

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE LATHROP COMMUNITY, NORTHAMPTON

ASSOCIATION MEETING

April 5, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by the President, Carol Neubert. She thanked Hawthorn Lane for the refreshments. With thoughts for two residents who are hospitalized – Libby Brandt and Judy Stearns - the Association observed the customary moment of silence.

Minutes. The minutes of the March 1, 2017 Council meeting were accepted as presented.

Treasurer's Report. In Beverly Bowman's absence, Carol presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved as presented. We currently have a balance of \$4862.97. The full report has been filed with these minutes in the Library.

Management Report.

Thom Wright reported that the search for a Life Enrichment Coordinator has recruited Julie Robbins for the position. Her references are being checked, and she will start sometime in April, part time. The need for someone to develop fitness programs, recommended last month by the Fitness committee, will also be explored.

Thom provided an update on the progress of the Master Plan. We are continuing to develop both physical and financial plans. A task force meeting scheduled for next week has been postponed for a month or so to allow ample time to complete this work, which includes financial modeling to test assumptions used in the model.

Frank Sansom reported on the financial state of Lathrop as of the end of February. Although the townhomes on both campuses are fully occupied or undergoing renovation, occupancy at the Inn is down slightly. Refunds since the beginning of the year were \$1,567,515, a million of which were for the Inn because of a change in refund policy. Bob Comerford asked if they are using a lower upfront buy-in amount at the Inn, and still using the incentives they had initiated last year. Frank replied that they are using a combination of both incentives. We currently have 153 days cash in hand. This against a benchmark number of 150 days.

Michael Harvey reported for the Marketing group, amplifying the alternatives currently available to finance residence at the Inn. He summarized current occupancy as follows:

Sold and Occupied as of April 5, 2017

Northampton	(Sold) 100%	(Occupied) 96.2%
Easthampton	98.3	98.3
Inn	<u>67.3</u>	<u>63.2</u>
Total:	96.9%	88.2%

Turnovers are fewer this year than last at this time – 10 last year; 7 this year. Daphne Stevens asked if the recent move of a resident from the Inn to a Crabapple townhome was a unique event. Michael reminded her that the residence agreement allows moving from one residence to another,

although this usually involves a move from a townhome to the Inn, or from one townhome to another.

Nominating Committee Report

The nominating committee was composed of Judy Buhner, Peg Rasmussen, and Hans van Heyst. Judy Buhner, as chair, presented a slate of the following for Association officers in 2017-2018: President, Dave Morrissey; Vice President, Helen Engeseth; Secretary, Joan Davis; Treasurer, Bev Bowman.

Carol explained that we will vote on this slate at the May Association meeting. Lane representatives are chosen by the lanes themselves.

Directors Reports

Carol had invited each of the directors to give us a brief job description, and to tell us one thing they had accomplished in the past year that had improved life at Lathrop. Thom Wright led off, saying that his job was the easiest and hardest to describe, for he does a little bit of everything. He reports to the Board, and supervises six directors and a staff of 62 all together. He has wide responsibility for both staff and residents. As for accomplishments, he feels that the development of the master plan has been an occasion for improving the quality of conversation in the community. The conversation about refugees and our responsibility to them has clarified our place in the larger community, and the recent focus meeting on dogs at Lathrop has lifted our perspective generally. He hopes we can keep that perspective.

Frank Sansom said that he is essentially the Lathrop accountant, with responsibility to maintain books and accounts. He has regular monthly reports to prepare, is responsible for budget preparation as well as preparing for the annual audit and tax reporting, and for explaining our financial position to residents. Cynthia asked if he was involved in planning for the future. Frank replied that he attends task force meetings, and while an outside firm is currently involved in that planning, he hopes to be involved in the future.

Susan Weldon focuses on developing a bright, capable, happy staff. To that end she provides staff development training through Lathrop Academy, partly funded by contributions of residents. She also monitors the benefit program, is in charge of recruiting new staff, and of compliance with federal and state regulations. She has recently computerized staff information, making that data much more accessible. This year she has begun staff evaluations at the same time for all staff, rather than on their anniversary date. This has been the accomplishment which is most successful this year. Judy Buhner asked if staff job descriptions were available to residents. Susan answered that they are made available to search committees, but are not considered public information. Bob Buhner wondered if the performance evaluations were tied to the Employee Appreciation Fund, and Susan said that they were not. Dispersal of the fund is based on the number of hours employees work. Helen Armstrong inquired about the possibility for increasing diversity among the staff. Susan replied that she advertises job openings in both Springfield and Holyoke and in colleges like HCC, but she said "Mt. Tom seems to be in the way." Arlene Jennings asked if Susan had sought resident feedback on employee evaluations, or asked for self evaluations. Susan

said that employees meet with their supervisors, and she has not moved out to others such as residents to participate. Stacy Carmichael asked how a resident could best contact her, and Susan said she is not always there, for her own status is part-time, but she will reply to messages left on her telephone.

Michael described his group's responsibility for sales and marketing, describing a close knit team with distinct jobs, but overlapping interests. Major forms of outreach are ads, which always include the exterior and interior of townhome, and always include people. They are designed to encourage people to consult our website (on which we receive compliments). This is our main device for generating inquiries. He showed sample ads which always lead with a statement of our values, and which change with the seasons and for special projects. He noted that the "best of" poll is coming up, and urged residents to vote for Lathrop, the winner in our category for the last three years. He is most proud this year of using e-mail rather than snail mail to contact the reservation list. It is much more effective, and cheaper. He also is pleased with the community option at the Inn. A major disappointment is the lack of diversity among residents. Establishing "enhanced independent living" at the Inn is his current biggest challenge. Judy Hyde asked if we were overadvertising since we have a long waiting list. Michael pointed out that we were certainly not overadvertising the Inn, and we need to continue to push that. Stacy asked if he had any specifics on increasing diversity, and Michael said they were involved with the LGBT community in the Pride parade and other events, but the hard nut to crack is ethnic diversity where progress is hard to come by.

Paul Westerfield and Mike Strycharz were unable to attend the meeting.

Rob Olmsted described the duties of the Wellness Care Coordinator as educator, both informally and in the Lamppost; conductor of Annual Visits with residents; scheduler of wellness events, organizer of support services (a team managed at the Inn), and finally, care coordination. The last is helping people to respond when changes occur. The degree of his involvement is for residents to decide, and Rob referenced the series he had written in the Lamppost about how to respond to changes.

Arlene Jennings suggested that all the directors be invited to Association meetings. Carol thanked the participating directors, who received a hearty round of applause.

Dog Park Project

Carol explained that the idea of a fenced dog park had been introduced at the January Council meeting, and an ad hoc committee of Arlene Jennings, Helen Armstrong and Joan Davis had been appointed to locate a site and seek bids for fencing. Lathrop has agreed to contribute the land. Arlene presented a report from the ad hoc committee. A fenced area on the north side of the community garden was chosen, and among the three bids procured that of Hastie Fence was the lowest at \$3,133, with \$1144 as down payment. They can do the job in mid- to late-May, and Mike Strycharz has agreed to supervise the installation. This project will be underwritten by residents, and those interested in contributing should do so promptly with a check written to Lathrop, with "Dog Park" designated on it, and sent to Frank Sansom. This is NOT part of the Lathrop Community Fund, which has five other purposes for which contributions may be

designated. There were questions about the two trees included in the plot, whether room remained on the other side of the garden for a croquet court (there is, and the horseshoe pitch has been preserved as well), whether the gate will be wide enough for a mower (it will not, but Dale LaBonte has offered an electric mower to take care of the plot). Cynthia Nyary proposed that the Association make a contribution to the dog park. It was **agreed** that we give \$250 dollars for that purpose. Further discussion of the amount of the contribution ensued, but Audrey Bozzo's suggestion ruled the day -- that we wait to see if contributions fall short of the objective, and discuss another Association contribution then if that is the case. There was **agreement** on this suggestion.

Open Floor for the Good of the Community

The trail enhancement will be starting soon. Volunteer help is needed. It is heavy work, and those able and willing can sign up on sheet in mailroom. Marlisa Parker announced that the regular Thursday Walking Group is beginning again: meet at the trailhead bench at 9:30. Hans van Heyst also mentioned the imminent revival of Hiking with Hans, on the first and third Tuesdays of the month beginning in May. Peg Rasmussen said that there was still time to sign up for work in the butterfly garden. Judy Buhner announced a talk by Ryan O'Donnell, city councilor-at-large at 4:00 on Wednesday.

Bob Buhner reported on the Energy Program, phase two. About 20 people are participating. Hans has a contact at Kendal who will do a diagnostic inspection with a special camera which will detect a wide range of possible deficiencies in the townhomes. Janet Price wondered if these data might be useful in designing future townhomes. Cynthia Stanton thought we might fall under the purview of the Mass Save program. Bob explained that they will not do testing here because we do not hold title to our units. Besides, he said, the Kendal operation is free of charge.

Dave Morrissey asked that the resident who borrowed the video of "Moonlight" from the library please return it, so that it can be shown this weekend at the Meeting House. He expressed pleasure at the successful meeting about dogs at Lathrop held last Wednesday. Dave has a draft copy of David Jones's notes for his presentation, which might be adapted for inclusion in our resident handbook.

Peg Rasmussen mentioned the new video series at 4:00 on Thursday afternoons. Dale LaBonte wondered what plans had been made for grounds maintenance in spring to heal the ravages of the winter, asking too if consideration had been given to other kinds of ground cover. Carol said that these were property committee decisions, and Hans van Heyst said that the committee will discuss these questions at its next meeting. Bob Comerford reminded people that it is time to take in bird feeders.

Carol announced that the next Association meeting will be on May 3 at 10:00. She asked that we each identify a fellow resident who has done something to enhance the community. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Davis, Secretary

