

Property Coordinator Update
March 28, 2014

Snow

It's been quite the winter. I've spent a lot of time driving back and forth from Meeting and shoveling ramps, steps, porches and walkways around the property. Thankfully, daughter Katey was around for the most intense stretches of this and helped get it done.

Thermostats & Heat

On Sunday or Monday of each week, I reprogram the thermostats to coincide with the scheduled use of the buildings for the coming week. After one or more well-meaning souls repeatedly hit the "hold" button, thinking that would return it to its programmed schedule – when in fact, it either kept the heat blasting for 24 hours or didn't allow it to heat up for the next event – I resorted to putting a piece of purple duct tape over the hold button. This seems to have solved our problem.

Bulletin Boards in the Community House

They still look sad and lonely in the Community House. M&C has indicated that they are interested in taking up this bit of outreach.

Occupancy Limits and Town Inspections

We still have not had the walk through inspection we've been trying to arrange since January. Stay tuned!

Use of the Buildings by Others

The Westport River Garden Club met with me to commit to dates for the coming year and to come up with a consistent compensation. They gracefully asked for window coverings in the hall that would facilitate PowerPoint presentations, etc. on a large screen. The window darkening curtains on the stage seem to have solved this problem. They expressed deep gratitude to Meeting for the continued use of the space, which they describe as "perfect" for their needs. (The new president uses email extensively, which works well for me, too!) It feels great to have such a wonderful, reciprocal relationship with them.

Partners Village store moved a large book-signing event to the Community House one Saturday in February when they realized that their building couldn't have accommodated it. We all scrambled to make it happen 2 days before the event and then felt great about the good-neighborly-ness through it. ☺ BTW, the author had photos to display on a screen, so the room darkening shades and curtains in the hall were much appreciated!

That same week, the Trustees of Reservations also moved a large event to the Community House when the RSVPs began exceeding the capacity number in their planned venue. Again, with a bit of a scramble and friendly cooperation on both sides, we made it happen. (Oh, and once again, the audience could see the PowerPoint presentation because of the shades and curtains!) Between this event and the book signing, I think we had at least 150 people in the building that aren't usually there.

We have 2 private birthday parties booked for April. NEYM's Youth Retreat programs held their annual 6th Grade Retreat here in early March, Noah Baker Merrill, the secretary of NEYM, held a meet and greet potluck one Saturday evening in mid March, and the exercise classes, brownie troop meetings, women in ministry meeting, and Westport Women's Club meeting all were held in the Community House as usual. The building gets used at least 5 days every week....and sometimes 7.

We received a letter from Ed Swidey, the director of Summer on Stage, asking if we would once again agree to the use of our property for the children's theater camp this coming summer. We are in the process of negotiating a satisfactory arrangement for all affected. They intend to run the camp for 5 weeks this summer, which is 2 more than previous summers. Business Meeting provisionally approved this request, with some lee-way in the final rental fee, and dependent on the theater camp agreeing to a list of expectations similar to last year's.

Property Committee, with input from the Finance Committee clerk, approved a request by Tim Gillespie and family to borrow one of the tents for a family wedding over the 4th of July. We are grateful for all of the years that Tim and his family have helped us with the set up and break down of the book fair. They will return it in time for the 3 day window when we try to get the tent up on site for the fair.

Misc. Repairs and Upgrades

Windows: Property Committee is working with a contractor on a replacement window estimate for the Community House.

Outside painting: Property Committee is also negotiating an estimate for painting the trim on the exterior of the Community House.

Painting bathrooms: Business Meeting approved having Jen Moura help Property Committee choose a color for me to repaint both bathrooms in the front half of the Community House later this spring.

Morency carpet: A Property Committee member has taken the lead on inquiring about the seam that is becoming more apparent in the Meeting House over time.

Cracked bench: Several wonderful attenders are helping me resolve the problem of the bench underneath the balcony that has a support leg that is splitting.

Several doors: I am aware of several doors in both buildings that need work done on them. They are on my punch list to get done.

Tile floors: I have researched possible contractors to strip and refinish the tile in the Community House and have one that I hope to get an estimate from next week. (Our previous contractor does not seem to be in this business any longer.)

Parking Lot: In the next few weeks, A.J. Potter and I will work out the price and work to be done re-gravelling the parking lot. First, it will have to be leveled out – the snow plows this winter have understandably and predictably created some waves in the landscape!

Weather Seal Ramps and Decks: I will be looking to get a volunteer crew together to do this once the weather is a bit warmer.

Water Quality

The latest water test came back fine for drinking. We are clear, however, to continue to provide bottled water for drinking.

Peace Garden

Cynthia Brenner has graciously offered to head up the effort to get the peace garden ready for the spring. I am looking for donations of garden tools *in good condition*. (Please note this requirement!) In particular, we are looking for sturdy hand trowels, a leaf rake, sharp clippers, and a good, sharp spade. Be in touch with me if you have any of these in your shed that are simply collecting dust! We will put them to good use.

Stay tuned for the date of the Spring Cleanup Day....to be decided at the Property Committee meeting 3/30/14.

Gretchen Baker-Smith, Westport Meeting Property Coordinator