

# **New community clubhouse at Selby On The Bay ; A phoenix rising from ashes of a fire and numerous court battles [Capital (Annapolis, MD)]**

TMC\_CONTENT\_BODY\_U2\_BEGIN (Capital (Annapolis, MD) Via Acquire Media NewsEdge) The 4,500-square-foot building, designed by architect Bruno Reich of Famous Buildings Inc. of Columbia, was built by Crofton's Gardiner & Gardiner Contracting LLC. The building's floor level is 4 feet higher than the previous clubhouse. It is built on a slightly smaller footprint than the former structure and has a concrete walkway on one side that allows rainwater to soak through.

For residents, Selby On The Bay might as well be called Selby In The Court.

The many legal disputes have been over ownership of the community clubhouse and its grounds, which now include grassy parkland, a children's playground and a narrow beach stretching the length of a football field.

But their troubles didn't end in the courthouse.

In 2003, the clubhouse was damaged by Hurricane Isabel. Floodwaters inside the community structure were more than waist- high.

Just as the residents were close to taking possession of the repaired clubhouse, it was destroyed in a fire in 2007.

The community regained the property a year later and began a new round of negotiations, this time with the county, over building permits and designs.

Selby Community Association officials also worked with Severn Bank executives and County Council members to create an amendment to the County Code allowing the community to get financing for the project from the bank.

Now, after five years of planning and construction, the phoenix has risen.

A potluck luncheon is scheduled for Sept. 15 to celebrate the opening of the association's new clubhouse and cast ballots for its next board of directors.

Martin O'Callaghan, Selby Community Association's building chairman, has lived in the area most of his life. Since 1988, he has lived in one of the original summer cottages.

The new clubhouse is "the capstone to what we went through," O'Callaghan said.

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"It may look plain Jane, but we put in a lot of security features. We wired it for Wi-Fi and a projection system. It has a gigabit Ethernet switch, too," O'Callaghan said.

He pointed out the polished concrete flooring in the main room is outfitted with pipes for radiant heat. The roof is designed to accommodate solar panels in the future.

At one end of the main room is a food preparation area with Corian countertops and wood cabinets.

The interiors of the two large restrooms were finished by the residents.

"A bunch of us tiled the floors and walls ourselves," O'Callaghan said. The lights and exhaust systems in both bathrooms turn on automatically when the rooms are in use.

Near the restrooms is a multipurpose and exercise room.

The waterfront side of the building is paneled, floor to roofline, with energy efficient Low-E glass windows.

Outside, rinse stations are being installed.

The buildings and grounds are monitored by 20 motion-detecting video cameras. Selby's all-volunteer security force can review the monitors on their smartphones.

Contentious history Beginning with Capt. Edward Selby in 1652, Selby - overlooking Selby Bay, which runs into the South River - has passed through numerous owners.

In the 1930s, Otis L. Williams and Alvin G. Branham purchased 206 acres and began developing the area as Selby on the Bay Properties Co. They divided Selby into four communities: Cedar Grove, Selby, Selby Heights and North Selby.

A fifth community, Selby Ridge, was developed in the early 2000s. The combined communities include 843 homes, ranging from cottages to million-dollar manors. There are approximately 2,000 residents.

The development was intended as a summer resort. Williams and Branham gave potential buyers a verbal promise they would share ownership in a waterfront community clubhouse and its surrounding land.

The open-air pavilion built by Williams and Branham, set on more than 7 acres, was replaced by a bathhouse with showers and locker rooms. That, in turn, was replaced by a clubhouse in the 1940s.

The clubhouse lands were never formally deeded to the residents by the developers. An injunction on the property has been in effect since 1938, preventing its sale or use for commercial purposes.

In the 1970s, the developers' heir tried to create a marina on the site, but was prevented by the injunction.

In December 1996, the owner donated the property to an out-of-state charity. Two years later, the charity bolted the doors, denying Selby residents access to the clubhouse.

That set off a 10-year court battle. It was finally resolved when the Selby Community Association agreed to purchase the 7-acre clubhouse property from the charity for \$165,000. The judge made the charity pay the SCA's court costs, trimming \$50,000 off the agreed-on price.

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