RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATON OF THE LATHROP COMMUNITY NORTHAMPTON

**COUNCIL MEETING**

March 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 had many comings and goings this month. Many changes on Butternut Lane: Marjorie Ewing has recently moved in, Eleanor Beaudreau and Don Levitan are expected home from rehab soon and Laura Cranshaw has moved permanently to assisted living at Linda Manor. June Morse has returned to Dogwood from rehab. Kathy Havens has vacated her Aspen Lane townhome, and Telle Zoller has moved to the Inn. We expect move-ins on May 1 on Firethorn and Goldenchain; on Hawthorn in early June and on Crabapple during the latter part of June.

Dave gave shout-outs for contributors to community life. We appreciate the terrific contribution Bonnie Johnson is making in the office during her weekly two-day stint there. The handsome Nor’easter issue featuring fiber arts was the work of Sarah, who produced it without the assistance of Camilla Knapp, who we lost several months ago. Sarah is also responsible for imaginative changes in the Wednesday lunch routine. For example next Wednesday, 3/14, is Pi Day, and lunch will feature both savory and sweet pies. Bob Buhner made a shout-out for the fine article about Lathrop in the current Business Guide.

**Minutes.** The minutes of the February 7, 2018 Association meeting were accepted as presented.

**Treasurer’s Report**. Beverly Bowman presented the Treasurer’s Report, which was approved as presented. We currently have a checking account balance of $7519.49, and a balance of $5054.12 in the CD. Monthly income was $.06, and nothing was expended. The CD was rolled over with an improved interest rate, as reflected in interest income of $5.56, as opposed to $1.89 last month. The full report has been filed with these minutes in the library.

**Management Report.** Thom Wright reported that occupancy is still at 94%, and we expect 97% by the end of May. They have conducted a good round of interviews for the marketing director position; one in particular rose to the surface, and will be offered the job. The Task Force has been rescheduled for next week. It will further consider Plan B, and send a recommendation to the Board in April.

Next week visitors presenting new management software will arrive from Kendal. One issue is the Resident Satisfaction Survey which we have not used since 2013. Thom is investigating alternatives to Halloran, the traditional firm used for this purpose. Jack Hjelt asked what areas were of interest in the survey. Thom replied that there were no specific ones, but we tend to generalize from little concrete data, and some people are unwilling to express their opinions. A better source would be useful. The way the current landscaping exercise has been developed is instructive. Thom also suggested that residents use the suggestion box.

Given life saving concerns and code compliance, we must consider temporary, non-residential **uses for the Blue House**, Thom said. Stacy Carmichael asked how long we needed to plan for… for example five years? And with what kind of expenditure? Thom replied that he would think five years was about right, and that use of the Blue House will help to decide about future changes in the Meeting House. If pressure on the Meeting House for small group meeting space can be eased, spending a small amount over there to adapt it is worthwhile.

As for an **upgrade to the gathering room**, the new audio/visual system at Easthampton has been reviewed. Mike Strycharz described the multiuse nature of that system as wireless, which hooks up to any laptop, can stream programs, play a music system such as Pandora, and can be voice activated (meet Alexa). It provides better audio and media, with surround sound, and can adjust lighting, windowshades, etc. Dave thought we should upgrade our system, and make sure that our TV is bigger than theirs. A discussion of TV sizes ensued. Bob Buhner was impressed by what he saw in Easthampton. He knows there is interest here in a new TV, and asked if we could start with that and add other components later. Mike Strycharz said we would basically be automating the room, and that was needed first. A TV that size is relatively cheap (+/- $2200). Total cost in Eashampton was about $6500. Thom noted that it was on Lathrop’s dime, because of the marketing advantages of the new system. Dave asked if we could get a quote on cost of the entire system, so that we can investigate a TV, at the least.

On the **landscaping** effort, Dave reported a successful meeting yesterday. The landscapers have filled many blanks and will do mini-studies of individual situations between now and a meeting on March 27, at which each lane will have a representative. On April 17, the landscapers will report to the whole community, and suggest a multiyear implementation plan.

**Old Business**

**Shallowbrook Drive/Bridge Road intersection.** Little progress was reported on easing this problem. Bob Buhner has discovered that resurfacing of all of Bridge road has gone out for bids. Jack Hjelt thought we might stage an accident, following the old squeaking wheel principle. There were no volunteers. Bob Comerford said that at a bare minimum we need crossing signs, and that visibility particularly at dusk was bad. There was agreement that there is heavier and heavier traffic all the time on Bridge Road as thru traffic avoids downtown, which makes getting in and out of here increasingly problematic.

**Speeding on Shallowbrook Drive.** Bob Buhner read a draft e-mail he had prepared on this issue:

“I am a resident of Lathrop, Northampton, and a member of the Residents’ Council. We have a concern about speeding on our main entrance road, Shallowbrook Drive. I understand that you, as the Traffic Officer, control placement of those roadside speed monitors. I know that we are a ‘private roadway’ not covered by local traffic laws, but is it possible for you to place a monitor at our entrance for a period of two to four weeks? Are there other ways that we, ourselves, could monitor vehicle speed at low cost? Bob Buhner ([jandrbuhner@yahoo.com](mailto:jandrbuhner@yahoo.com))”

Bob asked permission to send the e-mail, which permission he received with the suggestion that he amend it to read “speaking on behalf of the Residents’ Council.” A discussion ensued, in which Bob Comerford, comparing the relative merits of a 15, 20 and 25 hour speed limit, felt that 15 was too slow, and 20 was about right. Helen Engeseth did not want too much signage: “I don’t want to have us look like a parking lot.” Stacy Carmichael felt that speed bumps should be off the table, although there was some sentiment in favor of small ones.

To facilitate discussion of **future uses of the Blue House**, Dave distributed a sketch of suggested uses prepared by Hans van Heyst. Use of some space as a guest suite was a clear first choice. Stacy Carmichael wondered what kind of investment would be necessary to make this use possible. Mike Strycharz said that checking on code issues would be a first step, but otherwise not much. Beverly Bowman, who uses the space currently for weaving, and shares it with the massage therapist, needs to know what plans are for alternative spaces for them. Thom assured her that as planning progresses, her needs will be taken into account. Sheila Lyford suggested the second floor as attractive space for this use. Or it might be appropriate to put Kendal at Home up there as an income producing option. Strycharz repeated the need for investigation of code issues before we put it into public use. Bob Buhner asked about the splendid bookcases in the second floor apartment, and Mike Strycharz said they were built on and for that spot and could not easily be removed. Dave noted that public use of the second floor was problematic, because of access issues. Thom said we should not expect the Blue House to be a revenue producer.

Dave noted that the conversation about **incremental improvements to the Meeting House** had been started at Lane Meetings, and he had received comment on an elevator and/or a dumbwaiter between floors, improvement of the exercise room floor, and improvements to the Ladies Room. Dave asked for Council feedback on these suggestions. Bob Buhner thought that a study of the utilization rate for each space might generate better scheduling of space. Sheila Lyford thought the table in the conference room was too wide, and that a narrow table might work better in that room. Stacy Carmichael suggested that the library be moved to the current conference room, and the current library become the game room. Marlisa Parker is interested in culling three ineffective pieces of exercise equipment from the exercise room, and replacing them with better equipment. Both Rob and Thom described improvements in exercise equipment at Easthampton, funded in part by grants from the Easthampton Residents’ Association. Bob Comerford thinks we can’t accommodate modern exercise equipment, and asked if we should even try. Sheila Lyford said that small group meeting space is what we need to think about, and the Blue house living room is an ideal location for that.

Miscellaneous old business items: The **Kendal grant** has been received and work on the trail’s Death Valley can begin when the weather improves. Dave inquired about a review of **Wednesday lunches**, asking if we want to meet with Paul Westerfield. Thom assured us of Paul’s availability if we so desire. We need to tell the staff about our expectations for **cleaning the Meeting House**. Bonnie Johnson has been a big help, and a regular assignment of cleaning people would be a big help.

**New Business.**

The President has appointed the following nominating committee for next year’s Association officers: Hans Heyst, chair, Gillian Morbey and Cynthia Stanton.

**Discussion of Other Issues.** The question of upgrading and/or replacing pendants was discussed, with particular emphasis on their limited range, and therefore their limited utility. Mike Strycharz described our system as very expensive – really a nurses’ call system. We use only a part of it. We provide basic security on site; it could be extended off site, but at considerable expense. We could also offer it only to those who want it. Dave thought we need a fresh look at our system to see if it is cost effective. Stacy Carmichael asked if there is a separate system for the Inn. There is, Mike Strycharz replied, and Northampton could also be separated out from the general system. A daily alert system is also possible, but, again, is expensive.

On tree pruning, Mike Strycharz is waiting for the landscapers recommendations. However, he is now accepting work orders for pruning. On the question of preventative maintenance of our heating systems, there is nothing in particular to check on the boiler system, and a needs assessment last year will allow for better planned depreciation.

**Lane Representatives’ Remarks.** Bob Buhner (Aspen) offered the following resolution, which was agreed to, and will be recommended to the April Association meeting:

We, the Resident Council, recommend that the Northampton Residents’ Association approve the expenditure of up to $600 to restore and maintain the Butterfly Garden during the year 2018. The money would be made available from the Residents fund and administered by the Butterfly Garden committee.

He noted, too that the Handbook is out of date, particularly on dog policy. Sarah said that the update page should have it.

Bob Comerford (Hawthorn) has noticed that the sidewalk to the parking lot is very slippery, and needs a heavier application of snowmelt.

Stacy Carmichael (Firethorn) is concerned that posting resident telephone numbers in the mail room constitutes an invasion of privacy and might well be misused. She suggested that they be posted outside the office door instead. There was no objection to this move.

Dave asked us to consider if we want to send flowers from the Association to our returnees from hospital or rehab. We have had the opportunity seven or eight times this winter. Rob explained the Easthampton sunshine committee, which sends cards. Dave asked us to think about this.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Davis, Secretary