

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE LATHROP COMMUNITY, NORTHAMPTON

ASSOCIATION MEETING

February 1, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by the President, Carol Neubert. She thanked Goldenchain Lane for the elegant refreshments. With thoughts for Mary Elizabeth Parker, Mary Willard and Pat Walsh; and memories of Frank Bruder, the Council observed the customary moment of silence.

Carol displayed a miscellaneous array of garments, all of which have been left in the mailroom, and which we hope will find their proper homes.

Minutes. The minutes of the January 4, 2017 Council meeting were accepted as presented.

Treasurer's Report. Beverly Bowman presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved as presented. We now have a balance of \$4935.80. The full report has been filed with these minutes in the Library.

Management Report

Thom Wright reported that the search for a possible successor to Deborah Peavey is still ongoing.

Thom explained the concept of enhanced independent living, an alternative to assisted living which provides better nursing service for Inn residents, as well as up to an hour a day in other individual assistance, for an increased monthly fee. Thom explained that this is a pilot program designed to give us some bottom line assistance; it will sync with the master plan.

He described Lathrop's response to refugee settlement plans in Northampton. He plans to have an assessment made of our Bridge Road property near the community garden to see what fixing and/or improvements would have to be made in order to offer it to a family. We want to be a safe haven, and will work with Catholic Charities to achieve this.

Thom provided an update on the progress of the Master Plan. This month financial estimates for the plan were presented to the Task Force and the full Board. The plan will be published next week. The January fireside chat was productive and resident meetings will be initiated in February to discuss the impact of financing the project.

Daphne Stevens wondered if Thom's plans for the Bridge Road property included the barn and the newly rechristened garden house, and was assured that they did not. Bob First asked what the Life Enrichment Coordinator did, and if this position is necessary. Thom explained that the position provides a wide variety of support for resident activities, and is an active, dynamic position which reacts to resident needs. Audrey Bozzo commented that the program committee would agree that the position is needed. Michael Harvey said that the coordinator also runs the welcoming committee for new residents.

Frank Sansom reported on the financial state of Lathrop, providing information for the end of 2016. Occupancy at year end was over 81% (97% of town homes; 48% of the Inn). In the next couple of weeks we expect move-ins at the Inn, bringing the occupancy up to 60%. Entrance fee activity showed a net of \$1,546,000. However, \$975,000 was spent on renovation of vacated units.

We currently have 234 days cash in hand, a cash flow increase this YTD of \$137,000. This against a benchmark number of 150 days. In response to a query, Sansom said that a basic refurbishment costs \$40,000, with a range between 40 and \$60,000.

Michael Harvey reported for the Marketing group. We had on our reservation list, from which we draw most new residents, a total of 159 at year's end, the second highest ever. He commended Michael Todd, who produces a sale every 5 or six times he gives a tour. Harvey also thanked the residents who are willing to open their homes for marketing visits. Although deposits have created an overall occupied and sold rate of 91.4%, the inevitability of turnover created a net of 27 vacancies during 2016. The transition from town homes is critical to the occupancy of the Inn, and the incentive program has been successful. The question of the Inn is a constant concern, Harvey said. If we do the entire master plan, it will not affect the Inn for several years. Some refurbishment and rearranging of space is going on now within the limitations of the current structure, using funds from a bequest. Don Levitan asked about the potential impact of marketing new townhomes for \$395-400,000, and a projected monthly fee of \$4000. He wondered what the sales team's position was on the disparity between these fees and those paid by current residents. Harvey replied that this was only one model being discussed and that any fee schedule will be tested before being implemented. Thom added that our current pricing is a bargain, and resetting fees is in the cards.

Committee Reports

At this point Carol asked that we move on, citing several chances to discuss these matters scheduled later this month. (These are listed at the end of these minutes). She referenced correspondence with other Kendal affiliates, many of whom have too many cumbersome standing committees. They seem to find our system of using ad hoc committees very appealing, and Carol has introduced a number of other Kendals to our system. Carol commented on the current issue of the Nor'easter, remarking that it is the best yet. She also announced that the Music Committee needs a new chairman, and will accept volunteers. She described the efforts of our Program committee as "awesome," but also noted the burden they carry for set-ups, cleaning up after an event, and opening the Meeting House door, etc. Therefore there will appear on the sign-up sheet opportunities to volunteer to help with these mechanical aspects of events. She urged residents to look for these sign-up spaces and sign up if they can help. Carol needs a helper, too, to maintain the calendar of events on the website.

In line with this year's council goal of enhancing environmental responsibility, the Earth-Friendly Organizers have been discussing recycling options. Helen Armstrong and Virginia Irvine gave an entertaining demonstration of what goes where, supplemented by a descriptive guide in the cubbies. Their presentation was greeted with applause. Bob Buhner has been doing a heating assessment in the Meeting House. We have: three heating zones, two upstairs and one in the

basement; and two air conditioning zones, in the upper level. We use programmable thermostats which react to fluctuations in outside temperature, but also to the activity of building users. Keeping the doors to the Meeting Room closed should help to conserve heat, and signs to this effect will be installed shortly.

We have been awarded the Kendal affiliate grant, to be used for trail improvement. Work will begin when the ground thaws. Carol has appointed a nominating committee, consisting of Judy Buhner, chair, Hans van Heyst, and Peg Rasmussen. Carol explained the nomination process, which includes presenting a slate of officers at the next Association meeting on April 5.

Dave Morrissey gave a summary of the Fitness survey, which enjoyed a return of 54 questionnaires. People appreciate the offerings we now have. Lots of individuals also have their own routines. In the future, 41% would like to see improved facilities and equipment. 39% would be willing to pay for these; 33% would not. As a followup, Dave suggested a Lathrop budget line for fitness programs. Also, the fitness and wellness committees have consolidated their efforts. In response to a question about training for using the equipment, Dave remarked that interns from Springfield College or Westfield State might be explored as an option.

New Business

The next agenda item was the issue of pets at Lathrop. Carol described three separate topics for consideration: dogs in the meeting house, invisible fences and establishing a dog park. She acknowledged the strong emotions surrounding this issue. There has been a great deal of hurt and anger which needs to be acknowledged. We need to speak openly and listen carefully. Carol felt that she has become a lightning rod, which gets in the way of productive discussion. Therefore, she has recused herself and asked Dave Morrissey to lead this discussion. She asked the group for one more moment of silence. Dave said that passions are running high around these topics, but he feels sure that we will find an accommodation without winners or losers.

Joan Laird was recognized to make a motion, which she prefaced with thanks to both Carol and Dave for their thoughtful remarks. Herewith is her motion:

I move to table the discussion of this item and will make the same motion to table discussion of the next item until a time certain, until after at least one or more open forums are held, modeled on Quaker practices and consensus building, in which residents try to build solutions that will contribute to a better quality of life for all Lathrop North residents. Jack Hjelt seconded the motion.

Before voting on the motion several comments were made. Marlisa Parker noted that the process of building consensus is exactly what the open forum would be designed to do. Dave felt we needed a trained facilitator. Bob Buhner did not disagree with the process, but thought that a policy should include Easthampton. He recently went to four large stores in the business block on Rt. 5 and discovered that there were four separate ways for dealing with dogs, depending on their individual business models. Lathrop also has a business model, and we might let management decide these issues based on that. Peg Rasmussen said that the problem here was one of safety. Therefore, management should take responsibility. We now have nine dogs; the overall policy should reflect future expansion.

Joan Laird called the previous question and a show of hands was decisively in favor of tabling the discussion.

Open Floor for the Good of the Community

Caroline Zavarine was concerned about inaccuracies in the schedule of events—particularly changed times, and sometimes even the location. It was suggested that Sara use her e-mail list to send a message if time or location of a program is changed at the last minute. Dave reported that Sara has been working on a Who's Who for Northampton, and will be calling for a short bio and a photo for each entry.

On February 9 at 11:00 Frank Sansom will make a financial presentation. Thom Wright will hold a fireside chat on February 23 at 11:00. The March meeting of the Council will be on March 1 at 10:00. Observers are welcome.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Davis
Secretary