

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE LATHROP COMMUNITY, NORTHAMPTON

**COUNCIL MEETING**

September 6, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by the President, David Morrissey. The Association observed the customary moment of silence. Dave noted the departure of three residents: Barbara Houlihan has moved to Loomis, Peg Bedell is now at the Inn, and the Warburtons have moved to a house they purchased in Florence. Dave also gave a shout out to residents who have made contributions to the life of the community: Arlene Jennings and Joe Kulin for cleaning rugs and other apparatus for the yoga class; Caroline Zavarine for watering Meeting House geraniums all summer; Gillian Morbey, Judy Buhner and Pam White for stepping in to care for the butterfly garden following Peg's retirement from this responsibility; Mike Strycharz for new lawns and a revived sprinkler system. Joe Kulin added thanks for removal of trees behind homes on Aspen.

**Minutes.** The minutes of the August 2, 2017 Association meeting were accepted as presented.

**Treasurer's Report.** Beverly Bowman presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved as presented. We currently have a checking account balance of \$8792.90, and a balance of \$5040.04 in the CD. Monthly income was 4895.05, principally the slice of the Lathrop community fund residents had designated for Association activities; there were expenses for the eclipse party refreshments and masks. The full report has been filed with these minutes in the library.

In view of the obvious need and the relative health of our treasury, Bev suggested a contribution to the Red Cross for Harvey disaster relief. Though charitable contributions are proscribed by the by-laws, Bev felt that disaster relief was an exception and suggested \$250 as an appropriate amount. There were several objections to contributing to the Red Cross, and alternative recipients were suggested. Dave thought we could authorize the amount, and decide on the recipient after some research. Thom said the Lathrop would match whatever amount was approved by both Northampton and Easthampton associations. Consensus was reached to contribute \$250 to Harvey hurricane relief.

An alternative investment strategy has been under consideration for several months, with suggestions for instruments which are safe but more adventurous than a local bank's offerings. Specifically, the Friends Fiduciary Fund, with which two Council members have had positive experience, is under consideration. Bev reiterated her objection to such a move, citing the current volatility of the market, which underlies her reluctance to invest in any mutual fund. She is also concerned about the amount of paperwork involved in making a withdrawal. Marlisa Parker has used this fund in the past, and did not find the paperwork onerous. Joe Kulin noted that the fund uses Quaker values for allocation of funds. Bob Comerford warned that a drop in the market is likely in the near future, and Bev pointed out that investing now would be at the very top of the market. Thom thought it appropriate to see what associations at other Kendals are investing in, and Dave volunteered to do this study. Thom also noted that we are really interested in stewardship rather than investment of funds.

## **Management Report.**

Thom Wright announced that occupancy is currently 85% in town homes, which is the budgeted occupancy level. The Inn is 64% occupied, an improvement bolstered by three transfers from town homes to the Inn.

He provided an update on the progress of the Master Plan. We have received a new feasibility study which includes better metrics, e.g., on how much long range debt should we carry. We are now refining these projections of capital requirements for the next 20 years for presentation at an October Task Force meeting.

Sean Kelly, Kendal executive, will be here on the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup> of September and will join us at the annual picnic on the 13<sup>th</sup>. He will convene a meeting with Northampton residents at 10 o'clock on the 13<sup>th</sup> in the Meeting House. He would be happy to receive questions for discussion in advance of that meeting.

There appears to be dwindling interest in Wednesday lunches, and some difficulty in delivering them from Easthampton. This issue needs discussion, and Thom will invite Paul Westerfield to the next Council meeting to discuss these problems. Early delivery of sandwiches, resulting in limp lettuce and mushy tomatoes was cited, although the soup was universally praised. Helen Armstrong thought that a delivery of soup and cookies would suffice, and that residents would rather bring their own sandwiches. She also asked that the kitchen refrain from using plastic wrap, for health reasons.

## **Property Committee Report.**

Hans van Heyst, chair of the property committee, has done yeoman work reconciling priorities between the two campuses. He is proposing a series of ad hoc committees centered on individual issues to improve the work flow of the property committee.

The committee has hired a landscape architect to make an assessment of Northampton landscaping needs, with attention to the superannuated plantings, including trees. Mike Strycharz noted that most white pines, planted for privacy of residents, have grown so tall that only the trunks not the foliage are now at eye level. She will make recommendations for the future for the front and sides of the townhomes, including suggestions for appropriate perennials for front entrance planting. She will develop a plan, to be executed in sections as funds become available – e.g., a lane at a time - to update the campus. Joan Laird asked if there should be a resident committee to work with the architect; Dave thought we should do this before we went too far down the road. In response to questions, he agreed to distribute the proposal used in hiring the architect to Council members.

## **Old Business.**

Joan Laird presented a draft for a policy on *invisible dog fences*. She noted that she and Ann Hartman have used an invisible fence for 32 years, with great success. The draft was distributed

for the Council's information, and will be forwarded to the property committee for action. Dave noted that the Meeting House policy on dogs seems to be holding, and the dog park is a success, so this may be the time to address the invisible fence issue.

*Bridge Road Intersection.* Dave commented that we are all aware of the perils of the crosswalk on Bridge Road to catch a bus and the short, narrow turn space to enter Lathrop from the west. Both are inadequate, although no one to date has been willing to brave the constant traffic flow to document the need for a new paint job on the turning arrow or crosswalk. Bob Comerford suggested between 10 and 11 a.m. as a good time to snap a photo, but Dave thinks that it is always rush hour on Bridge Road, and few would disagree. We collected 58 signatures on a petition to be sent to the City Council. A meeting has been called at the Meeting House on Thursday, September 14 at 4:00 with Maureen Carney, our representative on the City Council. Dave hopes that we can convey the importance of this issue to the Councilwoman, and Helen hopes we emphasize the limitations of an aging clientele..

In addition, *water quality* will be discussed. Helen Armstrong said that we have heavy metals, such as chromium, and PCBs in our drinking water. Sheila Lyford asked what we can do about this, and several people suggested buying a filter to remove some of them. Beverly Bowman has also solved a taste issue with an inexpensive water filter.

Dave asked Mike Strycharz to report on *energy conservation* efforts. Seven units have requested programmable thermostats; 17 are interested in added insulation. To Mike's surprise, 20 units are interested in a test for mold. This is an air quality test, and is not the cheapest thing to do. He will investigate costs and decide if the test is feasible when he has more information.

*Solicitation on Campus.* At Dave's request, Gillian Morbey dug up the history of the solicitation policy. Dave distributed copies of a policy adopted in 2008, and asked if it might be time to reconsider and perhaps revise the policy. Dave will consider an ad hoc committee for this purpose.

*Friends Journal.* We discussed subscribing to this publication at an earlier meeting, but Dave has found a resident subscriber who will donate her copy and place it in the sitting room of the Meeting House when she has finished reading it.

### **New Business.**

Dave noted that *forms for activities and field trip van reservations* are now available on the wall across from Sarah's office. At Bev's request, reimbursement forms will also be available there.

Dave suggested a *change in Council agendas*. Rather than asking observers at Council meetings to wait until the end of the meeting to speak, Dave would like to invite them to speak for a maximum of three minutes at the beginning of the meeting. He will test drive this at the next meeting. Bev thought it would be a courtesy to observers.

Dave asked if we are interested in preparing a followup proposal to the \$5000 *Kendal Grant* we received last year for trail improvement. He has a template of the original grant from Carol, and

will write the proposal. Helen, endorsing the idea, mentioned three areas on the White trail which need improvement. The Blue trail is in good shape. She noted the considerable amount of volunteer labor that went into last year's trail project, and hoped that would occur again. Dave asked for alternative suggestions, and an improved entrance to the campus was mentioned. This, however, is Lathrop's responsibility and part of its capital improvement budget. Dale La Bonte, chair of the community garden committee, added a better water supply and better gates for the garden as alternatives. Dave will discuss these with Jim Dowell to see which seem most likely to be supported.

### **Lane Representatives Reports.**

Hawthorn: Bob Comerford. Will Lathrop be spraying townhouses to clean off mold? Mike S.: There are budget considerations here. They will look at this in the spring.

Firethorn: Marlisa Parker. A tree leaning badly behind Firethorn houses needs removing; bushes removed two years ago in the Firethorn circle have not been replaced. Mike S.: Landscaping plan will include that. Suggests winterberry bushes be used generously around campus. Helen Armstrong reminded them that both a male and female bush are necessary to have a yield of berries. Marlisa thanked Mike for the new lawns, and asked when watering will occur. Mike S.: They are fine tuning the sprinkler system, and will announce a schedule when it is ready.

### **Observer Comments.**

Dale La Bonte: Crabapple wants to design a plan for the sign at the beginning of their lane. How do other lanes handle this? Mike S.: Hans wants to plan for the signage, but needs to know if lanes want to act individually, or have a cooperative approach by the landscapers. He suggested that lanes let him know next spring which they prefer and if they want Spring Valley to do it. For this fall, it is mums for everyone.

Jack Hjelt: Jack feels that leaving Lathrop by entering Bridge Road is fully as hazardous as turning into Lathrop from Bridge Road. He also sees an emerging problem in the landscapers' distinction between back and front yards, citing the preference of some to ignore the front, but use the back yards.

Dave continues to be concerned about cars ignoring the 15 mph speed limit. The Lamp Post notices are helpful, but only for residents. He will investigate a mechanical sign which displays a driver's speed. He also announce the donation of two fine pieces of exercise equipment to the exercise room. Thom Wright has offered to demonstrate their use to interested residents.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Davis, Secretary

