

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE LATHROP COMMUNITY, NORTHAMPTON

COUNCIL MEETING

October 5, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by the president, Carol Neubert . The Council observed the customary moment of silence.

Minutes. The minutes of the September 6, 2016 Association meeting were accepted as presented.

Treasurer's Report. Beverly Bowman presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved as presented. The sum of \$2013 was encumbered in August for previously approved audio equipment, including new microphones. We received a \$150 donation from the mourning group for use of the Meeting House. We now have an unencumbered balance of \$3005.23. The full report has been filed with these minutes in the Library.

Helen Armstrong has received a bill for labor for \$200 more than anticipated for installation of gates at the community garden last spring. The Council approved expenditure of \$250 for the purpose, and so far \$215 has been expended for the gates themselves. She asked whose obligation it is to pay this additional sum. In the past, the labor of maintenance staff at the garden has had no charge attached. A lively discussion ensued between those who felt that the gardeners themselves should split the cost, and those who felt that the bill should be paid from Association funds. Ultimately, it was agreed that the remaining \$35 dollars of the original Association allotment be given to the garden committee toward the bill and that the gardeners split up the rest. In future maintenance will only do tilling for no cost; any other services will be billed.

Arlene Jennings asked why veggieburgers for the picnic were billed to the Association, as she had assumed that Lathrop had underwritten the food. Audrey Bozzo described it as a last minute expenditure drawn from Program Committee funds. The committee has no fixed budget because expenditures are too unpredictable. In future, the kitchen will provide the veggieburgers.

Management Report.

Thom Wright reported that in Northampton 77 of 78 units are occupied, with one under deposit (or 100% occupancy); 57 of 60 units are occupied in Easthampton, with 3 under deposit (also 100% occupancy). The Inn has improved to a projected occupancy rate of 58.5%. Overall, we have 88.5 % occupancy, well above the 78 percent projected in the 2016 budget.

There are two finalists for the Director of Finance position. They will be vetted once more by the search committee, along with Amy Harrison, the new CFO of Kendal. Both are available, and one may start on November 1, 2016 or sooner.

The budget preparation process is underway, and the final budget will be presented to Northampton residents on October 26 in the afternoon. In the wake of a successful first attempt, when 5 residents transferred to the Inn, the Marketing Department is developing another Inn-Centive Program to

encourage town home residents who are ready to move to the Inn. It may include an element of support services and more flexible dining options .

He presented a large volume detailing the history of the Master Planning process prepared by DiMella Schaffer (available in the Library). The Finance committee has interviewed two investment banking firms, to feel out the possibilities for implementing future plans. They are also doing some financial modeling and working on a new resident entrance agreement.

Bob Comerford asked if Thom would be communicating planning task force results. Thom replied that he would be doing so but preferred not to have a planning discussion at a Council meeting. Carol suggested that there will be plenty of opportunities in the near future, as the RIPs group meets with residents.

On-going Business

There have been inquiries about how to get things done, and Carol has arranged with Deborah Peavey to include a regular Question Box in the LampPost to deal with these questions. She also noted that the answers are all in the Resident Handbook, but that we all need a refresher at times.

Massage and foot care appointments will be held in the Blue House in the future. It is up to individuals to make their own massage appointments which will be made for Tuesdays and most Wednesdays. Foot care appointments (on second Wednesdays) may be made through Sarah. Entrance to the Blue House is through the back porch.

We have new black chairs for the meeting room, obtained in a switch with Easthampton.

Benches to be refurbished will be picked up after Thanksgiving. Sites will be improved and made easily accessible before the benches are restored to slightly different places. Refurbishment of the entryway and mailroom will begin soon.

A discussion about lunches with Paul Westerfield was constructive. However, the proposal to pick up dinners in Easthampton for consumption in our dining room was ruled unfeasible by Westerfield. Therefore the current plan is to use the van for transportation and to eat in Easthampton in the small dining room. Sign up sheet is available in the mail room for the first of these dinners, on October 13.

A decision has been made to buy a sturdy folding ping pong table rather than one to lie on top of the pool table. In anticipation of this, cards have been moved to the conference room and the jigsaw puzzle to the location formerly occupied by the coloring project. The new sound system has been installed, including microphones.

New lines in white and yellow have been painted on Bridge Road, to enhance safety of both pedestrians and drivers.

A "Journey with Judy" has been tentatively scheduled for October 21. Please look for a signup sheet.

Carol cautioned those who use the Meeting House in the evenings and on weekends to be sure windows are closed, lights are off, and the building is locked when they leave.

Report of the Property Committee

Stacy Carmichael, Janet Price and Hans van Heyst are the Northampton members of the new Property Committee, with Hans serving as chair. Hans reported that the committee has held its first meeting and discussed things in general. The committee's charge, as Hans sees it, is to assist Mike Strycharz in making decisions and scheduling. In addition, the committee may serve as liaison with the Council. The Land Conservation Committee will be separate, but will be coopted as necessary. Another meeting, which he hopes will include better attendance from Easthampton, will be held in two weeks. Mike Strycharz added that the committee will be of assistance in preparing guidelines for, e.g., satellite dishes, invisible dog fences, and the like. Helen Armstrong asked if the recommendations of the ad hoc mowing committee would be included. Mike replied that a new system for lawns will be adopted next year, and the property committee will be involved at that time. He also said that because of the drought, some lawns may not have survived, and we will be able to try a miniclover option for the dead spots before next year. Hans noted that the tarring and filling of road cracks (which cost \$9000), was a project that the property committee could have assessed and recommended - another example of how the committee may assist in tinkering with the budget and setting priorities.

Kendal Affiliate Grant

Carol reminded the Council that this grant of \$5000 is available annually from Kendal. For the last two years, the grant has been used to clear our land of invasive species, principally on the Easthampton campus. A new project is needed this year. We had decided to explore with the Broad Brook coalition ways to improve our trails. The grant has been approved and is due to arrive early in November. In the meantime we will meet with the Broad Brook Coalition to discuss cooperative projects.

Council Goals

Carol suggested that we begin work on our goal of Earth Care by worrying about recycling in the Meeting House, including both food in the kitchen and paper everywhere. Our project can broaden later. A subcommittee might be asked to start thinking about this, and report later to the Property Committee.

Audrey Bozzo remarked that there is a sign posted suggesting that we take our catalogs home, rather than dumping them in the mailroom containers. She felt, however, that in any event we need bigger containers for trash and recyclable paper in the mailroom. Marlissa Parker wondered how we can find out what is and isn't recyclable. Audrey replied that we have had a city employee come to talk with us about this in the past, and could do so again. Mike Strycharz commented that there is a new city policy, a copy of which he will send to Carol for disbursal.

Discussion for the Good of the Community

Dave Morrissey announced that we now have the capability to stream media on our television, at a very modest monthly fee. Sarah has the small machine to perform this feat in her office, and will be happy to instruct anyone who wishes to use the TV in this fashion. Dave also asked about the possibility for xeriscaping. This, too, was referred to the Property Committee.

Arlene Jennings noted that the ticks are back after a summer hiatus and residents using the woods should exercise caution.

In answer to a query about what to do when work is requested but not acted upon, Mike Strycharz said to call him. He also said that a bench will be delivered to Firethorn tomorrow, as requested.

Lane Reports

Aspen: Miriam Moss, sitting in for Judy Buhner, wanted to know if there is a plan for restoring grass, and for dealing with a dead tree. Nothing will be done until next spring about the grass, with the possible exception of trying the miniclover. The tree is dormant, not dead. She also wondered when bird feeders can go out. Bears should be hibernating, so from late November to early March is appropriate.

Butternut: Helen Armstrong announced with pleasure that Butternut is fully occupied for the first time in a very long time.

Crabapple: Audrey Bozzo reported that the lamppost near 32 Crabapple has exposed wiring.

Dogwood: Hans van Heyst said a resident was concerned that the gully at the entrance to Dogwood Lane may be dangerous. Carol referred this to the Property committee, which suddenly has its hands full.

Hawthorn: Bob Comerford asked what the policy was about moving and removing shrubs. Work orders are necessary to start the process. Lathrop replaces bushes in front of each unit. Lathrop pays for replacing dead shrubs; the resident pays for replacement of live ones, and also for additional shrubs. He had received a complaint that residents are not receiving the services they used to receive, e.g., power washing of the exterior. This is scheduled every ten years. Re cleaning gutters, he was told that it would occur, but after the leaves are down.

Miscellaneous Concerns: Audrey Bozzo asked about washing bedspreads and other items too heavy for our machines, which has been provided in the past. Mike replied that when we outsourced the cleaning service we lost this capability, but there are machines at Easthampton which can handle these loads. Miriam Moss asked about covers for the air conditioners. They are the responsibility of the resident. Helen Armstrong was concerned about invasive species included in foundation plantings. Mike Strycharz replied that they will not be taken out, but as they replace plants, they will not use invasives.

Coming Events: Carol announced a Thom Wright Fireside Chat on October 28 at 11:00. Anne Lanning (Board President) will host a "Captain's Table" at the Inn at 5:30 on October 25 (sign up). On October 26 in the afternoon, Thom will present the 2017 budget to the Northampton community. November 2 will be an Association meeting, with refreshments at 9:30 and the meeting at 10:00. The Program committee announced a Halloween cocktail party on October 28 at 4:00, and a Thanksgiving luncheon on November 16.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Joan Davis, Secretary

