

# Window Town Hall Meeting

## Questions and Answers

May 5, 2008

*A James owner asked Peter Power (Engineer): When we do new windows, can we consider having a “sliding” window versus the current hopper style window? (The owners stated that the current hopper style windows bang shut)*

- ▶ Pete Power: Yes, a sliding type (or casement) window style can be an option. Hopper windows are susceptible to slamming shut. He also stated that they seldom put hopper windows in new buildings. The biggest complaints he has heard about hopper windows is that they get in the way of window treatments. Peter tells us this is what the Resident Advisory Committee works with the Engineering firm to analyze and recommend these types of owner preferences.

*The same owner asked Peter Power: Is it possible on the balcony window sections to extend the glass down to the floor on replacements rather than having the 2’ infill panel at the bottom of the section (and inside knee wall construction)?*

- ▶ Pete Power: There are mechanical systems (plumbing pipes) in some of these sections and that is the purpose of the knee wall construction. (Editors clarification: The 2 bedroom unit balconies do NOT have plumbing in that knee wall – 160 corner balconies – but the 240 1 bedroom unit balconies do have pipes running through these wall spaces.) It can be looked at in the Resident Advisory Committee process.

*A James Owner asked Pete Power: He was confused as to why we needed to do concrete inspection repairs again (as we had done repairs in 2004/5) and wasn’t the purpose of the Ordinance to remove “immediately dangerous” material only.*

- ▶ Pete Power: First that we are required to inspect the building every 4 years and yes that is the intent of the ordinance is to minimally remove the dangerous material. He cited that as we were paying for the mobilization of being on the building to inspect – we would do a sounding and an analysis of the concrete conditions in order to

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understand total costs projections for any forthcoming Window Replacement or Repair work.

*A James Owner asked the panel: With the problem that she has personally experienced having other unit HVAC leaks on her unit – are we considering replacing the lateral or horizontal pipes that are in the window walls at the time we replace the windows? She felt that it made sense to do it when we opened that wall from the outside.*

- ▶ Duane Hickling (IC Chair) took the question: There have been 5 such leaks in James units and 4 in Kilmer in the last 10 years (the latest being in February 2007). He discussed how difficult it was to test for defective pipes as they are in walls and the tests can be damaging to the pipe – or was at least invasive in opening up the walls! The Infrastructure Committee has discussed this and is bringing a consultant in at a future meeting to further investigate options. When we pull 4 windows out during this summer we will have an opportunity to look in on the situation further. It has been noted that we can only repair these pipes when we shut down the water system (heating or cooling) and that is best done during transition months. The committee is committed to working on this and will keep everyone informed.

*A James Owner asked the panel: Yes or no, will we consider swinging doors versus sliding doors on Balconies?*

- ▶ Yes, the Resident Advisory Committee will have the chance to review that option for this building.

A Kilmer Owner asked the panel: Will these presentation materials be made available to those who could not be at the meeting tonight?

- ▶ Panel: Yes, it will posted on the website and available in the office by the end of this week.

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*A James Owner asked Pete Power: She has experienced water leaks (severe) after (or as a result of) the last concrete inspection and repair process.*

- ▶ Pete Power: Stated that every precaution would be put in place.

*A James Owner asked Pete Power: Is it possible to put tinted windows in place because they would be helpful in blocking ugly window treatments from the outside view and give a consistent look to the building.*

- ▶ Pete Power: There will be a minimum code requirement that our building will have to meet regarding energy efficient window products (due to the fact that 90% of our building exterior surface (or envelope) is glass or infill panel. Tinting is one component of energy efficiency and again this is something the committee will review. The current technology of tinting actually has the tinting embedded in the glass and it has minimal effect on the view from the inside looking out.

*A James Owner asked if the project could be LEED certified?*

- ▶ Pete Power: This will be investigated just as the Association is already discussing energy saving and funding opportunities with the Clinton Climate Initiative program. (Editor Note: LEED = Leadership in Energy Efficient Design - certification is an approach to building for “sustainability” and provides some tax incentives. While it is most often sought in new construction, there are efforts – like window replacement – that may help make financing more available and tax credits a possibility.)

*A James Owner asked if 1130 S. Michigan Avenue was similar to what we are looking to do?*

- ▶ Panel: This building is an example of a complete replacement with windows that give the building a totally new look. We have studied this building and others to learn from their successes.

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*A James Owner asked the panel about how the cost projections considered current or future values and felt Net Present Value was a way to look at this project.*

- ▶ Duane stated that a 4% inflation factor was built into the future cost estimates because the engineers were asked to provide best estimates on actual cash flows for each scenario. But that a better way might be to pull all of the projected costs to a common 2009 Current Value. This would allow each scenario to be evaluated on a present value basis – costs in current dollars, as opposed to future inflated dollars.

*The same owner asked: According to the slides regarding the 1995 – 2005 studies it appears that the window costs have risen at a higher rate (double) that of inflation.*

- ▶ Construction cost estimates in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century rose very rapidly. This was a time when capital was relatively inexpensive to borrow and developers, corporations, municipalities and institutions all launched aggressive capital construction programs. Also, there was a huge international construction boom during this period (China, India, etc.). Construction materials were in high demand and in short supply. Interestingly, this was also a time in which real estate values also increased rapidly. So the net effect is that a windows replacement project may be nearly the same percentage as related to the value of the property – but for sure, the absolute dollar cost increased a great deal during this period.

*A James Owner asked whether we could get a rebate on aluminum scrap recycling of old windows?*

- ▶ Pete Power stated no, that the cost of taking the glass and aluminum apart was not something the contractors got involved in and often they structured the removal to take advantage of others taking the material away for some value. In fact, some contractors depend on the metal scavengers to pick up most of the metal to reduce their

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(contractors) costs of hauling the material away. This is how they try to keep their bids competitive

*A James owner asked what the warranty was on new windows as Pete had stated repairs would only be good for a limited period (5 years).*

- ▶ Most new products had a standard 10-year warranty with some components having up to 20-year warranties.