

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE LATHROP COMMUNITY, NORTHAMPTON

ASSOCIATION MEETING

August 10, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 by the president, Carol Neubert, with thanks to Dogwood Lane for the reception refreshments. The group observed a moment of silence, with concern for Joan Maiacco. We welcomed new residents Joe and Andrea Kulin (1 Aspen), John and Shelley Schiefflin (21 Crabapple), and Chris and Jack Hjeldt (67 Goldenchain).

Minutes. The minutes of the July 6, 2016 Council meeting, prepared by Marlisa Parker as Secretary pro-tem, were accepted by consensus.

Treasurer's Report. Beverly Bowman presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved as presented. The full report has been filed with these minutes in the Library.

President's Comments.

1. The reports of committees which everyone received last week are self explanatory. Carol noted that each one offered an opportunity to community residents to participate in their activities. However, there will be no Hiking with Hans for awhile, since he is scheduled for a hip replacement this month. He plans to start his group up again in the spring, but if there is reasonable snow in the new year, there may be cross country skiing or snowshoeing excursions.
2. The property committee was a Board committee, but will now be staff based with resident participation. Mike Strycharz and Michael Harvey are the staff involved; there will be in addition three residents from each campus. Interested residents were encouraged to sign a sign up sheet, available at the meeting.
3. Habitat for Humanity has provided a volunteer opportunity for Lathrop residents. They will need a group this fall to organize and produce a bulk mailing; volunteers welcome.

Updates on community activities:

1. The refurbishment of the mail room has been completely planned. That plan will be executed as soon as a workforce can be assembled to do the work expeditiously to minimize disorder. (Vacation problems)
2. There is a notebook in the mailroom of restaurants which will provide home delivery of food. In addition, Sara has information about Delivery Express, which delivers meals from most restaurants in Northampton for a small fee.
3. RIPS subcommittee of the Long Range Planning Task Force reports that the Task Force met last week, will have a followup meeting shortly, and will report to the community at that time.

4. Rob Olmsted, in a Lamppost article in July, introduced the Vitalize 360 program initiated by Kendal. Rob is working with Deborah Peavey to see how this program might be adapted to Lathrop needs. It is a way of taking stock of where we are in various aspects of mental and physical health, and suggests ways to set and move toward fitness goals. Deborah Peavey has descriptive packets on Vitalize 360 for those interested.

5. The website (Lathropres.org) is an excellent source for community information. A show of hands indicated that it is less than optimally used. Carol urged us to turn to the site more often.

6. The goals for the Council in the coming year will be to continue efforts at improving communication in the community, and earth care – a renewed emphasis on conservation measures.

Issues from the Council for Association Consideration

1. The Association was asked to approve expenditure of \$1,388 for expansion of the sound system, including replacement of an obsolete microphone system. The total cost was estimated at \$3400. The Council has pursued resident donations for the project, and has received \$625. The requested Association share (\$1388) is half the remaining cost, with the other half to come from the Lathrop capital budget. A lively discussion ensued.

Mary Willard felt strongly that the majority of residents need hearing assistance, and that Lathrop capital funds should be used to provide for all of the expense. Miriam Moss asked for a description of capital funds, and the amount available. Thom explained that as operational costs were discussed during the budgeting process, certain minimal funds were earmarked for minor capital improvements. That fund totals \$140,000 for 2016, and there are a variety of projects in it. Arlene Jennings asked about the purposes for which Association funds are used. Carol replied that they are used for programs for residents, for donations of \$50 on the death of residents and for special requests like fencing the community garden this spring and the request on the floor at the moment. Arlene commented that it appears that necessities go into the capital budget, while the Association budget seems to be reserved for niceties. She therefore agrees with Mary Willard that this should be a Lathrop responsibility. Carolyn Zavarine wondered about the impact of such a move on Easthampton, where they have already agreed to the split as proposed here. Cynthia Nyary felt we had been very frugal, and it is our money to spend as we see fit. Dave Morrissey asked about savings on lawn mowing skipped because of the drought. He was assured that these have been consumed already by alternative projects. Arlene noted that Lathrop controls the capital funds, and asked what the impact would be on Association funds. Bev Bowman said that we have around \$4000 available (in addition to a \$5000 CD).

Carol remarked that we seem to be in agreement that we need an improved sound system, and asked for a show of hands on the question: Do we split the cost or ask Lathrop to pay for all of it? The show of hands was overwhelmingly in favor of splitting the cost.

2. Carol described the John Diffey Educational Fund and the Lathrop Academy. The former is a Kendal effort to honor the service of John Diffey to Kendal, and respond to his keen interest in staff development. The Lathrop Academy is our home grown effort to provide an on-going staff development program. In common with the Easthampton Resident Council, the Northampton Council recommended that a gift of \$500 be sent to each of these projects. The recommendation was approved.

3. The Ad Hoc Lawn Committee, which provided residents with a suggested land treatment plan in a memorandum a short time ago, asked for approval of its recommendations so that they might be passed on to the Property Committee for its consideration. They recommend four lawn treatment applications per year with varying components, that wildflowers be planted on the Dogwood bank as an experiment to see if we can minimize mowing area, and that flower and shrub services on the front of townhouses be regularized. There is a sign available if one wants to omit these services. Don Levitan commented that the proposal omitted attention to watering, for which residents bear the responsibility. Stacy Carmichael, concerned about the landscapers' "casket pruning" of shrubs, asked if one could receive mulch, but not pruning service. Carol replied that a little variety is possible, but not much. She remarked that the committee had to reconcile many different desires, and thanked them for the job they did.

Open floor for the good of the community.

Nancy First, who lives in the last unit on Hawthorn, has an extensive garden outside her front door. Even more than painting, she loves to garden, and hopes that the next resident there will be given a chance to keep her garden.

Betty Barto described the desecration of her garden by the landscapers' bush hog last week, and wondered where her complaint should be addressed. Carol said she would check with Mike Strycharz on that issue. Joe Kulin inquired about a dead tree in his yard. Commenting that the tree would probably be taken down and a replacement made simultaneously and that this is not tree planting season, Carol agreed to check on that situation, too.

Management Reports

Thom Wright: Columbia Gas is servicing furnaces in some units, and may need to enter residences to turn on the heat for a brief period. Those affected should have received notices of this.

New members have been welcomed to the Board. Chuck Johnson has returned to the Board, as has Robin Longo. Johnson will function as Treasurer. Ellen Ober, Easthampton resident active on the RIPS committee, has joined as a new Board member.

He announced a meeting with Dogwood Lane on August 11, as well as the summer picnic on September 14 at Look Park from 12 to 2.

Thom bade a fond farewell to Deborah Parry, noting her splendid service to Lathrop. He has initiated a search for her successor, and will appoint a search committee composed of residents, Board and staff members.

Michael Harvey: Good news on the occupancy front. We have 36 new names, and a total of 148, on the reservation list this year. Year-to-date deposits total 23, 8 of which are in Northampton. There have been 16 move-ins so far this year, of which 5 are in Northampton. Net turnover is 20. Northampton occupancy is 93.6%; total occupancy is 83.8%. – better than budgeted for. The marketing department plans another incentive program to encourage moves to the Inn again this year, following last year's success with this program.

Deborah Parry: Deborah thanked the assembled residents for the experience of working at Lathrop, describing them as excellent role models for continuing to challenge oneself. This is a value she plans to take with her.

With healthy occupancy, as Mike described, increased entrance fee activity has resulted in a net of \$616,000, which can be used for refurbishment of vacated units. There is a negative cash net operating margin of \$59,000, a result of vacancies which have occurred earlier in the year than we anticipated. The daily cash on hand figure is within expectations. The balance sheet also shows a deficit, primarily because our accounting method includes future obligation for paybacks to residents when they leave their units.

Carol also thanked Deborah for her exemplary service, noting her ability to communicate money matters in a clear fashion. She invited the residents to a farewell reception for Deborah, which immediately followed the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Davis
Secretary