

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE LATHROP COMMUNITY, NORTHAMPTON

**ASSOCIATION MEETING**

August 2, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by the President, David Morrissey. The Association observed the customary moment of silence. Dave thanked former president Carol Neubert for her outstanding contributions to the community, citing her authorship of the grant which produced the improvements to the trail, and recently, the coordination of the Board visit to the Northampton campus. The latter was such a successful intermingling of residents and Board members that the Board would like to visit again. Perhaps we can include them in a holiday party. Dave also thanked Arlene Jennings for the expeditious creation of a dog park – from an idea in March to an operating park in June. He also thanked residents for their cooperation in making the dog policy a success, particularly since we are now up to a total of 10 resident dogs. He thanked Peg Rasmussen for initiating and bringing to fruition the wildflower garden. Peg is ready to retire, and needs a successor. The person who succeeds her will have the support of people who now help in the garden. The Association gave Peg a hand for her efforts.

**Minutes.** The minutes of the July 5, 2017 Council meeting were accepted as corrected. Joe is Kulin, not Kulik.

**Treasurer's Report.** Beverly Bowman presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved as presented. We currently have a checking account balance of \$4022.83, and a balance of \$5030.33 in the CD. The full report has been filed with these minutes in the Library.

Bev noted a program committee request for rental of a performance platform for a September event. It has occurred to her that if we could find a place to store a platform, we might entertain the idea of buying one. The Lathrop Community Drive which closed June 30 brought in \$4820 designated for the Residents Association. When that appears we will have over \$9000 in our coffers.

Thanks were expressed for the ramp into the kitchen, which Mike Stycharz reported will be painted soon.

**Management Report.**

Thom Wright promised a financial update at the next Council meeting. He provided an update on the progress of the Master Plan. Following a series of focus groups, we are continuing to develop both physical and financial plans, and are about 60 days behind our original schedule. We are working on a new feasibility study which will include better metrics, e.g., how much long range debt should we carry. This is to be presented to management this afternoon, and the next 60 days will be spent refining these projections. The Meeting House improvements will be considered by the architects separately from the more extensive changes on the Easthampton campus.

The "shadow" reservation list resulting from people initially moving into the Inn, and later transferring to a townhome has been discontinued.

## **Property Committee Report**

Hans van Heyst, chair of the property committee, noted that this committee has been meeting for about a year and has discovered a real difference between the two campuses. In Northampton, the issue overwhelmingly is landscaping, and he proposed to address this in his report.

**Lawns** will be aerated and reseeded in mid August. They intend to install regular grass rather than clover (which had been chosen earlier). They have begun to reevaluate the sprinkler system, defunct for nearly five years, to see if it can be revived for the next growing season.

**Design of front of townhomes** and open areas exposed to road traffic needs to be replanned. They plan to hire a landscape architect/designer, who will develop a plan, to be executed in sections as funds become available – e.g., a lane at a time. The details of the plan will be presented to the Association. They are ready to interview two landscape architects/designers.

**Replacement of Trees** Attention will be paid to replacements which are attractive, and which will provide privacy where it is necessary.

**Lane Entrance Maintenance** Currently, there is no policy about responsibility for the plantings at lane entrances. Some lanes prefer to handle this themselves, while others are content to leave it to the landscapers. Lane reps should let Hans know which their lane prefers.

Cynthia Nyary commented that their lawn is just gone, and no aeration or reseeding will work. Mike replied that the lawn will be taken completely down and rebuilt from scratch. Carol Werba was concerned about improvement to back yards. Hans replied that they might be tackled once all the front yards are finished. Jack Hjedt wondered if the landscape architect would present an assessment of needs, and was assured that they would. Judy Buhner asked about overhanging trees, citing an often huge time gap between a request and its execution. Hans said this was being studied. Would there be any choice about plant materials? Hans replied that people could do some things themselves if they wished. Peg Rasmussen commented that the corner of Shallowbrook and Goldenchain is seriously overgrown, and was reassured that this problem will be included in the plan. Hans also assured the group that invasives will continue to be monitored.

Dave commented that landscaping means a lot to people here. Many chose to move here based on the attractive campus. It will take time to get a handle on landscaping problems, but we will persist in trying.

**Worxhub Processing** An attempt is underway to make the process work better for residents. Dave demonstrated on the big screen how to make a worxhub request. He said that residents can make a request on line, but also on paper, and that Sarah stands ready to help if needed. Mike Strycharz mentioned that if the request is for landscaping – e.g., for removing a tree branch – it would be an enormous help if residents gave as much information as possible, including a picture of the offending item. The season for landscaping is short, and the more information the landscapers have, the better off they will be.

**Sidewalk Access to Meeting House** The sidewalk from Crabapple Lane leading to the Meeting House needs paint and/or a sign requiring that there be no parking which obstructs it.

**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, and a petition is available in the mail room asking for improvements. Please do sign it. We pay taxes, and plow and repair our own roads, so we can legitimately ask for better traffic calming measures.

Shelley Schieffelin feels in fear for her life getting in and out of Lathrop. She has been in touch with a councilman about this. The situation is an accident waiting to happen. Thom suggested a speed study, which might lead to a hump or other device to slow traffic. Miriam Moss would certainly send the petition, but would also invite our Northampton councilman to come here and speak with us about the situation. Audrey Bozzo commented that our councilperson, Maureen Carney, has been here often and would be glad to come. Joe Kulin was surprised that, as a non-profit, we pay taxes; Thom replied that we do so voluntarily for both campuses. Cynthia Nyary pointed out that it was also a resident driver's responsibility to pay attention to how they are driving – to be sure to use the blinker light when turning, etc.

**Solicitation on Campus** Dave commented that this question arose shortly after he took office in May. One problem is that the single sign prohibiting solicitations is too small to be readily taken in, and needs to be replaced with a larger one. The question of political solicitation has never been definitively settled, and Dave feels that a committee to reexamine the current policy is needed.

**Weekly Recycling** At the request of some residents the potential increased cost of weekly recycling has been examined. Mike Strycharz reports that it would cost an additional \$150 per month, but would probably require a change of days for pickup, and both might not be on the same day. Sid Moss felt collection for trash and recyclables should occur on the same day. Carol Werba suggested a show of hands to indicate interest in the change. The overwhelming response was to keep the current system.

**Energy Audit** A Kendal rep came to conduct an energy audit on May 9 and 10. He found no obvious problems, but did have some suggestions for increasing energy efficiency. There will be a general meeting next Tuesday, August 8 to discuss these recommendations. Clean source options will also be discussed, though solar and windmills will not be among these. Suggestions will include programmable thermostats, more insulation, winterizing air conditioners, etc. Stan Maron asked if there was a written statement that solar was not appropriate for our buildings. Mike Strycharz didn't think there was such a document, but felt that our roofs were not structurally strong enough. It was pointed out that new technology now provides wafer-thin solar panels which might well be appropriate. Janet Price thought that when the time came for new roofing might be a good time to consider solar panels

**NorthNeighbors** Dale LaBonte, for the Neighborcare committee, presented a new group communication device – the google group. This will provide group communication through an e-mail exchange: [NorthNeighbors@googlegroup.com](mailto:NorthNeighbors@googlegroup.com). Dale will be happy to enroll you, if you failed to receive the e-mail invitation to join.

**Program Committee** Helen Engeseth is the new chair of the program committee. Dave urged all who are planning programs to submit the activities form available in Sarah's office, which the program committee will use to allocate space and schedule events. The committee meets monthly, usually on the third Tuesday of the month. Next meeting is on August 15.

**Food Composting** Dave explained the services available at the Department of Public Works site located a few blocks from Lathrop. These services are offered for an annual fee of \$25 for a transfer permit, and among other things feature composting of food waste including animal waste. We should meet with someone there who will explain what is available there.

**Water Quality** Joe Kulin has discovered on the Internet (LiveScience.org or .com) that sample water analysis for Northampton shows that the city does not meet Federal requirements. He suggests a committee to test our water here to see if this is indeed the case.

Residents were encouraged to take home some of the ample and delicious refreshments supplied by Crabapple Lane. The September meeting of the Council will be on September 6 at 10:00.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Davis, Secretary

