. Discussions then turned to the deteriorating state of the boundary stonewall at the Till Rock Drive entry to Barque Hill. Many years of snow plowing, snow pile-up and the relentless constant migration typical of all mortar-free rock walls in New England have all taken their toll. Bob Ashley, Steve Lynch and Dan Uhlman all expressed an interest in working to help restore this distinctive architectural feature of our neighborhood over the coming weeks, including the brush and undergrowth defoliation necessary to be able to perform this work safely and freely. Additional volunteers are always welcome. BYO Round-Up.
- d. Shipyard Park, Till Rock Park, Barque Hill Common and Trail
  - i. All these lands are now dedicated conservation land since being deeded over in 1988 and are taxed accordingly.
  - ii. Per Anne Merna, the cleared lot on Till Rock is useable, recently passed a perk test and has been sold in order to be built upon.
  - iii. John Garvey observed that some Barque Hill residents are of the opinion that Till Rock Park seems to be less-well maintained as a rule and solicited additional membership feedback to determine any further action which might be required to mitigate that perception.
  - iv. Steve Lynch is planning to remove the fallen tree currently obstructing the Barque Hill Trail and welcomed any assistance, either in the form of labor or refreshment. The trail should be cleared for unimpeded use no later than the end of June.

#### 4. Association Functions.

- a. Welcome Committee - Anne Merna
  - i. Anne stated that the work of the committee had slipped of late and proposed that she, Pat Mullare and Rosemary Spurway collaborate on a Fall Social to take place at the Cushing Center to help reinstitute a more adult-focused fall venue. Details to follow.
- b. Picnic - Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>
  - i. The picnic costs between \$1700 and \$2000 per annum and remains the Association's largest annual social event.
- c. Halloween - Parade Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup>
  - i. This event was not held last year. If there is interest in running some form of Halloween event this coming October, please speak to Dan Uhlman, Board Director responsible for social events.
- d. Christmas Caroling
  - i. Tom Poor invites anyone who thinks they can sound as good out of the shower as they do in to convene a group for this holiday activity. Hopefully it will not be 5°F for your group as it has been in years past.
- e. More functions?
  - i. Both Dan Uhlman and Tom Flynn expressed strong interest in supporting informal, impromptu events and activities down at Shipyard Park in either the spring or fall months. Anne Merna recalled a cocktail party that was

held some time ago using the Silent Chef for neighborhood adults and reiterated her interest in managing a fall social event of a similar nature.

## 5. Common Lands.

- a. Misuse - drinking and congregation
  - i. Since the demise of the rope swing, Tom Poor reports that it appears that issues that were of concern regarding teen drinking and congregating in Shipyard Park has diminished substantially. The minutes show no other material comment made by meeting attendees on this subject.
- b. Right-of-way
  - i. The "Panhandle" section of land in Shipyard Park abutting the Roman and Shepherd properties is considered to be subject to a legal concept called 'adverse possession'. (Note: According to Barron's Law Dictionary, Adverse Possession is "a method of acquiring complete title to land as against all others, including the record owner, through certain acts over an uninterrupted period of time, as prescribed by statute. It is usually prescribed that such possession must be actual, visible, open, notorious, hostile, under claim of right, definite, continuous [and] exclusive.")
  - ii. The statutory basis for adverse possession in Massachusetts is Mass. Gen. L. c. 260, §21, which provides for a twenty (20) year statute of limitations to recover possession of land. In order to fulfill the Association's continued claim to this land, we must walk and mark the property in question at least once every 20 years. This is best accomplished as an early wintertime activity due to the dense undergrowth in that area.
- c. Markers on Barque Hill Drive
  - i. We continue to struggle with a good way to give snow plow drivers visual guidance in the successful accomplishment of their rounds on Barque Hill Drive. In the past solutions that help properly mark the roadway's edge have also caused personal injury to selected owners to the degree that the markers came back down. We continue to explore different approaches and suggestions are most welcome at this point.
  - ii. Absent a better solution for guiding the plow drivers, they inevitably end up plowing our sod as well as our snow and as a result of the heavy snowfall this past winter, substantial areas of our neighborhood common areas took a real beating. Repair work to the median that the town committed to do is belatedly underway and Hugh Spurway volunteered to continue his follow up with the Town and make certain this work is completed in a timely fashion. This is a time-sensitive issue as it is our hope we can still benefit from the prime rainy grass-growing season as have other parts of Norwell such as Stetson Shrine Road. Repairs initiated there much earlier in the season are now showing excellent results. Jeff Lundgren asked the board to investigate what our "Plan B" solution to this issue would be in the event the town was unable to assist us in this repair work before fall, though no motion was formally made at that time.
  - iii. Wintertime mailbox destruction in Barque Hill due to plowing activities continues to be a problem that is puzzling, patience-testing and stubbornly persistent. Unfortunately, we regret that owners are pretty much on their own to resolve this problem. Though most members agreed it would be nicer if the entire issue were to go away, the expression of individual homeowner's creativity and engineering ingenuity in their use of materials ranging from bungee cords and duct tape to granite monoliths worthy of Stonehenge in attempting to resolve this challenge is impressive. Again, thanks to Hugh Spurway for attempting to give this issue a bit more visibility on the Association's behalf over on Main Street with our Selectmen.

## **6. Web Site. (<http://www.barquehill.org/>)**

- a. John Garvey called for suggestions and states that the site is on autopilot at point.
- b. Links to approved or known vendors with products/services that have benefitted owners have been added. Owners are invited to continue to provide further such input or additional content suggestions as they feel would benefit the Association's members.
- c. Kevin Bedford suggested a 'babysitter list' might be posted on the site - some members expressed concerns about internet safety for kids and discussion if this requirements would be better served as an email distribution to Barque Hill resident email addresses of current record in lieu of the website.

## **7. Old Business.**

- a. Speeding
  - i. Tom Poor reports that many residents and visitors continue to operate their vehicles substantially above the posted speed limit signs and cited individual owner concerns at various locations within our neighborhood. Short of commissioning a highway study to add signs to control the flow of traffic, Tom reminded the assembled to try and be mindful of the locally posted speeds in our part of Norwell, which in many cases are set at 20 or 25 mph.
  - ii. Jeff Lundgren asked if at some point in the past we had requested a raising of certain speed limits in the area. (Fox Hill Ln. area of Stetson Rd. is posted 20 mph, for example) A brief discussion followed with no specific motion or resolutions.
- b. Stetson Road
  - i. The Barque Hill Association offers to help maintain a clean and neat appearance with the Stetson Road area paralleling the state highway. State and Norwell DPW crews infrequently patrol the area but in the past have come to clean up major rubbish when notified. (i.e. furniture, major refuse dumps, waste tires)
  - ii. Kevin Bedford reported witnessing what he believes was an individual disposal of rubbish on Stetson and noted the individual's license plate at that time but no further action was taken.
  - iii. Tom Poor organizes a volunteer crew from time to time to assist in this effort which impacts us all as a major feeder road into our neighborhood and acknowledged it is a constant struggle to keep up with it.

## **8. New Business.**

- a. Dogs
  - i. Man's best friend could use some help from man from time to time, too. We remind owners to make certain their dogs are securely restrained when owners plan to be away so they do not roam freely as a courtesy to other homeowners. Lucky Bedford's owner Kevin stepped up and acknowledged his dog was one such instance but all in attendance agreed Lucky was not the only case in point.
  - ii. Bob and Kelly Ashley offered to sponsor a 'Dog Social' event at their house in order to allow the dogs in the neighborhood to adapt to each other and to facilitate the socialization process that is a key aspect of these animals behavior. John Keene observed that dogs being left alone outside all day tended to bark a lot and the Ashley's believe this Dog Social approach is one way to mitigate that. The Association would facilitate this event by providing a current e-mailing list to the Ashleys so they could proceed to host this activity.

- b. Activities for kids
    - i. Tom Flynn and Dan Uhlman spoke of having the next of their impromptu spring / fall neighborhood Sunday get-togethers down at Shipyard Park and for little additional funding from the association could be a great way to deliver the kinds of things that are easier to put together and cost less than a typical annual September event runs based on last year's costs if we are looking for ways to save some of the anticipated 2010 budget overrun.
  - c. Utilities service(s)
    - i. Caroline North of 124 Brigantine Circle requested via email to discuss an issue related to phone line service, Verizon and FIOS in the neighborhood. Subsequent discussion revealed a long-standing issue related to the phone service infrastructure coming into Barque Hill resulting in poor line quality and interrupted or difficult to repair service. Many homeowners expressed strong support that an email be sent to all Barque Hill association households to solicit responses to gauge interest levels and aggregate size of this group. The thinking is if interested, we could have the option of ordering FIOS for internet and phone service (apparently as well as cable television), and get improved phone service, as well as an option other than Comcast if we negotiated together as a group rather than individual households.
- A. Motion to explore asking membership via email for their interest in pursuing this group option with Verizon was made and seconded. Carried unanimously.
  - B. A copy of Christine North's email is incorporated herein as *Article 4*.
    - ii. Tom Flynn then asked members in attendance if they thought there was anything that we might do to remedy the seemingly high number of power outages we experience in this part of Norwell. The general consensus was that the root cause problem is a direct result of the power lines mounted on poles being in such close proximity to all the trees which make Barque Hill such a distinctive neighborhood. In icy or stormy weather, these same trees and branches falling across the lines make us an easy target for outages.

## 9. Other Business.

- a. Homeowners' Guide
  - i. Ray Colella raised a concern about a persistent rumor circulating to the effect that an additional cut-through to Brigantine Circle created from the purchase of a piece of vacant land on Till Rock was being contemplated but no one else was able to substantiate this claim further. General consensus was that this matter would need to receive enough Town of Norwell oversight via the Planning Board application / hearing process that anything else material will come to light via that mechanism
  - ii. Tom Poor advised that the Bylaws have been scanned and that any delay in editing or revising them lay with him. Steve Lynch suggested that they could be made more user-friendly and thought it prudent that they be brought current. No motions were made or voted upon at this time.
- b. Expectations of Barque Hill Association from residents
 

Tom Poor asked the assembled if there was anything else that the Association could be doing to assist the membership and two areas were discussed:

  - i. Neighborhood Watch - Break-ins and attempted break-ins seem to be on the rise. Kevin Bedford reported an attempted recent break-in at his home which caused minor property damage but did not allow anyone to gain entry. Other members cited several notices in recent issues of the Norwell Mariner reporting a larceny, suspicious activity and possible attempted forced entries. We ask that in addition to keeping an eye out for each other

if anyone sees any suspicious activity or unfamiliar folks prowling around a neighbor's home, please contact the NPD immediately. It is much better to find out that a contractor has been authorized to perform work on someone else's property than to find out afterwards that the same innocent-looking white van was responsible several thefts.

- ii. Deed Restrictions - Concerns apparently remain about use, scope and disposition of certain undeveloped parcels of land within Barque Hill and how policy changes could adversely impact our neighborhood.

**10. Election of Directors.**

- A. Motion to accept Barque Hill Association 2009-2010 Board of Directors as submitted was made and seconded. Carried unanimously.
- B. A copy of 2009-2010 Barque Hill Association Board of Directors is incorporated herein as *Article 5*.

**11. Adjournment.**

- A. Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Carried unanimously.
- B. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen H. Lynch

Temporary Secretary  
Barque Hill Association