

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE LATHROP COMMUNITY NORTHAMPTON

COUNCIL MEETING

December 6, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 by the President, David Morrissey. The Council observed the customary moment of silence, focusing on the victims of the Barclay Friends fire.

Dave was test driving an agenda projected on the screen, a method suggested for the next Association meeting. **Comings and goings:** Kathy Hazen and Ruth Leder have moved to the Inn, and Audrey Bozzo intends to do so in January. This will be a real loss, for Audrey carries the memory of the community and has served in every needed capacity in her years here.

Dave gave **shoutouts** for contributors to community life: Mike Strycharz for the plethora of wreaths gracing the campus; to the residents who decorated the Meeting House (especially Bob Buhner, who contributed the large teddy bear for the sitting room); to the kitchen staff who, during an electrical outage, managed to serve a fine Thanksgiving dinner. Helen Armstrong added the Neighborcare Committee, which quietly serves the community.

Minutes. The minutes of the November 1, 2017 Association meeting were accepted as corrected. Arlene Jennings noted that the increase in rates set for all townhomes next year were not the same, as the minutes recorded. Instead, the rate for two-story townhomes was 2% rather than 4%, for marketing reasons.

Treasurer's Report. Beverly Bowman presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved as presented. It was a quiet month, with expenditures of only \$87.95. We currently have a checking account balance of \$8185.23 and a balance of \$5045.07 in the CD. Bev mentioned the writing group, which is faithful in its donations for use of the Meeting House. The full report has been filed with these minutes in the library.

Management Report.

Thom Wright reported that the marketing staff is working hard on vacancies. The occupancy of the Inn has increased from 47% last June to 90% today. This marketing success informs the ongoing planning process. Currently prominent in the discussion is a Plan B, which envisions retaining the Inn, and adding on a memory support unit. Fewer new town homes would be constructed. DeMella Shafer, the architect, is currently working out details. In January the Board will be presented with two complete plans, including dollars involved.

Work is proceeding on new residency agreement options, including one for two-story townhomes for 50% return of capital. Conversations have also been reopened with Lynn Jacoby about housing Lathrop at Home here in the future.

Easthampton is considering hiring a security firm to patrol in off hours, and on weekends. Thom asked if there was a need for this on our campus. Marlisa Parker has never felt the need for enhanced security; Cynthia Stanton has felt this only occasionally; Bob Comerford was sure that there was little need from dawn to dusk; Joe Kulin, who lives on Aspen in the first house one

encounters after the entrance, has installed a security fence; Helen Armstrong has noted nothing at all on Butternut. It was agreed not to pursue this idea for the Northampton campus.

Dave reintroduced the issue of the satisfaction survey, and asked if the 2015 results were available. Thom replied that he had discussed this the day before at a meeting of Kendal executives, noting that the current objective is to assess engagement rather than satisfaction in these surveys. Also, there is a trend to evaluate by departments, and to prefer quick and dirty efforts rather than the traditional formal ones. Halloran, the firm traditionally used by Kendal, is not popular with anyone. Any affiliate can continue to use them this year, but Kendal will research other firms for use in the future. Marlisa asked Thom how he sets his goals. He replied that initially he had only very general directives, but that over time, the need for metrics emerges. As we begin strategic planning next year we will need something like this. It would be helpful for comparative purposes if the data were available across all Kendals. This year we will probably use Halloran, in the interest of expedition.

Some residents have expressed interest in receiving Board meeting minutes. Because the Board often considers personnel issues that require confidentiality, minutes cannot be circulated. But Thom agreed that key Board decisions should be widely shared. He called upon the resident Board members (there are two) to report back to the Association when these decisions are made. Sarah noted that many Board documents are available in the Resource book, found in the library.

Thom reviewed the Barclay Friends tragedy. In addition to four casualties, both residents and staff are scattered widely through the area. Some residents have been taken in by their families; others have been placed in other institutions in the area. No cause has been identified for the fire. A major reason that 140 people were successfully rescued was that the residents were well trained in evacuation. As for our Inn, Thom said that the Fire Department has requested that we train residents to protect in place, and that we need drills for other situations.

Mike Strycharz reported that snow plowing posts went in this week, and that sand buckets will be put out next week. Marlisa Parker commented that the people who installed supplementary insulation had done an exemplary job; Shiela Lyford added that she appreciated the preliminary legwork that was done, and she is pleased with her job.

There was some criticism of Joe Kulin's new fence for his backyard on Aspen. Helen Armstrong asked if it could be painted. Joe explained that the landscapers plan to soften the fence with plantings next spring. He explained that security is an issue for him, and that some people have said they really like it. Dave noted that the landscaping report is due in February, to be implemented in spring. He will invite Hans vanHeyst to attend the next Council meeting to bring us up to date.

He remarked that the new housekeeper has been well received, and will be full time Monday through Thursday at Northampton if enough people hire her to maintain their townhomes. Helen Engeseth has found Lisa's job to be excellently done, and highly recommends her; Bev Bowman is also totally satisfied with Lisa.

Ongoing Business

Those who wish to have their tap water tested for lead at a cost of between \$30 and \$45 may consult Ginny Irvine, who has the information.

The turning sign and crosswalk painted on Bridge Road have been repainted. Further improvements to our entrance from Bridge Road are still in the cue, and Dave will alert us when they come up for discussion at City Council.

Our solicitation policy, adopted in 2008, is up for review. Dave distributed copies of the old policy to those requesting them.

New Business

We need task descriptions for Sarah and Lisa, particularly around upkeep of the Meeting House, substitution requirements and training needs. Sheila Lyford produced a list of housekeeping tasks for the Meeting House prepared by the Wednesday knitting group, most of which are, or will be, Lisa's responsibility under Sarah's supervision. Sarah will train substitutes for the office, as she begins to increase her responsibilities in Easthampton. A checklist of daily responsibilities would be a helpful device. We are still in shakedown mode vis-à-vis Wednesday lunches. Dave and Sarah will talk together about training requirements to assure that residents' needs are met when substitutes are manning the office.

The future of the Blue House was introduced for discussion. Thom listed possible uses which have been identified, and invited others. He would like to form a subcommittee of the Council to conduct tours of the building, and make recommendations. Uses suggested for the upstairs apartment include using it as a guest apartment for families and friends of residents, as a regular rental, and as refugee housing. The latter is under consideration now, and will go to the executive committee, anticipating a decision by March 1. The family lodged here when they first arrived in the country are being considered as tenants. Kendal at Home has an eye on the first floor, and space for yoga and exercise is a possibility for the first floor and garage. Dave asked the lane reps to identify people who would like to serve on this committee.

Dave commented that improvements to the Meeting House projected in the long-range plan are not going to happen overnight, and in the meantime, we could plan and execute incremental changes which might improve the utility of the space we have. Dave mentioned the new refrigerator, and suggested an improved stove and counter tops for the kitchen, a 75 inch TV screen for the meeting room, etc. He will be happy to honcho this effort, but would like a subcommittee of residents to help plan and asked each lane to identify someone to serve on this committee.

Sheila Lyford mentioned that improved lighting in the sitting room exhibit space has made a big difference already.

Rob Olmsted wanted to follow up on a request that he change his clinic hours, which are currently from 8:30-9:30 a.m. Bev Bowman remarked that the hour was too early for older people to get out to meet with anyone, and suggested the noon hour as another possibility. Rob will see what he can do.

When asked if Wednesday lunches have stabilized, Sarah reported that between 6 and 12 people attend each week. Marlisa Parker remarked that the lunch is important to those who come. Dave has submitted the Kendal Grant proposal for trail improvements, and we should hear in late December or January about its fate. Dave announced the Holiday Party on December 21 from 4 to 6. He has hired a staff person at \$66 to serve. It will be a potluck cocktail event. Drinks, for which we normally charge \$2, will be free, since our liquor supply is as flush as our treasury at the moment. The Board of Trustees and our staff have been invited to join us.

Remarks by Lane Representatives

Marlisa Parker (Firethorn) inquired about the reason for painted figures on lawns. Mike Strycharz said that he didn't know, but if they were orange they were probably electric company business. She also forwarded a complaint about scheduling meetings in the library, limiting its legitimate uses. She worries about things placed in the recycle bin which are not recyclable. Christmas wrappings are an example. She commented on the negative comments with which a resident opened Thom's fireside chat last week, noting that this evidence of low morale was hard on new residents in the audience. Rob thought that community members should have offered counter arguments to soften the impact of the negativity.

Helen Armstrong (Butternut) mentioned their monthly lane cocktail party which really cements their neighborhood.

Shiela Lyford (Dogwood) said she rarely has concerns to bring to Council, for they solve things at their weekly cocktail hour.

Joan Laird (Crabapple) finds that having the Association President living on the lane covers most of the problems. Her lane meets once every month, however. This month they gave their unanimous support to continuing the butterfly garden. Dave reminded the group that this will require hiring someone to weed once a week next summer, given the increasing decrepitude of this year's resident crew.

Bob Comerford (Hawthorn) had a question about space left bare by annual plantings, and was assured that snow would cover all sins.

Comments from Observers

Jack Hjelt spoke in favor of using the Blue House apartment as transitional housing for new immigrants. He hopes the Council will get to work and staff the suggested subcommittee, for there is a deadline for the family that he is proposing as occupants. He will circulate his own personal take on the situation.

Warren Hammack has noticed reportage in the Gazette of increased break-ins. He suggested that everyone lock doors and cars, and that we ask someone from the police to assess our situation. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Davis, Secretary

