

Snowmass Mountain Construction Update

Week 8: June 5 - 11, 2011 - What Lies Beneath?

This week brought a few unusual pictures/situations called to the Board's attention by our contractor, The Neenan Company. It seems that asphalt and dirt cover a multitude of sins from earlier construction. Recall that our complex was one of the first to be built in Snowmass, completed long before Snowmass Village was incorporated as a town and way long before there were regulations about recording construction designs and plans in the county archives! The fact that surprises are uncovered with all the digging going on should not be surprising – and yet, well... there it is. Let me just share a few of them with you.

First – and this was brought to the Board a week or so ago – there was the discovery that the posts that hold up the carports have been knocked around a bit over the years by drivers who can't quite get their vehicles into the space allotted. That is, some of the posts are a bit off plumb. Further, when the concrete floor that the posts were embedded in was removed, it appears that the posts had corroded a great deal over time. What to do? Can't just patch up the concrete and pretend that no one saw the problem! Solution: the poles will be embedded in a concrete casing (after being brought back into plumb) that will extend down into bedrock and up about three feet from the garage floor (just above bumper height) with the decorative stacked stonework topping (and surrounding) the metal posts. We think this will not only provide a better anchor for the support poles but also offer considerably more protection from errant drivers with a material (concrete) that is much less expensive to repair after being hit than decorative stone. Neenan provided us with a picture, but believe me; you don't want to see it!

The storage shed where the trash dumpsters have been for years was slated to house the new boiler system. Once the drywall had been stripped from the walls and the area cleared to the floor level, it became clear that there was a bit of questionable construction technique (did you know that most of the laborers who built these early condo complexes were not trained construction workers but rather were “ski bums” working construction over the summer) that went into this building. Needless to say, this little shed is going to need a different approach than the minimal reconstruction that had originally been planned for it.

The third “what in the world?!” moment came during the excavation of the storm water drain line between Buildings I and J. An entire little wall of railroad timbers, looking for all the world like a supplementary wall anchoring system, appeared in the dirt. OMG! Do you continue to excavate and maybe disrupt the system and trigger a falling wall above the buildings (you can imagine the cascade of mountainside and buildings raining upon your head if you were the backhoe operator). Obviously not. Our structural engineering consultant John Mechling (who works for the HOA, not for Neenan – he serves as our outside expert to give us an objective, second opinion) inspected the situation and recommended that the storm drain installation be postponed until **after** the new north section MSE wall was in place and after the old tie wall was removed. He suggested that the little cribbage wall be removed as well at that time. Indeed, John suggested that similar auxiliary crib-walls may well be found at the base of the existing tie wall in other places along the wall between buildings.

The good news is that the shoring phase has begun. This part of the wall repair will proceed in a series of phases: excavation, insertion of shoring blocks, drilling horizontally into bedrock and then anchoring the shoring block against the earthen mass with a pylon drilled into the bedrock (think of a nut/washer/bolt mechanism), and then moving on to the next shoring block. Almost 50 shoring blocks have been trucked onto our grounds over the past week and truckloads of excavated materials have been moved out. Hank has provided a few pictures of the process which are attached below. The sewer line that is being installed under the roadway is now 70% complete.

In other news, the Board met via conference call on Wednesday, June 8th. The Association is keeping pace with construction costs, thanks to an ownership who is almost 100% paid up on the first installment of the project assessment. All but 4 owners are paid in full (one of whom is in foreclosure) and registered letters are being sent to the others re payment. The Board has postponed the billing for the second installment from June 1 to June 20. Notices will be sent on June 20th to owners for the second installment, payable by July 20.

This picture shows the shoring blocks – stacked and ready for installation.



Next is a picture showing how the shoring blocks are moved into position. Note the size of each block.



Final picture shows a shoring block being positioned into place.

