

MINUTES
Council Meeting
Northampton
July 6, 2022

Present in the Gathering Room: President Elly Rumelt; Lane Representatives Sally Ives, Peter Van Pelt, Rowena Roodman, Ginny Biggie, Jean Krogh, Sarah Ismail, and Arlene Jennings; CEO Cindy Jerome; Executive Assistant Sarah Gauger; Director of Wellness Rob Olmsted; Committee members Chris Hjelt, Jack Hjelt, Dave Morrissey, Jean Krogh, Virginia Irvine, and Dale La Bonte.

Attending via Zoom: Chris Hague, Facilities Director

Elly Rumelt convened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. with a moment of silence.

Comings and Goings: Elly noted with sorrow the death of Marjorie Ewing. Resident June Morse is in rehab.

Gratitudes were expressed to:

All those who have turned ninety for giving us the occasion for a splendid party,
Carol Neubert and her team for the Juneteenth commemoration and for all who held signs on Bridge Road reminding motorists of the importance of the day,
The Music Committee for ongoing concert pleasure,
All the community members who compiled the steps to be taken each evening to assure that the Meeting House is safe and environmentally correct,
Donna for writing these steps up and displaying them in easy to see signs,
Facilities for the painting of our porches, doors and trim, and
Alaire for filling in as secretary

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report was accepted without changes.

Minutes: The corrected minutes of the June Council meeting were approved.

Committee Reports:

Landscape Committee: Dale stated that there was nothing new to report.

Program Committee: Chris Hjelt reported that there had been a number of successful programs organized by the committee, including numerous van trips, a New Horizons Band concert accompanied by an ice cream social, and a party to celebrate those age 90 and up. On July 20 at 10 am Cindy Jerome will hold an event called "Chat with Cindy," which will serve as an opportunity to discuss concerns between Association meetings. Cindy also noted that she welcomes phone calls, including from those who are homebound and not able to attend meetings.

Fitness Committee: Sue Bastek reported that the Committee is not meeting in the summer.

Safety Committee: Virginia Irvine reported that she is new to the Safety Committee and that there will be no meeting until August.

Meeting House Committee: Dave Morrissey has requested this committee to be made a standing rather than ad hoc committee. Since its beginnings in 2019 completed projects with committee involvement include new paint, shades and lobby furniture inside the Meeting House. Upcoming projects include paint trim on the outside of the Meeting House, roof inspection, removal of moss on the roof, refurbishing the library, and improvements to the ladies' room. Fall projects also include attention to the outdoor space with improvement to the performance area, including seating, addressing mobility issues and relocating the flag pole to the entrance. An update to the library's Directory of Residents is planned. Joan Cenedella will take needed photographs. Several new residents are not yet included, and lane reps will be asked to contact these people and provide them with forms if they wish to be included in the Directory.

Keeping Community Working Group: Fran Volkmann reported that the Keeping Community Working Group met to consider how to prioritize which programs should be offered in hybrid form given the unsustainable level of work now being asked of our tech team. The group believes that a long term goal should be to develop a level of expertise and staffing that would permit all programs to be offered in a variety of formats. Since that is not possible right now they request that lane meetings consider the question of prioritizing which programs should be offered in a hybrid format.

Music Committee: Jeff Mitchell reported that this committee will have arranged 8 performances by October. The Community Appeal has resulted in a "splendid" contribution to support more musical performances on the North campus than in the past.

Residents' Handbook Working Group: Jean Krogh reported that the group plans to add a section on North Neighbors and how to use it.

Lane Business: All lanes had been asked to submit suggestions for traffic calming and pedestrian safety on Shallowbrook Lane. These were as follows:

Dogwood Lane: Ginny Biggy reported that Dogwood Lane does not want speed bumps but is willing to consider a larger sign, possibly with flashing lights.

Goldenchain: Sarah Ismail reported that speed bumps are unpopular with Goldenchain Lane residents. They supported electric signs but were not sure whether one or two would be better. Elly noted that there was a lot of conversation about the safety of the entrance with drivers coming off Bridge Road at speed, which suggests that a pedestrian crossing close to the entrance would be hazardous.

Butternut Lane: Peter Van Pelt reported that residents of this lane are not in favor of speed bumps or signs. However, there was support for a "gracious welcome sign" to indicate to drivers that "they have left the real world now."

Crabapple Lane: Rowena Roodman reported that residents thought a large sign at the entrance should be considered as well as "Stop for Pedestrians" signs crosswalks. Fran proposed that a flyer be developed to be given to visitors, delivery people, etc., alerting them to the need to be careful. The need for residents to also be responsible for their own safety by, for example, wearing light clothing after dark, was emphasized.

Hawthorn Lane: Arlene Jennings noted that many Hawthorn residents are unwell and cannot come to meetings. She proposed a "traffic calming study," for example as a project of civil

engineering students at UMass/Amherst. Meanwhile, speed bumps could ease safety concerns.

Firethorn Lane: Jean Krogh reported that some lane residents are in favor of speed bumps. Another possibility of a “speed table” near the entrance, possibly with a solar powered sign. This could be tried for one year and reevaluated.

Aspen Lane: Sally Ives reported that in general Lane residents prefer an electric sign and favor a crosswalk near the community garden/dog park/blue house entrance. One lane resident has observed speeding on Shallowbrook for some time and concluded that traffic has generally slowed. Sally noted that while it is good for residents to give advice to management, it is a management decision to do what is safe, not necessarily what is most popular.

General Discussion of Shallowbrook Lane Safety: Crosswalks may not increase safety because they give a false sense of security. The Easthampton campus is really happy with their electric signs. A middle island may prove greater safety. Construction of sidewalks on the Meeting House side of Shallowbrook between Crabapple and the blue house/community garden/dog park would create snow removal problems. Cones in the middle of cross walks might be effective and relatively inexpensive. The sense of the meeting was to start with low cost measures and work up as needed. There was a consensus that speed bumps were not immediately desirable.

Old Business: The resolution of the Council passed at the last Council meeting requesting that the Transportation and Parking Commission of the city of Northampton take another look at ways to improve pedestrian safety at the intersection of Shallowbrook and Bridge is now being forwarded to the Commission, along with a statement that this resolution was signed by 80 members of our community and a statement of support from our C.E.O. The request that the City consider a solar powered charging station near the encampment in the woods will be forwarded to the appropriate person in city government; Councilor Moulton is researching who that might be.

New Business:

Follow up to Keeping Community: Elly noted that efforts are underway to balance the overwork of the tech team. Are there priority events for which technological assistance is especially important? Ultimately this is a matter of the Lathrop mission statement, i.e., where we stand on the use of technology to support aging in place. In the present we need to encourage more residents to participate on the tech team, if only for a limited number of tasks.

Treasurer’s Resignation: Denny Brandt will be resigning effective in October because the. Brandt’s will be moving. Under the Bylaws, the Council can choose an officer to fill this position.

Wildflower Garden: This is a new effort. Dale presented several possibilities for the vacant lot at 724 Bridge Road, and noted several questions that need to be addressed including Lathrop’s plans for the space, traffic noise and exhaust, who will pay and what uses will the residents support. Possible uses include a small orchard, a “pocket park” with plantings and seating and a more formal arboretum. Cindy stated that there are no plans now. She is generally supportive, but would not like growing vegetables due to problems created by public access.

Facilities: Goldenchain residents are concerned that although trees were trimmed during the winter and early spring, now that they are leafed out some don’t look healthy. Chris Hague

responded that he will have Bartlett tree service look at them. Chris was also asked to arrange to clean the sign at the entrance to Lathrop and remove the large pile of rubbish near Goldenchain. Chris also reported that recently the HVAC filters have been changed, which should be done every six months. The facilities team is currently refurbishing 6 townhouses and 3 apartments, with a couple more on the horizon.

Director's Report: Cindy stated she was intrigued by the suggestions for traffic calming, notably an attractive "artistic" sign. She cautioned residents not to approach moving vehicles, especially garbage trucks. Cindy announced that as part of an ongoing assessment, her team is considering a new policy with respect to internal transfers, i.e., when a resident moves from one house to another at Lathrop. That incurs expenses for refurbishing two houses, at a cost of \$20,000 to \$40,000 per house. Other Kendal communities charge for refurbishing, based on the square footage. She also noted that as part of the strategic planning process residents will soon be receiving a survey and focus groups will be formed.

Wellness Report: Rob Olmstead announced that the Covid advisory group will consider the policy with respect to mask wearing in the Meeting House. Because there is no way to know the degree of individual risk with covid, managing covid exposure should be an individual decision.

Finance: Holly Smith-Bove reported that the occupancy rate in June was 99% for the Northampton campus, 95% for Easthampton, and 97% total. The waiting list for townhomes is 4 to 6 years. We have doubled the 5% budgeted for operating margin. Right now our cash position isn't as good as desired but it will improve in the next few months as new residents arrive.

The Council meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.