

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE LATHROP COMMUNITY, NORTHAMPTON

COUNCIL MEETING

December 7, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by the vice-president, David Morrissey . Dave noted our recent loss of resident Frank Bruder, and also the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. The Council observed the customary moment of silence.

Minutes. The minutes of the November 2, 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 now have an unencumbered balance of \$2948.26. The full report has been filed with these minutes in the Library.

Helen Armstrong asked how the Employee Appreciation Fund was allocated. Audrey Bozzo replied that it was prorated on the basis of hours worked.

Audrey also commented on the expenses for the Christmas party, which will be minimal since paper products have already been purchased. The cash bar will sell drinks for \$2 each. The Treasurer's report was accepted as submitted.

Ongoing Business

Dave mentioned a survey distributed by the Fitness Committee. He hopes there will be good participation. The committee is trying to determine which fitness activities are most desired, as an aid to deciding which activities to try to finance. Rob Olmsted noted, however, that as of now there is no financing.

Dave announced the arrival of a **ping pong table** in the pool room on the lower level. We bought the ping pong table on Black Friday at Dick's, and the van picked it up. Stacy Carmichael asked if it would be a problem if both were in use at the same time. Bob Comerford, a pool player, didn't anticipate much conflict and felt any problems could be worked out.

Dave also described continuing **renovation of the entryway** and mail room. Still to go: a new rug and cushions for the new bench under the window. There was some discussion of the coat rack, and the new hooks in the mail room. Dave explained that the coat rack will remain in the sitting room for the winter and be stored in the summer. The hooks should suffice for the summer. There is a need to reduce the amount of paper in the mailroom, specifically a larger container for waste mail. It was agreed that the new paint, new mirror and new lights have helped to brighten the entryway.

The **kitchen floor** is almost complete – the workmen ran out of flooring just before they finished. What is done looks good, and we hope they'll return and finish the job promptly.

The **Kendal Affiliates grant** proposal to improve Lathrop trails has been submitted; we will hear in January whether we have been funded. Trail users in the group called attention to a valley on the White trail which is eroding badly and needs attention. This is not part of the grant proposal. Helen suggested that we look into Lathrop's liability insurance, since many who are not residents use the trails. It was agreed that Phase II could include this concern. Arlene will consult the Broad Brook Coalition to see if there is a temporary fix we can install. Rob told us that the pendants will not work on the trail in case of an injury, but encouraged carrying cell phones, which do work to call 911.

Rob thinks it a good idea to remind people how the pendants work: only on campus, to the office between 9 and 5 weekdays, and to the desk at the Inn on a 24 hour-7 day basis for times not covered here. Smoke detectors do not go directly to the fire department, but to the Inn front desk. Judy Buhner wondered if this information was in the Residents' Handbook, and she was assured that it was. Since it unclear whether people read their Handbook, Dave thought we might give new residents a pop quiz.

Helen reported that the **Meeting House Earth Care group** (recycling) had agreed that there is a lack of clarity about trash in the mailroom and kitchen. The committee would distinguish between paper trash and trash trash. Those who sort their mail in the mailroom can use the large paper bin; when that is full the paper trash can be stored in the trash closet outside the kitchen door. In the kitchen, the issue is between recyclables and trash trash. Compostible materials can be made available to those who want them, or be put in the disposal. Paper trash from the library can go either to the mailroom or the outside trash closet.

Sara added that Bob Buhner is undertaking a heating audit to see how we can save on electricity. He is also suggesting using fans in the meeting room to direct heat downward, although they will need adjusting before we can use them in this way. We will use standard temperatures in the meeting room as a fall back – 68 degrees during the day, and 62 degrees at night for the meeting room.

Handbook Update Discussion

Dave, who, as vice-president, will be the point person on this year's revisions to the Residents' Handbook, introduced the discussion. He said that last year, the Handbook was completely updated, and the major revision was addition of the transportation policy. This is the version currently on the website. He urged residents to keep their resident agreement with the Handbook, since the former references the current handbook, which changes regularly. Any changes in content or format, or in the website version should reach him by mid-January. Joe Kulin has already suggested that the Quick Tips should not be buried in the middle of the document, but be at the front where they are easily accessible. Stacy hoped all could be combined in one document, rather than have supplementary sheets attached. Dave replied that if the website version is complete, residents can ask Sara to print out any changes they want. Changes can be advertised in the Lamppost.

Discussion for the Good of the Community

The first issue was the cloudy definition of what constitutes a resident's property. The Property committee had discussed this matter at their November meeting, the minutes of which were distributed to the Council. In 2015 the Council had studied the question and arrived at the decision that land immediately adjacent to a townhome (about the width of the back patio) was "private space," for use only by the townhome occupant. Other land is community land but those using it should be sensitive to those who live close by. In the Handbook's Quick Tips, the following sentence can be found: "Please respect the grounds immediately adjacent to the townhomes, and treat these areas as the private property of the occupants." The Property committee would like to find a more specific description of the difference between public and private land, but decided to retain the old policy and deal with questions on a case-by-case basis. Audrey reminded the Council that the old policy was tried a few years ago, but essentially didn't work anymore. It is not really an issue, for legally none of the land is privately held, and creating a zone of privacy relies mainly on the respect other users show for homeowners' space. Stacy will take the issue to the next Property committee meeting, for it has never really been resolved. Ultimately the Council and Association should decide.

The boundary issue is pertinent to the major discussion of the morning: the inclusion of dogs in our community. Carol, in response to some complaints from residents had, in advance of this meeting, sent a memorandum to the Property committee suggesting changes in policy about dogs. She had also asked the Lane Representatives to determine resident preferences on current policies to report on at this meeting.

Unfortunately, only two lane reps had polled their lanes. Both of those lanes were agreed unanimously that dogs should be allowed at Lathrop; one of these also felt that dogs should not be in the Meeting House. A lively discussion ensued, first about dogs in the Meeting House, followed by the invisible fence issue.

After many years when dogs were not permitted in the Meeting House, the policy was changed in 2015 to allow them inside except in the kitchen and the meeting room where food is served. Audrey Bozzo stressed that having dogs in the Meeting House was not pro- or anti- dog, but was really a safety issue – for elderly people a tripping hazard which can be life threatening. Several council members, as well as Rob Olmsted, concurred. But Arlene Jennings, who has a dog, said that she could no longer come to the Meeting House if her dog could not accompany her. Tying a dog on the porch while its owner was in the meeting house (former practice) seemed a less than perfect solution, for the safety reasons mentioned above, although this method worked well without incident for many years. Without that provision, dogs would not be permitted anywhere near the Meeting House. This seems pretty punitive, and it was remarked that Northampton Lathrop, marketed as dog-friendly, is really not. Most of the Council sentiment favored dogs, but not in the Meeting House. However, no decision was reached by the Council. It was agreed to reopen the discussion in January, and the Lane reps who had not polled their residents were urged to do so for that meeting.

We initiated the idea of establishing a small dog park on the new property adjacent to the north side of the community garden. Helen, Arlene and Joan were deputized to explore this idea, and

prepare a proposal for submission to the Property committee. (They have subsequently done so, and will report in January)

As to the invisible fence issue, a lively discussion culminated in support of the current policy, which requires all pets to be leashed and not allow fences. The Council suggested that the final sentence “If there is a resident who feels strongly enough about needing a fence, then the resident can present a case to the Property committee for special consideration” be rewritten in more neutral language, i.e., “ If there is a resident who needs a fence, then the resident can present a case to the Property committee for an exception.”

The Property committee decided in November not to allow satellite TV dishes on either campus attached to the house. Freestanding dishes might be all right. Arlene asked if an aggregate dish for several users might be possible. Michael Schwartz said that wiring to each house from the dish might be problematic, citing his own experience of moving his TV to the barn to receive reception when wiring proved impractical. Audrey remarked that there was a Board decision at one point not to have dishes, and since this involves the thorny private property issue (above) we recommended further clarification in the Handbook. Stacy will also raise the issue with the Property committee, and she hopes common sense can prevail.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Davis, Secretary