

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE LATHROP COMMUNITY, NORTHAMPTON

**ASSOCIATION MEETING**

February 3, 2016

Carol Neubert convened this Association meeting with an expression of thanks to Hawthorn Lane for refreshments, and an announcement that new augmented hearing devices were in use at this meeting. The meeting opened with the customary moment of silence, with concern for ailing residents Joan Maiocco, and Stephen Janofsky. Carol welcomed and introduced new residents Dana Wright and Marlisa Parker, Daphne and Michael Stevens, Dennie and Libby Brandt, Janet Price and Audrey and Larry Bernstein. She commended Judy Buhner's campaign to enforce the 15 mph speed limit, "for the safety of all."

**Minutes** The minutes of the Association meeting of November 4, 2015 were accepted as presented.

**Treasurer's Report** Bev Bowman reported that we have a balance (including the CD) of \$5008.15, and a cash balance of \$4507.56. Since the last Association meeting there have been minor expenses for entertainment and the usual modest interest income. The Treasurer's report was accepted as presented.

**President's Remarks** Carol commented on the splendid issue of the Nor'easter which was published last week, featuring art work by Judy van Heyst and written items by several Northampton residents. She congratulated Joan Laird, Dave Morrissey and Andy Walsh for their work on this issue.

She asked for a round of applause for chairperson Audrey Bozzo and the faithful volunteers on the Program committee, and noted the next two committee-sponsored events. There will be a Mardi Gras party on February 9 at 4:00. Audrey said that those intending to wear costumes might take note that Mardi Gras colors are yellow, green and purple. Richard Little will present a talk on the geography of the Pioneer Valley on February 12.

Carol reported that the Wednesday Craft group is exhibiting a variety of their products in the Meeting House this month, and announced that the Art Group will expand the exhibit space to include the hall in the basement, enlivening that dead space.

She noted with satisfaction the burgeoning interest in exercise. Twenty people show up every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon for an exercise session, and on January 31 a yoga class with a capacity of eight was convened. Scheduling is becoming a challenge, for the Meeting House is a very busy place, with plenty for everyone to do.

**Management Reports** Thom Wright reminded the group of the Master Plan update all residents received recently, and announced a presentation on Tuesday, February 9 at

11:00 (or at Easthampton at 3:00) to bring everyone up to speed on the plan, and to get resident feedback. On February 17 there will be a land committee meeting in Easthampton on farming opportunities to serve autistic clients as well as those with mental difficulties. Kendal at Home is still investigating the regulatory climate in which they will operate, and we await the outcome of their work in Boston on this matter.

Residents have received a questionnaire from one of the land committee's 22 subcommittees about a possible greenhouse in Easthampton to be shared by both campuses. Those who wish to respond may return the questionnaire to Sarah.

Deborah Perry gave a financial update as of December 31, 2015. We had an occupancy rate of 83% (budgeted at 82%). We had 33 vacancies (36 were budgeted). Entrance fees were \$2,290,000, a cash intake higher than a normal year. Our net operating margin was 1.7%. Although ideally it should be about 2.4%, we are definitely headed in the right direction. Residents interested in the detailed report may request a printed copy from Deborah's office.

Michael Harvey gave an equally upbeat marketing report. There were 74 deposits in 2015, a new record. The previous high was 47. There are 132 people on the reservation list, an increase of 22% over last year. Michael recognized the contributions of Mike Todd and Kathy Maloney to these results.

During 2015, 23 residents left Lathrop; 10 in Northampton, 9 from the Inn and 7 in Easthampton. Five residents are in transition to the Inn, but with three deaths there this month, filling the Inn continues to be a major challenge.

Mike Strycharz reported that 34 refurbishments had been completed by his crew in 2015. He also has plans to replace the kitchen floor in the meeting house.

**Governance** Carol introduced governance as the topic for consideration at this meeting, listing a number of areas in which we are experiencing growing pains, and suggesting that our governance apparatus has a impact on how we deal with these. Beginning with the Board of Directors, she convened a panel consisting of Irene Lamson, Board chair, Peter van Pelt and Joan Wofford, Northampton resident Board members and Thom Wright.

Opening the discussion, Irene Lamson asserted that although we are a Kendal affiliate, benefitting from the expertise of the 13 affiliates and the central Kendal management, we are an independent organization, guided by the Board of Directors. She provided basic information about the Board – it meets quarterly; terms of office are three years, running from May to April; an annual meeting is open to all residents; the major work of the Board is done in committees and Board decisions are reached by consensus. Carol asked how one becomes a member, and Irene described that process. Peter van Pelt described the vetting process as he experienced it, and expressed his admiration for this board. He feels it is well balanced and able to manage things. It is a new and interesting experience

for him to serve on a board of a 501c3 organization serving residents rather than shareholders.

Joan Wofford noted that at the most recent Board meeting, a new committee structure was approved. Irene then explained that there are now six standing committees which report to the Board – an executive committee, board development, finance, audit, philanthropy and diversity committees – and described their functions. The remaining committees are now advisory, and report to the Executive Director. These are health and wellness, property, transportation and land conservation committees.

Carol reminded the group that governance also includes the Resident Association, which meets quarterly; the Council which meets in months the Association does not meet, and resident committees. The latter currently include two-campus committees (art, music land conservation and Nor'easter) and those specifically for our campus (library, program, art studio, etc.). She said all of these work together in a cooperative effort. Irene added that we follow in the Quaker tradition with decisions made by consensus.

Carol then solicited questions from the residents. After commending Irene for her openness, Don Levitan asked what the role of the Board, and the residents, is in the Master Planning process. In response, Irene described the composition of the Task Force which includes all three constituencies – Board, staff and residents – and indicated that all three have been and will be involved in the decision-making process.

To a question regarding Easthampton resident Board members, Irene replied that currently only Karen Clark is a member, and new ones are needed. Stacy Carmichael asked if there were residents on the Board executive committee. There are none at present, but there is nothing to prevent resident membership on the committee.

Bob Comerford felt that Board members should report to the Association after each meeting, since residents are essentially shareholders. Irene replied that this is being addressed. The Board plans to provide a summary of Board meetings, to be filed in the Resource Book in the office and on the resident website. She thanked Bob for the suggestion on behalf of the Board, which seeks transparency in its actions.

**Open Floor for the Good of the Community** Carol mentioned green spots now observed on some of the cubbies. These are to indicate residents who have agreed to receive the weekly Lamp Post exclusively by e-mail, achieving thereby an earlier distribution time, and living color. Others who covet a green spot can let Sarah know that they, too, will forego hard copy.

Joan Davis gave a short history of the community garden, and announced a meeting for those interested in participating this year scheduled at 10:00 on Tuesday, February 9. She billed this as an organizational meeting to discuss issues pertinent to an expanded operation.

Nancy First asked residents to form a team for the spelling bee sponsored by the Northampton Educational Foundation. A team of three or four would compete on March 30. Cynthia Nyary endorsed this idea, which she said is a lot of fun. Volunteers may seek Nancy out.

Peg Rasmussen noted that soon we will be planting the butterfly garden outside the meeting house. She needs a crew to reup or volunteer. She described the various tasks volunteers can perform, and asked interested parties to think spring and sign up in the mailing room. Nancy First noted that we must keep our bees healthy, too.

Judy Hyde invited people to join her bridge class, at 1:15 on Wednesdays in the library. She said library users are welcome to use the library while her class is in session.

Bev Bowman commended the President for the attractive graphics that accompanied the agenda. The meeting adjourned at 11:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Davis, Secretary