

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF THE LATHROP COMMUNITY, NORTHAMPTON

ASSOCIATION MEETING

February 7, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by the President, David Morrissey. The Association observed the customary moment of silence.

Dave noted that we have lost two residents this month. Ruth Leder and Audrey Bozzo have moved to the Inn. Janet Price is home again after surgery in Boston. The Nor'easter has lost Camilla Knapp, Easthampton resident, who made great contributions to the publication.

Ed and Ann Shanahan have moved into Dogwood Lane.

Dave gave shoutouts for contributors to community life: To all who participated in the "The Chimes" production in December, to the Program committee for several outstanding events lately, to the 61 Northampton residents who contributed to the Employee Appreciation Fund, and the 52 who responded to the Landscaping survey. The Kendal grant for this year was approved, largely because Kendal was so impressed with Carol Neubert's leadership in beginning trail improvement last year.

Minutes. The minutes of the January 3, 2018 Council meeting were accepted as corrected.

Treasurer's Report. Beverly Bowman presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved as presented. We currently have a checking account balance of \$7519.43, and a balance of \$5048.56 in the CD. Monthly income was \$.06, and \$298.09 was expended. The full report has been filed with these minutes in the library.

Management Report. Frank Sansom began the management report with a financial overview as of November 30, 2017. Highlights of this report were: We now have over 80 per cent, and are approaching 90 per cent occupancy in the Inn. We paid \$4,257,100 in refunds last year, higher than usual. Our cash operating margin on November 30 was 1 per cent. It was better in December, and because of improved occupancy at the Inn we expect further improvement in 2018. Our objective is 5 per cent. We have a 98 day cash reserve, and our target for this is 150 days. Sansom also presented pie charts of expenditures, noting that about 50 per cent of these were salaries.

Thom Wright was asked what happens when a resident moves to the Inn, but retains a town home here. Thom replied that the resident is charged for both units. Asked how robust our reservation list is, Thom described it as very much so at 202 names, but also said we want to keep it that way. Occupancy stands at 97.8 per cent overall, and our next move-in will be at 25 Crabapple next Monday. We have 5 renovations underway in Easthampton, 4 in Northampton, and 4 at the Inn. Processing of applications for Michael Harvey's replacement begin this month.

As to the Master Plan, next Monday the Finance Committee will review the new Plan B (which keeps the Inn, builds a community building in Easthampton, and increases the number of townhomes). It has taken two years and a half to reach this point, but, Thom said, with full resident input, it has been worth the time spent.

One plan is to build more townhouses on this campus, probably not, as initially envisioned, in the community garden area, but along Bridge Road.

Thom began a discussion of the proposal to use the blue house apartment for transitional housing for a refugee family. He reviewed the expected Quaker decision-making process by showing a video, "Sacred Decision Making," to serve as an introduction to the discussion. He noted that the refugees' time frame had shortened the decision process, and described several difficulties which need to be cleared up before we can decide. These were clarity about the role of the Edwards church, liability questions, and meeting life safety codes. We are short of time, and may not meet all of the requirements. He had received a response to his questionnaire of 37 per cent. Fifty-eight per cent of respondents favored the proposal.

A resident noted that there may be DACA people, homeless veterans, etc. who also deserve help. He also, as a non-secular humanist, wondered at the thrust of the video. Bob Comerford asked if we can choose a particular religious group to assist, noting that what happens in Syria is important. There are still Aramaic speakers there.

Carol Neubert asked what needs to happen to make the apartment useable by this family. Thom replied that it was all about safe egress from the unit and what part of the second floor could be used. (Specifically, the state of the elevator) He said that there were life safety code issues on the first floor as well.

Helen Armstrong, as a 40 year Quaker who has observed the Quaker process, said it was not quick, and urged that we not try it now. However, we do have an opportunity here to use our resources generously, and should be proud to assist a refugee family.

Bob Buhner commented that when Plan B showed up with plans for housing construction on Bridge Road, the future of the blue house disappeared. Thus short-term solutions should be found to use it.

Jack Hjelt, who initiated the refugee proposal, said he has learned a lot about this community from this process, but hopes the decision will favor the refugees.

Thom described this morning's conversation as a cautious step forward. We will pursue some of the problems, and need to do this together. Thom offered to expedite this.

Miriam Moss was surprised that there wasn't strong support. She described this as a good thing to do, which we should do if we can.

Dave said that the family would be responsible for the cost of utilities; that the Edwards Church would be paying rent, which lowers the risk.

Judy Buhner asked if we would have legal help for the arrangements. Alex Neubert wondered about the condition of the elevator. (Thom said it needs to be looked at). Jack Hjelt said they are

conservative people who need a safe and secure place to stay. They wish to be independent, so the elevator to the second floor is important.

Thom closed the conversation with the remark that other Kendals have done something similar and their experience has been positive.

President's Remarks Dave Morrissey introduced Bonnie Johnson who will be manning the office on Tuesday and Wednesday on a regular basis. He has distributed a summary of the Board meeting of January 30, 2018 to residents' cubbies. Pursuant to the above discussion, Dave called our attention to the approval that the Board gave to the blue house refugee project, contingent on meeting all of the requirements. Dave commented that if this were being rammed down our throats, the Board would say no.

He reported on the Landscaping study. 52 responses were received, and the landscaping firm is now processing them. They will present preliminary recommendations to the Property committee in March, and to the community at the next Association meeting in April. Jack Hjelt thought we were lucky to have such competent help. Peg Rasmussen cautioned that it will not happen overnight – it will take a year or two to put the plan into effect. Virginia Irvine asked when a map of the recommendations would be available, for we need one to understand anything. Probably in March, Dave replied. Peg commented that street trees and screening are emphasized, rather than individual properties.

Peter van Pelt said that Kendal currently has a strategic planning process underway. We can expect a visitor from them as part of their process soon. This is a healthy thing, and we will probably undertake something similar soon ourselves.

Judy Hyde remarked on the exemplary minutes taken at our meetings.

Dave again reviewed the solicitation policy, asking anyone who wishes to get together and advance proposals for change. Judy Hyde thought door-to-door solicitation was not appropriate, but all right in the Meeting House. Virginia Irvine felt uncomfortable about being accosted in the Meeting House, and Miriam Moss wondered what she meant by “accosted.”

Other matters on which Dave brought the group up to date: Wednesday lunches, which will be reviewed soon to decide if the current format is successful; the Bridge Road intersection and the speeding problem on Shadowbrook, action on both of which will be delayed until spring. Shelley Schieffelin suggested investigating speed readers to help with the speeding problem. Dave also mentioned that volunteers are needed for the gay pride parade. He again discussed pending issues, including paying someone to weed the Butterfly Garden, paying kitchen staff for help with wine and cheese parties, and incremental changes to the Meeting House. The Meeting House kitchen has a new refrigerator, and we can turn our attention to a new (75 or 80 inch!) television with bells and whistles including attention to the sound system. Bob Buhner was concerned about the method for deciding on such changes. Dave replied that lane representatives might survey their constituencies to find out what priorities were. Thom Wright noted that the architects had collected a lot of information about this, which might be used as a first step in the process of deciding.

Coming Attractions

Dave announced the following: Quarterly Birthday Celebration, February 14; Talk on Crisis in Little Rock, February 20; Artist reception, March 9; Brush Painting Workshop, March 19. Dale LaBonte mentioned a Land Conservation committee program on March 6 at 2:00. Helen Armstrong gave a shout out to Dave for regularly supplying fine films for Sunday viewing, and also a series of French movies on Tuesday noon.

Dave noted that Yankee magazine has an article on Northampton this month. He will put a copy on the sitting room coffee table.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Davis, Secretary

