

**NORTHAMPTON COUNCIL MEETING**  
**October 2, 2019**

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**Council members attending**

Chris & Jack Hjelt, Co-Presidents  
Audrey Bernstein, Vice President  
Dale LaBonte, Treasurer  
Arlene Jennings, Secretary  
Judy Buhner for Edie Denney, Aspen  
Nancy Nowak, Butternut  
Shelley Schieffelin, Crabapple  
Shelia Lyford, Dogwood  
Joan Bernardini, Firethorn  
Elly Rumelt, Goldenchain  
Bob Comerford interim rep, Hawthorn

**Staff attending**

Thom Wright, Executive Director  
Mike Strycharz, Director Facilities  
Sarah Gauger, Resident Services Co-ordinator & Executive Assistant

**Visitors**

Alaire Rieffel  
Dave Morrissey  
Fran Volkman  
Bob Buhner

**Moment of Silence.** Co-President Jack Hjelt called for a moment of silence to open the regular monthly meeting at 10:00 a.m.

**Gratitude and Thanks.**

- Joan Bernadini, Fran Volkman, and Bob Buhner on Finance/Budget Advisory Committee
- Fran and Jen's persistence for managing resolution of final details in Fitness Center construction and Mike and his team for their response
- Tree Committee - Hans, Daphne, Rowena, Ed
- Spring Valley for the rehabilitative planting along Shallowbrook, tree removal, and the retention pond
- Lathrop staff for a wonderful picnic

**Issues from Lanes**

- Aspen would prefer electric to gas mowers.

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- Crabapple residents are concerned about climate change issues, and pesticides and recommend we have a committee to study sustainability.
- Dogwood asks if during the dry season can we have less frequent mowing.

**Comings & Goings.**

- Helen Armstrong to Fisher Home Hospice. If you wish to visit Helen, check first with Judy.
- Arlene Jennings from 66 Goldenchain moves to 77 Hawthorn October 7.
- Nancy Felton & Joel Dansky will be new residents at 17 Butternut in November.
- Clair Frierson & George Kriebel move to 66 Goldenchain in November.

**Minutes** from the Council meeting on September 4, 2019 were approved as presented.

**Treasurer's Report.** Dale LaBonte.

Free Business Checking

Beginning balance	\$13,581.06
Income	0.00
Expenses	\$1738.83
Balance	\$11,842.23

Expenses were for fitness equipment, puzzle table lamps and chairs, a new computer in the library, the butterfly garden stipend, and a speaker honorarium.

15 Month CD

Interest 2.3%	\$10.03
Balance	\$5,190.14

**MANAGEMENT REPORT.** Thom Wright.

Transportation to Easthampton for dinner at the Inn begins tomorrow. The van will leave the Meeting House at 5:30 and return from Easthampton at 7:30. Starting next week, meals can also be delivered to the Meeting House. Sheila reported that Dogwood would like to go together as a group. Thom

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noted that it will be important to plan well in advance. The cost will be on our monthly bills if the meal is delivered. Dining at the Inn can be paid there or on the monthly bill.

**UPDATES FOR MANAGEMENT ACTION**

The **Blue House Guest Room** is nearly complete. There will be a notice after next week on how to book. Entrance will be through the screen porch. Access to the rest of the house will be for emergency exit only.

Judy Buhner asked about placing a programmable thermostat in the blue house. Mike will check.

Once it is complete, we will be able to tour to determine our interest in using the space.

Bob Comerford asked that materials for the guest suite be removed from the pool room so that pool could resume.

**Golden Chain Retention Pond.** Berkshire Design has made recommendations and will meet with the lane for discussion. They have cleaned out the pond, and nothing else requires immediate attention.

**Shallowbrook Planting at the corner of Goldenchain.** Work has begun. Planting will take place this week.

**Emergency Communication System.** Sarah and Thom have training today and will send out the plan to all.

**UPDATE FROM COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

**Lathrop Safety Committee.** There is a request for resident volunteers on the committee. Currently all members are from staff. Anyone interested should speak to Mike or Jack.

**Ad Hoc Meeting House Committee.** Dave Morrissey reported that the new computer is installed in the Library.

**Fitness Committee.** Fran Volkman announced that there will be a Grand Opening of the Fitness Center on Tuesday October 15.

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**Ad Hoc Tree Committee.** Chris Hjelt, Mike Strycharz, Hans Van Heyst. John from Spring Valley is also contributing. Chris gave an update on fall planting. The plan is for 30' spacing between trees for the canopy. There is a one year agreement for Spring Valley to water, and the committee is looking for an interested U. Mass. Graduate student to assist beyond that.

Chris also raised the question of how memorial gifts will be recognized. We need to define the process, starting with trees. Other gifts may be book donations to the library or plaques. The question now goes to lane meetings.

**ACTION AND/OR DISCUSSION NEEDED**

**Procedures for Funding Requests.** Dale LaBonte.

A proposal from Dale is based on the process in Easthampton with suggestions from Jack and Chris.

**Guidelines for submitting Association fund requests and reimbursement forms**

In order to make it easier for residents and committees to understand the process for approving expenditures, we have developed the following guidelines.

Standing committees can forward their requests to the President(s) and/or Treasurer for items to be considered at the next Council or Association meeting. Residents can make suggestions directly to these committees when the purpose relates to their ongoing activities.

Residents may initiate a project by submitting a Resident-led project form to the Treasurer either online or using the paper form. The Treasurer will forward requests to committees for recommendations or directly to the Council or Association. [This is a new process approved last year].

Because draft agendas need to go to Council representatives before the meetings, only requests that have been submitted in time can be considered.

Any expenditure of funds needs to be accompanied by a reimbursement form and/or the quotes, invoices, or receipts that show the purpose and the person to be reimbursed. [This has been a longstanding practice and there is a form in the Meeting House.]

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The President(s) or Treasurer will be able to act on purchases in anticipation of Council/Association approval when the need is urgent.

The proposal raises questions to be clarified. What are standing committees? Fitness, one encompassing Landscape, Program? What about ad hoc committees? Can they apply for funds? More clarification is required in the process. Dale suggests the process say not "standing committees" but "any recognized committee."

**Consensus Building.** It was reported from the David Jones training session last week that the Association is too large a group for seeking consensus; that should happen at the level of the council following discussion by the Association. Implementation would require bylaw changes.

Chris is looking for a discussion point for a trial run at the next Association meeting. One possibility: Do we want to be part of a pollinator corridor?

**Consideration of Solar Panels over the Parking Lot.** A suggestion was made to Jack and will be explored.

**Security Cameras.** The cameras were installed based on a management decision about resident health and safety. A Long discussion and range of opinions has ensued. Chris proposes a briefing session with Thom for all residents, but in questions of health and safety Thom will be the final decision maker.

**Visitors.** Bob Buhner expressed the importance of a programmable thermostat for the blue house.

**Issues for Council Meetings.** Jack asks that issues for the agenda be presented a week before the council meeting.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Fitness.** Fran Volkmann offered a presentation on proposed changes to the scope of work for a Physical Fitness Standing Committee. All equipment is in place including a recumbent bike, mirrors, and mats. HVAC is still an issue as the basement system is separate from the rest of the building. To have good

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air quality, the heat must be left on at all times; the filter is not engaged with the AC alone.

The committee is planning an open house for all residents. The general feeling about security cameras in the fitness area is that they are important but only if actively monitored.

**Funding for ongoing activities.** Funding for programs such as yoga and tai chi which require outside instructors have not been seen as part of the purview of the committee. Therefore the Council must establish policy.

As recommended by the committee, the balance of funds in the fitness bucket from last year's contributions was primarily used for the recumbent bike. The remaining \$500 may support yoga and tai chi.

Jack suggested we could decide the question here or leave to the officers. That choice does not affect future decisions. Butternut, Crabapple, and Firethorn object to funding a program for few people. Yet most Lathrop programs involve a small subset of the population. It might be used in this way but not guaranteed going forward. Money given with expectation would help with this.

There is are larger issues to be discussed by the community. We also need appropriate designations for committees to accurately describe scope of responsibility. Programs vs Activities? Fitness vs Health? Chris pointed out that we have not done preliminary work to define vision and mission.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.

## **COMING EVENTS**

### **Association and Council Meetings**

Association Meeting, Wednesday, November 6, 10:00 a. m.

Next Council Meeting, Wednesday, December 4, 10:00 a. m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Arlene Jennings.

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