

Minutes of the meeting of the CICA Housing Committee Saturday February 11, 2012 at 9:30 at the Rec Center

Present: Donna Damon, Mabel Doughty, Bob Earnest, Deb Hall, Beth Howe, Ruth Slagle, David Whiston (by phone), John Wilson
Absent: Erin Whetham

1. MSHA Closing

Bob said that since we had the Genesis closing before Christmas, we have many of the materials prepared for the MSHA closing. MSHA is going over the documents now and is in contact with Lew. We hope to have the closing in March, though there was some skepticism in the group.

2. Water Issues on SHR Site

Bob said that after the excavation for the road had been done, it was clear that there are two areas of springs to the right of the driveway. Wayne installed a culvert under the driveway, and at the moment the water is running down the left side of the road into the area where the building will be. We need to direct it over to the Munroe's ditch, around the building site.

Dick Sweet came to look at the area three weeks ago. Bob asked him about a fire pond. He said he thought it probably would not work. The area is not large enough to have a pond with sides that would have a reasonable slope. In addition it is near an abutter's septic field and near our well.

Bob said he and Curt had worked out three possible options for dealing with the springs. The third and least favored would create a long, probably 18" culvert from the parking area to the Munroe ditch. This would be expensive to build and the culvert would be difficult to keep clean/open. The second option would have the water go under the driveway and run along the left side of the drive to the area where the driveway becomes the parking area and into a rain garden. From there it would go through a culvert to the Munroe ditch. Again, the culvert is expensive and hard to keep open, even if it is shorter than #3. The first, best option is to have the water run under the driveway and then go along it to the parking area and rain garden and then run on the surface in a broad swale down to the Munroe's ditch. This would cost less. It would involve cutting some more trees in the area of the swale. Also this option would have three check dams that would deal with the problem that the land does not have much slope between the beginning and the end of the run of water. The check dams also slow the velocity of the water.

Donna asked what a rain garden is. Bob said it is a shallow pond that would have water in it some, but not all of the time. It would be planted with water tolerant plants. Part of its purpose is to slow the flow of the water down and allow sediment to settle out.

Everyone agreed that the third option sounded like the best.

Bob also said that, now that the driveway and parking area are in, it is clear that the site where we have been planning to put the septic system would require cutting most of the trees between our building and the Munroe's back yard. He thinks we should see if we can move our building to the east a bit and move the septic system to the west side of the building. This would allow us to leave the trees between us and the Munroe's. We can also add more plantings in that area to

thicken the foliage; maybe white pines. Dick Sweet has to come out again to see if the soils on the west side of the building are suitable for a septic system, and design a new one. This change would also have the advantage of eliminating the culvert that had been planned to carry the Munroe's ditch around the septic system. This will save money.

In general, the various changes to the site plan being discussed may mean that there is less work for Wayne to do and, so, less cost. But working on the site has been more difficult than Wayne expected and we do not know yet whether that has cost more money. Also a new septic design might be more expensive.

Donna said she thought it might be a good idea not to plant large trees in the space between us and the Munroes, since they can become a management issue when they get big. Bob agreed and said that one way to deal with pines is to top them out. Deb offered a copper beech.

Donna said that one of the Cumberland School maintenance people had read the article about the housing in the forecaster and asked her if we were worried about the oil spill. She had forgotten, as had everyone else who knew about it, that there had been a spill of heating oil at the Bartsch's old house, maybe 8 to 10 years ago, and that MEDEP had spent a lot of time and money cleaning it up. Beth said we should test the water in the upwelling springs, since they are on that side of the property. This could have a major impact on what we can/have to do with the spring water. John said we should also test the well water.

John said that the Munroe's ditch is a deep one. Should we do anything about making it safer? It is on the edge of the property, in an area that will not be regularly used, but kids will be interested in it. Donna said she is worried that MSHA will object to it. We could have a fence. Or we could re-engineer the ditch so that it was more like a swale. Bob said he can ask Dick Sweet whether the ditch needs to be as deep as it is. Dick did say that the ditch is not an environmental issue since it is pre-existing. Bob said also he does not know where the water that prompted Ralph to dig the ditch comes from. It might be from our springs. If we redirect that water, it might make the upper part of the ditch dryer. We will be putting water into the lower part, but we might be able to send it into the wetland in a less concentrated stream. Deb asked if the water is actually emptying onto Chuck's land. Bob said it is all on ours.

3. Pets and Floor Surfaces

Bob said that one aspect of the pet issue is that we might want to change the flooring in the living room from carpeting to Pergo, a plastic laminate that looks like wood. This would cost \$1515 extra but might wear better. John was concerned about whether it could be refinished. Bob said no, but it is not like laminate that has wood in it. It is harder. Donna asked what its useful life would be. Bob didn't know. David said it has not been around for very long, so it may be unclear how well it lasts. He said he has qualms about pets. Ruth asked if we can see a sample of the laminate flooring. Bob said he can get one.

Donna said she wants to make the housing appealing to applicants. Families are likely to want to have pets. The more prohibitions we have, the less attractive the housing will be. There was a lot of discussion about how hard dogs are on houses – floors, walls, doors. Various people suggested that pets be allowed only subject to review and that we should have rules about expectations for them. John said he originally had been opposed to pets because of maintenance issues, but given that we have a small applicant pool he wants the people in our housing not to be

defined as “different/less” than other people on the island. These tenants are us, and should be able to have pets if they want. But they must also be responsible pet owners.

Dogs were the primary focus of the discussion. Deb enumerated the kinds of issues that could come up with a dog and its owner. The owner may not clean up after the dog. It may make messes indoors. It may bark. Would we allow a dog to be on a dog run outside? All day? She said that at a minimum we must require tenants to obey Chebeague’s leash law. Bob said there can also be problems with neighboring dogs or their owners.

Ruth said she would prefer no pets after living next to six huskies. David said that there may be legal liability issues that would come back to CICA, not just the dog’s owner. Dog bites child, for example. How would we manage this risk. John said that if we allow pets our liability insurance would be higher to cover this. And we have D&O insurance which would cover it.

Donna suggested having a pet deposit. The group discussed whether it should be a separate “pet deposit” or just part of the security deposit. And how much? Twice the security deposit? Donna asked whether it could be paid over time xxx amount per month. Deb asked what would happen if someone just didn’t pay it. John and Bob said it would be grounds for eviction. Deb said that would be difficult to enforce.

Bob suggested that we have a tentative vote on this issue but that we also develop a policy on pets. Beth said she would do a draft of the policy and send it around. John moved, seconded by Donna, to allow pets on a case by case basis under a carefully crafted lease agreement and with an additional deposit. The vote was unanimously in favor, but three people said they were reluctant and wanted to see the policy. Bob agreed that the vote could be reconsidered in light of the pet policy. Deb said she would help with the policy and suggested asking other affordable housing groups, maybe on the islands, what they do about pets.

4. Flipping the Building

Bob said that we may have talked about this at the very beginning but Beth brought it up when she wrote a piece for the *Annual Newsletter* recently. She assumed that the living rooms were on the south/sunny side of the building and the kitchens and dining rooms were on the side where the parking is. But the plans do not show that. It is easy, and requires very little change to the units to visualize this. For Keiser, however, it was not easy to produce a reversed drawing.

Donna said this would be a better arrangement. People bring in groceries would not have to walk through the living room. Bob said that the coat closet is at the end of the kitchen, so this works better for that. Everyone agreed with this.

Bob also said that Curt had argued for having a shed roof over the door into the kitchen. The steps would go up from the side of the little porch, so people coming in would not get splashed with rain. Adding this would cost \$1800 but Keiser will build the deck as well, which will save us about \$500 in carpentry costs, so the roof would actually be about \$1300.

5. Project Cost

Deb asked where the budget for the project stands now. It gradually creeps up. Bob said that the budget requires us to have \$449,000. We expect to have \$35000 from MSHA, \$5,000 from the Islands Challenge Fund, \$70,000 from the Genesis loan. That comes to \$425,000, meaning that

we CICA will need to raise \$24,000. Donna said it would be much better if we did not have to raise money from the community. Deb said that the problem is that we are building Cadillac housing rather than Chevy housing. There is only a limited willingness of the Chebeague community to give money for affordable housing and we should not exhaust that on a project where we already have a lot of money. Bob said it is like the Poliquin attacks on MSHA – the argument that they are building housing that is too expensive for low income people. John said that in that budget figure of \$449,000 there is \$30,500 in contingencies. If we do not spend that money we will not have to raise money, in fact we will need less of the Genesis loan as well.

6. Carpet Versus Sheet Goods

That brought the group back to the unresolved issues of whether to add the shed roof to the entry and substitute laminate flooring for carpeting in the living room. Ruth said she thought we had decided not to make the carpet decision until we had seen a sample of the sheet goods. Bob said that we really don't have time for that. We need to decide now because we need to make the 20 percent downpayment on the building which we need to do in order to hold the price. And, in any case we need to finalize the order in order for the building to be completed by mid-May. It will take Keiser 8 to 12 weeks to build the building. Eight weeks takes us to the beginning of April and 12 weeks, to the beginning of May. Deb asked whether we will have MSHA money to pay the downpayment. Bob said we can make the downpayment with the Genesis bridge loan – it will take us up to \$68,000 on that. But we expect to have the closing with MSHA fairly soon and that will bring the Genesis loan balance back to \$0, so we can begin to use it for other expenditures while the project gets finished.

Beth asked how well carpeting does with dogs. It gets dirty and it can get scratched up. But Bob said we would be ordering commercial-style short pile carpeting which is very sturdy. John said he has short pile wool carpeting and when it gets dirty he cleans it with his carpet cleaning machine and it gets clean. Also carpet is cheaper to replace than sheet goods would be. He thinks we should stay with carpeting.

Deb said she thinks the shed roof over the entry is a good idea, and that we should have carpeting rather than laminate in the living room. She moved that we do this. Beth seconded. The vote was unanimously in favor. Bob said that adds about \$1300 to the budget we just discussed.

Donna asked whether the application process will be completed enough before the end of the project that the chosen renters might do some of the volunteer work on painting and landscaping. She likes the Habitat model where people work on their housing. Beth said she thought it would be completed by that time.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Howe