

The Grapevine Newsletter

I heard it through the Grapevine...

Notes from the July 9, 2024 Berkowners, Inc. Board Meeting

Attendees:

Board Members Present: Walter Chadwick, Wanda Chin, Cecilia Durbin, Ed Leahy, Peggy Russell, Maxx Salat and William Walter.

Also present: Superintendent Carlos Rivera, Joe Doren (Metro Management), and Alan Randmae (Metro Management).

Meeting Called to Order at 6:33pm

- Reviewed June minutes and clarified edits to previous version - Motion made and accepted to amend and accept minutes

1. Superintendent's Report

- **Window Installation:**

11 windows left to install on A side of building due to shareholder delays (vacation, medical)

B side in progress

Difficulty with shareholders not being able to make the appointments provided by Tindel

3 apartments being worked on daily due to Tindel staff shortage, working conditions related to weather

Doug Lister returned to sort out the improperly installed windows

- **Hallway ceiling lights**

Need 8 sockets for 77th St building to complete LED lighting

- 35th Ave leak on B-side of 1st floor incinerator closet down into compactor room - stack/slop sink removed to access
 - Staff fixed hole in wall in adjacent unit related to the issue
- Sinks are not shut off as the line branches into the 6 line shower stall Plumbers need to return to finish work
- 78th St - Fire in shareholder's apartment
 - FDNY arrived and put out the fire
 - FDNY damaged door to the garden (B side of 78th St) - still functional
- Waterproofing building facade issue
 - Fire escape anchors need to be authorized
- Board approved pointing work dependent on pricing additions
 - pursuant to recommendation for diverter by Doug Lister
- Trespassers in 35th Ave alcoves
 - Shareholder took picture of trespasser outside window in bushes at night - police did not come, has found trash in bushes.
 - Shareholder witnessed 2 naked men in bushes 7:15am

7/8/2024

Board proposed solution of large thorn bushes in area to deter trespassing

- Southeast pathway in garden - 78th st laundry vent - 2 cameras proposed to be upgraded
 - Board approved request for proposal for cameras for alcove
- New staff photos to be scheduled for website

Carlos left the meeting at 7:15pm

2. Compliance Report

Alan Randmae - Metro Compliance Officer discussed Local Laws the Co-op will need to comply with:

- LL84 efficiency benchmarking
 - Performed by Metro on time for May deadline
- LL87 10-year cycle energy audit - option to do early update

- LL97 study should be included in next LL87 audit to determine potential capital improvements and repairs and determine how much fines can be reduced based on these actions
- LL97 - climate mobilization
 - Provides cap for amount of emissions that a building can produce - exceeding cap leads to fines
 - The benchmarking provided for LL84 is below first fining period - no fines before 2030 but present assessment would yield a \$30k/yr fine
- LL88, 134 - LED energy reduction
 - One-time certification due 1/1/25 Requirements not only LED sources, but also motion-sensing, pigtailed (tandem wiring), exit sign revisions and exterior lighting
- Paying fines vs. paying for expensive retrofits
 - Many similarly sized co-ops are working on inexpensive changes that will get them through 2030 and reducing fines to a tolerable level

3. Manager's Report

- Direct Energy - sending bills to Wavecrest rather than Metro - incurring \$83k of missed payments from 12/23 to 4/24
 - Can be paid over 3 months with no late fees or penalties
- Co-op owned apartments
 - B34 35th cabinets to be delivered, appliances ordered and delivered - apartment hopefully ready to be shown in 3 weeks
 - Sublets - Mr. Doren generated a standardized sublet renewal request form

4. President's Report

- Treasury Units
 - B34 35th - no realtor brought in yet as apartment is not yet ready
 - A38 77th - will get complete paint job by Dino from B34, refinish kitchen floor, channel in cable wire, bathtub needs to be reglazed, needs new stove - to be priced between \$700k and \$749k

No present Board liaison to Garden Committee

5. Treasurer's Report

- Balances as of June 28, 2024; total reserves \$6,120,153.72

- Board-managed:

Chase checking and savings \$54,659.29

RJFS \$5,825,606.92, composed of \$733,989.89 cash (mostly in 3 banks), one \$1.6 million UST, and 14 bank CDs (total full value \$3.5 million)

In the month of June, 11 bank CDs were purchased (total \$2.75 million UST), with interest rates of 5.40-5.45%, and maturities in September

and October 2024

Cash at RJFS currently earning 2.25% interest

One \$250K CD matured July 1

\$1.6 million UST matures August 1

All 14 bank CDs mature September to November 2024

- Metro-managed

Chase - Beautification Account \$46,479.66

Chase - Window Assessment Account \$193,407.85

The next payment to Tindel for the window replacement project will be during July, with anticipated four to five monthly payments thereafter, total approximately \$4.5 million.

6. Communications Report

- Website update moving forward
- Package theft - Board motions to attempt a pilot with a storage in one building to be chosen.
- Children's use of the Garden

Discussion of legal precedent of children using the garden, reasonable noise appropriate to developmental level

- Transfer Fee Proposal

- Proposed to call vote at end of July '24

Meeting adjourned at 9:01pm

CHILDREN'S CIRCLE

Saturday, September 14th

More info will be forthcoming

All Berkeley families are welcome.

Hope to see you there.

ANNUAL BERKELEY GARDEN PARTY

Sunday, September 22 at 3pm

North Garden

Rain Date - Sunday, September 29

The board will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, and veggie burgers with the "fixins" as well as drinks, alcoholic and non-alcoholic.

The party has always been successful because of the help of dedicated volunteers, and we will need your help again this year. If you would like to join your Berkeley family in making this success, we can use help as follows

1. Pre-prep, including:
 - Making hamburger patties
 - Slicing tomatoes
 - Preparing lettuce
 - Slicing cheese.
2. Set up in the garden at 2pm on the day of the party.
3. Help with grilling - always need grill masters to share the load.
4. Clean up
5. Provide a dish to share - appetizer, dip, salad, vegetable, or dessert.

In the past the array of shared food has been second only to the camaraderie of old friends and the welcoming of new ones to the Berkeley family.

To volunteer - contact Peggy at tpeg60@yahoo.com or at 225-247-0491 (text or call).

TRANSFER FEE VOTE CLOSED

Thank you to all shareholders that participated in the town hall discussions as well as those who volunteered their time to engage our community on issues concerning our co-ops financial future.

The Transfer Fee amendment did not receive the required 2/3s majority of shares to pass. The amendment received the following vote totals:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Shares</u>	<u>% of Total Shares</u>
For	127	50,745	45.5%
Against	39	14,925	13.4%
No Vote Submitted	122	45,785	41.1%

The amendment would have needed to reach a threshold of 70,341 shares to pass. Of the votes submitted, 77% were in favor of the Transfer Fee; however, with 41% of our outstanding shares not represented in the vote at all, we did not reach the engagement level necessary to decisively hear the opinion of our shareholders.

This outcome leaves our co-op with the following options to raise revenue for future capital improvements and comply with all local laws, including the upcoming laws that will require significant investments in the buildings:

- Raising maintenance
- Levying an assessment
- Selling off the few remaining treasury units

WINDOW INSTALLATION UPDATE

On Wednesday, August 14th, the Board informed the shareholders that the co-op will be hiring a temporary staff member to assist in completing the plaster repair work needed post window installation. A shareholder posted the asbestos testing results showing no conclusive evidence of asbestos in the mail areas of the 3 buildings.

Additional information:

- Work at 78th Street should finish Friday, August 16th.
- The bridge on 78th Street should be coming down by August 31 after a small masonry project is completed.
- Work at 77th Street is expected to be completed by the first week of September.
- 35th Avenue will start immediately thereafter.
- The bridge at 35th Avenue will be installed in the last week of August.

BERKELEY ARTIST PROFILE

Theresa Curley is an inspired – and inspiring – designer of fine jewelry, and our Berkeley neighbor. She and her late husband Thom moved to the 78th Street building in 2021, but had a deep connection: our late neighbor Peter Brams (himself a serious collector of outsider art, Native American art, and wooden decoys) had been Theresa’s boss and good friend for several decades. She had visited Peter at his Berkeley apartment, and was amazed by the garden, which Peter had helped to create.

Beyond the Brams connection, the garden was the reason for Theresa and Thom’s move to the Berkeley from another building in Jackson Heights. Thom, a veteran standup comedian and erstwhile member of the duo Edmonds and Curley, had had a stroke in 1993 that impaired mobility and required he use a wheelchair. He could access the garden with Theresa’s help, and was able to meet neighbors, friends and family there on many occasions before his passing in 2024.

Thom and Theresa both came to New York City in the early 70s, Thom from Wisconsin and Theresa from Indiana; they met at the Improv club where Edmonds and Curley were performing and Theresa was working. By this time, Edmonds and Curley were an

established fixture on nighttime television programs such as the *Mike Douglas* and *Merv Griffin* shows, as well as the *Tonight Show* with Carl Reiner. The duo frequently opened for stars such as Roberta Flack and the Temptations. They also performed on college campuses across the country. Thom and Theresa married in 1974. In the 80s and early 90s, Thom was an actor in films such as *Roxanne* (with Steve Martin), *Ghost* (with Demi Moore) and *See No Evil*. Unfortunately, his stroke put an end to this work.

Theresa had not planned on a jewelry design career; she had started in theater (Thom, in turn, had started as a psychiatric social worker before turning to comedy). But she had always had a design flair and in the 1980s, as a way to make money, she and a friend partnered to create jewelry from papier maché . . . and sold their entire line to Henri Bendel, a luxury retailer. Buoyed by this success, Theresa took classes in metal work, learning to solder and to work from wax casting. She eventually split from her partner and continued to design and produce unique pieces that were bought by Harrods (in London), Barney's, and museum shops across the country. In 1994 Theresa went to work for Peter Brams and his company, Peter Brams Designs, specializing in precious metals design. When Peter retired in 2000, he sold his company to Jacmel; Theresa continues to work there part-time.

Theresa also designs jewelry under her own name, using precious metals and stones. Her designs are inspired by nature – including the Berkeley garden – and by the materials themselves. Her work is sought after by collectors and fashion-forward people. In her spare time, Theresa, who is a member of the Berkeley Garden Committee, gardens in her plot and helps with bigger projects such as pruning the ivy along the south fence and plantings under the trees on the garden's south side. Theresa is very glad she moved to the Berkeley, where she has a lovely apartment (now, with new windows) and has made many friends. She appreciates the buildings' proximity to the library, post office, fruit-stands, supermarkets and transportation, and the Berkeley's kind and helpful staff. She and friends often gather for impromptu meals at one of the garden tables. Stop and say hi! You'll know her by her lovely, delicate jewelry and infectious laugh.

SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS

The following Board meetings will be held on September 10th, October 8th, November 12th and December 10th. If you have a topic you would like to discuss with the board, please email them at berkboard@gmail.com.

A REMINDER: *Residents are always welcome to address board meetings about anything about the co-op they feel needs addressing. Please give the board 24 hours notice that you'd like to attend, and you'll be invited to the zoom meeting starting at 6:30pm.*

Contributors to this newsletter were Walter Chadwick, Cecilia Durbin, Judy Whiting, Belinda Conway, and Peggy Russell. If you'd like to contribute content to the Berkeley Grapevine, please email bconwayb34@gmail.com.

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