

**Lathrop North Council**  
**September 2, 2020**

Attending: Chris Hjelt, Jack Hjelt, Judy Hyde, Dale LaBonte, Thom Wright

Reps: Ginny Biggie, Edie Denney, Shelley Schieffelin, Ellie Rumelt, Jean Shackelford, Joan Bernadini, Nancy Nowak

Visitor: Fran Volkmann

**1. Appreciations -**

- Jack observed that Spring Valley is now off our campus on Thursday by 4:30. Water bags are on trees. Thanks to Jim and Adele Dowell for their many contributions over the years. Thanks for Sarah now being in the Meeting House until 4pm daily.
- Let's not forget our new residents as we're hunkered down in this situation.

**2. Treasury status -** No major changes since last meeting. CD has been closed and balance put in checking account. Denny is looking for a more profitable interest-bearing vehicle. Florence Bank required submitting new forms to bring the account up to date.

**3. Thom's report -**

- November and December, new neighbors will arrive, filling all the townhomes.
- Rob (Wed.) and Thom (Fri.) will still have office hours here.

Appreciations for Sarah:

Joan: incident at MH which called upon Sarah....wonderful that she was there.

Chris: Sarah has been so helpful in figuring out tech stuff for our resident program this weekend. Also we will now be able to reserve the canopy for mtgs.

Elly: great to have notarizing and other help with business needs

Thom has asked the Republican to cease being delivered house to house.

Jack: Dog owners are concerned about the bear often seen on campus. Proposes writing a letter on behalf of Lathrop Council to the Wildlife Department communicating that we may have a bear problem. Thom agreed to have it be from management as well.

Shelley: Florence is the bear capitol of Mass. No feeders. We have to do everything we can to not attract bears.

**4. The American flag and the black lives matter signs**

Feedback from many suggest not placing flags there. Flag etiquette problems. Idea from Elly's lane: have a sign that incorporates patriotic ideation. Joan, Edie, Nancy and Ginny: our lanes opposed to flag placement.

No action to be taken.

5. Tree planting on Bridge Road. No action by us is indicated.

#### 6. Dale - **Land conservation Committee report: Highlights of Summer 2020**

- A number of plants have been identified on our campus and in the woods and will be labeled with common and scientific name. Spring Valley didn't mow last week, appreciated.
- The Grounds Guild will be working with Thom to set up a regular check-in mtg with Guild members, John Hancock and Thom.
- A nominating committee will be meeting to figure out how to restructure leadership, now that Jim Dowell is leaving.
- Jack appreciated Dale's presentation and the complexity and number of responsibilities that Dale is carrying. He proposes giving her a raise.

#### 7. **Defining what is common space and what is private—**

The question arises, frequently for newcomers, about what constitutes 'their' property. Several years ago, the Council had a long meeting regarding the subject and a 'rule of thumb' was adopted which has served the community well but needs periodic vetting.

"The ground around your house to about the depth of your rear patio is yours to landscape or not and is sort of privacy area, that is, you would not expect someone to walk that close to your house. The rest of the land is communal. If you wish something to change in that communal area, not only must you approve it with Facilities but also with your neighbors who border that area." And with anything involving gardening or landscaping, caution must be taken regarding drainage and underground utilities."

If you need to walk behind someone's house for COVID reasons, please walk on the edge of the private areas and try not to encroach on people's privacy.

Joan: a statement in the handbook would be a good thing to make it clear that it's acceptable to pass between houses.

Judy: all welcome to go through her yard to reach the community garden

Jack will circulate some language for the handbook and put in LampPost.

#### 8. Chris: **upcoming events**

- Afternoon of Sharing. Sunday. Sunday 6th
- Strolling minstrel singing labor songs Eveline MacDougall Monday Sept 7th
- Concerts: Sept 13th & Sept ; One in October

#### 9. **Lane concerns**

Elly: paying for gutters? Thom: Lathrop will work on gutters at no cost to us. Some homes may want to add to what's already there.

Eddie: Any progress at opening the Mtghouse for the winter?

Thom: adding new air purifiers. Looking for engineer's report on air quality. Imagining small groups can start meeting in October. Very important to residents.

Elly: how about installing heaters on porch for shoulder season? Thom: looking for heaters, but hard to come by.

Ginnie: still concerned about keys and time mtghouse closes. Thom: 4pm

Jean: Mobility problems on the grass for some, so can't use the canopy. Thom: move to parking lot?

## 10. The American Inn

Jack introduced the subject saying that we reach better decisions when we listen to and share with one another. No decisions have been taken regarding the purchase of the AI. A part of the anxiety of residents over the issue is we are in a host of things making us anxious and this is just one of them. In addition, residents remain unsettled by the 6-year Master Plan saga and the lack of progress, in addition to concerns over the expense of a memory unit.

Fran: The North petition to Thom and the Board was a resident initiative. 79 signed, 22 not, signifying strong resident opposition to acquiring AI. On the East campus, a polling with equivalent results is happening. Outpouring of deep concern and sense of fear. What's the role of resident reps on the Board? They haven't reported back to us. What should we expect of them in terms of representing us?

Lane input:

Jean: Lane consensus was stop now. Requests Thom to make statement of reassurance. What is Lathrop's risk? Is Kendal encouraging us to get involved?

Shelley: Jean spoke to concerns of her lane. Could Lathrop go bankrupt? People on waiting list concerned.

Elly: Info needed about why this even considered to begin with. Those with financial risk (residents) should be the ones making the decision. Could the reports of the working groups be presented to all residents via zoom? Is there any insurance against loss of all our deposits?

Ginny: Financial risk largest concern. Fear bad investment.

Shelley: Does the council want to make a statement?

Nancy: Who are these committee people making this big decision?

Thom: Master plan is going to get going next spring 2021. We have responsibility for fiduciary health. All options need to be explored. Main differences between Lathrop and American Inn: they were 'for profit' and single site with no oversight like we have from Kendal. No resident involvement. You are right about board reps not sharing back with you.

I agree that American Inn is not the best option for us. Final sharing by task forces and executive committee on Friday and Sunday. I appreciate the petitions. Tremendous risk. We don't have deep pockets. We have a lot to finish up here. We recognize these are your funds. Doing our best to assure we never go bankrupt. Going in the right direction. Our bid of 10 million is on something worth 30 million.

Chris: Would the four residents on the Board be able to block consensus? Thom answered yes.

Thom: I doubt it will pass. [at the Board meeting next week.]

Fran: I hope the petition doesn't get received as just the expression of fearful old people. I request names of those on task force so we can get the results of our petitions to them in time.

Chris: If it's deemed a no-go, would we have a resident mtg? If the finance committee decides it's worth going forward, we would want this info. But not necessarily a mtg.

Jean: I would like a mtg to know what you're looking at.

Joan: Written explanation for the decision would be good; The Chair decided not necessary.

Elly: Not sure fear will all be gone even with a no-go decision.

Thom: We are contemplating having a resident finance committee to work along with Frank and me on a regular basis. Will consult with Frank but would imagine resident involvement starting in October.

Chris: This is an amazing group of people, doing a fabulous job of gathering info and representing your lanes.

Meeting adjourned

Judy Hydy  
Secretary