

**MINUTES  
Council Meeting  
Northampton  
June 1, 2022**

**Present in the Gathering Room:** President Elly Rumelt; Lane Reps Sally Ives, Peter Van Pelt, Rowena Roodman, Ginny Biggie, Sarah Ismail, Arlene Jennings; C.E.O. Cindy Jerome, Executive Assistant Sarah Gauger, Director of Wellness Director Rob Olmsted; Committee members Chris Hjelt, Jack Hjelt, Gary Roodman; Resident Dave Morrissey

**Attending via Zoom:** Vice-president Claire Frierson; Lane Reps Peter Van Pelt, Jean Krogh, Pamela White; Committee (& Tech team) member Dale La Bonte; Residents Virginia Irvine

Elly Rumelt convened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

**There are no new comings and goings.**

**Gratitudes were expressed to:** The music committee for two wonderful concerts; to Shelley Schieffelin for hosting Trivia and for arranging the visit with Stan Moulton; to Dave Morrissey for the showing of CODA, including a conversation with an extra on this Oscar-winning movie; to Program Committee, Donna and kitchen staff for Memorial Day picnic; to the tech team which has made us in advance of our City Council in having hybrid events; to Lou Ratté for the Global Salon and to Maureen for collecting and collating the experiences of our remarkably well-travelled group; and to all the gardeners past and present who have brought amazing Spring beauty to our campus.

**Treasurer's Report**

Audio equipment \$1,164

Balance \$10,779.34

**Approval Of Corrected Minutes for March Council Meeting (appended)**

The minutes were approved.

**Committee Reports**

Landscape: Dale Labonte reported that the upcoming Land Conservation Committee meeting on June 13th will focus on long-term planning. Residents

are encouraged to submit ideas for future actions and projects with reasons why the suggested work would support our mission.

Program Committee: Chris Hjelt mentioned upcoming programs including the Juneteenth celebration, the over 90's pizza lunch, and a new weekly brown bag lunch every Thursday on the Meeting House Porch.

Fitness Committee: Sue Bastek sent a message that there was no new business to report.

Safety Committee: Jack Hjelt reported that the committee is in a period of transition, and is working with Rob and Chris Hague on various projects.

Nominating Committee for Resident Board Representatives: Gary Roodman reported that the committee's work this year has resulted in the appointment of Carol Neubert and Marlisa Parker as resident members of the Board. He asked for comments on the implementation of the new process.

Nominating Committee for Board Committee Members: Dale reported on the appointment of resident members of Board Committees as follows:

Joan Wofford: Board Development

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: John Schieffelin

Buildings and grounds: Hans Van Heyst

Investments: Gary Fey

Philanthropy: Peter Van Pelt

Finance: Gary Fey

## **Lane Business**

**Goldenchain:** Sarah Ismail reported on discussion of North Neighbors and fire safety concerns among Goldenchain residents.

It was determined that the project of writing a new Resident Handbook is still in process and will include a statement specifying that North Neighbors is NOT a means of making community announcements (as not all residents participate) and is intended for conversation among residents. Announcements directed to all residents should go to Donna, who will email them to all residents on email and distribute paper copies to residents who are not on email. Communication with administrative staff should be by direct communication. Issues that seem to be "bubbling up" in conversations on North Neighbors should be brought to lane representatives and by them to the Council.

On the subject of fire safety, Sarah reported that particularly on Goldenchain, residents report smelling smoke coming from the direction of the trails in the early morning and late afternoon, often with a smell of cooking food. This has also been noticed on Firethorn. The Fire Department has sent a truck (with no siren) at least once, but the source of the smoke was not identified. The issue has also been addressed with Jim Ries of the Broad Brook Coalition, which cleaned up a fire site on the new Pine Brook Trail that had been observed throughout the winter. It is not clear if the smoke smell is coming from the

encampment of houseless people near the Moose Lodge, from houses on Emily Lane, or from a more distant area of either side of Bridge Road. There was discussion of the best way to report smoke and fire concerns, and the conclusion, supported by Cindy and Rob, was that any resident who smells and is concerned about smoke should call the Northampton Fire Department business line, 413-587-1032.

**Dogwood:** Ginny Biggie reported on two related concerns involving hybrid events among residents on Dogwood.

One concern was the major burden being carried by the Tech team (Dale LaBonte, Gary Roodman, Bob Solosko, and Hans Van Heyst in setting up and running hybrid events. For last Sunday's concert, Zoom attendance was sparse and some doubt was expressed about the necessity for hybrid coverage for an outdoor performance on a beautiful day; this introduced the second concern, which was determining how having events available on Zoom may work for or against community life, depending on the nature of the event.

There was a strong request for a paid Lathrop staff member who would be responsible for setting up and running hybrid events, but Cindy Jerome said that was not possible because there is no staff member with either the time or the skill set to help with those tasks. She also mentioned that there is a Lathrop YouTube channel on which recorded performances could be made available. Clearly we need to increase the pool of residents who are trained to serve on the Tech team.

There was discussion of the pros and cons of using Zoom for hybrid versions of various kinds of events. Pros included inclusiveness and convenience; cons included lower attendance at events, leading to less audience response for the performers and less social interaction for residents. Chris Hjelt suggested that a meeting of those interested in both issues be convened, and that the Keeping Community committee chaired by Fran Volkmann could be asked to conduct a discussion of the role of Zoom (or YouTube) in our community life.

**Crabapple:** Rowena Roodman presented three issues of concern to residents of Crabapple Lane: speeding on Shallowbrook Drive, possible participation in MassSave energy audits, and improving Comcast internet in individual units.

Cindy Jerome reported that Chris Hague's current plan is to install four speed bumps or humps, each 4" high and 3' wide, on Shallowbrook, similar to ones in Look Park, with the lowest bid so far being \$12,000 for the four. There was concern about the cost and about the discomfort for residents when driving over such speed bumps. The cost of electronic speed monitoring or signage is apparently extremely high and so not feasible.

MassSave is a state program that audits residences for energy efficiency and supplies some free equipment for improving energy efficiency. Normally its

services are available only to homeowners, but there has been conversation with someone at MassSave about Lathrop homes qualifying under a part of the program that applies to condominiums.

Residents on Crabapple wanted to know if Lathrop could help improve Comcast internet service by having modems checked and replaced. Rob Olmstead noted that Comcast internet in individual units is part of a contract that each resident has with Comcast and individual residents should request service.

**Firethorn:** Jean Krogh brought up the question of safety protocols for encounters with non-resident individuals on campus that cause discomfort for some residents. There is some concern about at least one houseless person who uses electrical outlets on the Meeting House porch to charge devices. The question was raised if perhaps Lathrop or the city could provide a solar-powered charging station for public use. A resident or two mentioned frequent encounters with this individual, which they did not find threatening; a resident also mentioned cleaning up beer cans and cigarette butts the same non-resident leaves by the bench. A long discussion ensued, with Elly noting that our challenge is to balance safety with our desire to be a welcoming community, and to balance safety and compassion, and some discomfort was expressed with the absence of community discussion before the recent changes in hours when the Meeting House door is locked and Chris Hague's message recommending that residents lock their doors and call the police if an encounter makes them uncomfortable.

**Aspen:** Sally Ives expressed the appreciation of Aspen Lane residents for the experience of having their porches and trim painted by the crew that is working its way through campus. She also asked what the result was of the experiment with reseeded parts of the lawn areas on Aspen with short clover. Dale responded that the experiment was not successful, that because mowing continued, it was not possible to determine if the clover would eventually spread and reduce the need for mowing.

**Hawthorn:** Arlene Jennings reported that there is a trench at the top of Hawthorn that makes driving on the lane extremely difficult, and that there is concern about insufficient lighting on Hawthorn.

## **New Business**

Bridge Road Resolution for Transportation and Parking Department: Elly has prepared a statement requesting that the Northampton Transportation and Parking Commission conduct a traffic calming study on Bridge Road, and asked for Council approval of the request. After discussion of a previous traffic calming study, which brought about the repainting of the crossing lines and the creation of a turning lane with a rough-textured surface, the statement was approved. It will be circulated to all lanes for residents' signatures, as the more voters who show

that they have this concern about danger to pedestrians the more likely it is that steps will be taken to mitigate it. The online request form for the Department will include acknowledgment of those improvements while drawing attention to continued problems with drivers' not respecting the crosswalk.

## **Management**

C.E.O. Cindy Jerome began by affirming her intention to support differences in levels of comfort with the presence of houseless people on our campus. Cindy noted that there is a difference between being welcoming and not treating people harshly, and the security measures adopted and recommended were consonant with this difference. She expressed support for the right of anyone's right to call the police, as well as for efforts to support the houseless individual. Rob added that there should probably be new signs identifying our campus as private property and requesting that visitors be courteous.

Cindy noted that a project to relocate mailboxes for the cottages on the Easthampton campus is limited to Easthampton.

Management is engaged in improving the stability of the Wi-Fi in the Meeting House. The Meeting House router is obsolete, and work is being done with Comcast to determine how much capacity is needed. A Kendal IT tech team member will be visiting to help decide exactly which new equipment will best meet our needs.

Cindy also noted that there is room for improvement in management's handling of the process of nominating residents to serve on the Board and on Board committees, and work is in progress on being better prepared to facilitate the work of our nominating committees. She also asked that residents understand that our Resident Board members carry the same fiduciary responsibility as all Board members for being committed first of all to the long-term interests of Lathrop, as opposed to being on the Board only to represent the interests of residents. For future selection processes, it would be helpful to the Board to have more candidates than there are openings to allow balancing the overall diversity and experience among the Board.

## **Wellness**

Rob Olmsted reported on his ongoing efforts to check in with all residents through the process of updating everyone's File-of-Life; he has had only 30-40% response.

## **Announcements**

Sally Ives thanked Elly for the new format for Council meetings, with lane representatives presenting their reports before management reports.

Dale LaBonte expressed appreciation for Elly's analysis and summary of issues presented by lane reps.

Dave Morrissey stated his plans to reconstitute Ad Hoc Committee on Meeting House Improvements, mentioning projects involving the kitchen, library, and bathrooms. He also mentioned the need to update the Who's Who binder in the library, stated that the gas grills should be moved off the porch and provided with covers, mentioned hanging plants on the porch, and brought up the concept of a clear-out day when residents can dispose of large items.

**Adjournment 12:00**