

December 21, 2022 Council Meeting Minutes

Present on Zoom: Officers Elly Rumelt, Claire Frierson, Jean Shackelford; Lane representatives Sally Ives and Pamela White, Peter Van Pelt, Rowena Roodman, Ginny Biggie, Jean Krogh, Sarah Ismail, Arlene Jennings; Committee chairs Dale LaBonte, Joe Kulin, Jeff Mitchell, Dave Morrissey; Management/Staff Cindy Jerome, Holly Smith-Bové, Rob Olmsted, Sarah Gauger, Donna King; Residents Judy Buhner, Gary Fey, Cynthia Stanton

Call to Order at 10:00 with a Moment of Silence

Comings and Goings: None reported, but Elly read a note of thanks from the family of John Germain for the Association's donation to the Dakin Animal Shelter in his memory.

Gratitudes to:

The Program Committee for their events, balancing caution because of Covid with the need to celebrate the season

Volunteers who decorated the Meeting House in accordance with the Association discussion, achieving a similar balancing act of respecting our diversity while brightening the shortest days of the year with light and color

Shelley Schieffelin for arranging two meetings with our Northampton Council representative Stan Moulton.

Shelley also for putting together Lathrop residents with students from the Hilltown Charter School for an intergenerational effort to support the Foodbank of Western Massachusetts through participation in Monte's March

Jean Shackelford for the professional touch she brings to the Resident Association financial records

Ruth Elcan and her corps of volunteers for their efforts towards clearing the campus of invasive plants

The snowplows whose sound at 5:45 a.m. lets us know our driveways and roads will be cleared by daybreak

Cindy Jerome for her continuing availability for communication, and for steps to move forward on the goals identified in the strategic planning retreat (Aging in Community, Establishment of Contingency Fund, Focus on Environmental Issues)

Those who bring movies and music to campus

Treasurer's Report (appended) Jean Shackelford

Minutes of October Council Meeting (appended)

There were three corrections: Joe Kulin's name was misspelled; Crabapple (and Aspen) requested crosswalk signs, not crosswalks; and it was noted, in reference to the tree down on the trail, that the LCC pays Conservation Works, who will check the fallen log. These corrections have been made in the version of the October minutes appended to these minutes.

Lane Business: Old Business

Crabapple: Crosswalk sign: Rowena reported that residents on Crabapple are delighted that the sign is in place and said that it makes them feel safer when crossing Shallowbrook Drive.

Hawthorn:

Safety Issues.: Arlene reported there is no update, because there has been no action.

Organizational Chart: Sarah Gauger that two parts of the chart need to be checked, and that the chart will be available soon.

Lane Business: New Business. Lane concerns:

Aspen: Chats with Cindy: Sally asked that Cindy reconsider the decision to hold her Chats once every three months on Zoom or to record them, because many of the residents of Aspen are not comfortable attending events in the Gathering Room. Sally noted that a small sub-group of 21 residents attended the December chat and observed that the recent chats have been not so much an opportunity for conversation as events at which Cindy has communicated information. Cindy said that she would think about the request, but remains committed to the concept of the Chats as conversations, al-though she foresees a need for the next few Chats to include sharing and discussing information about the strategic planning process. For the moment, conducting an interactive meeting on Zoom is beyond the technological capacity of the Gathering Room, and we are awaiting a response to the grant application for improved technology. Jean Krogh summarized comments from residents on Firethorn, who thanked Cindy for the Chats and Sarah Gauger for her excellent notes, but commented that right now we can't have both the informality of a chat and the inclusiveness of a Zoom meeting.

Firethorn: Jean Krogh reported that Firethorn residents wondered if the \$24/month cable fee included in the monthly fee could be applied to internet instead of cable television since some residents never use cable TV. Holly explained that this is a mandatory fee because the safety systems (pull cords in the units) work through cable. Holly and Sarah Gauger will seek clarity about how the system is set up and provide further information.

Crabapple: Expanding Purview of Land Conservation Committee

Rowena reported on discussion that followed the conclusion of the removal of oriental bittersweet on campus, which was unable to address problems in three areas of campus where steep slopes or woody roots will require professional intervention. Residents of Crabapple were wondering how to pay for that work—Lathrop, a fundraising campaign, or perhaps the Land Conservation Committee. For the last, the LCC would need to consider expanding their purview to include landscaped areas of the campus; LCC has paid Land Stewardship, Inc. to remove knotweed from the conservation area, Rowena noted that of the \$97,000 that has been donated to LCC in the last eight years, \$8000 was spent on work in Northampton, and wondered if it

might make sense to divide LCC funding into East and North groups, as has happened with the Music Committee. Residents of Crabapple suggests that a working group form to pull in all the relevant information and make suggestions. Sarah Ismail reported that discussion on Goldenchain produced four questions: What did we learn from the experience of the now-disbanded Property Committee? Which remedial actions should be considered infrastructure and which land conservation? Could management create a clear statement defining the responsibilities of management and residents? How does this discussion relate to the strategic planning goal of environmental stewardship?

In response, Cindy noted that she will touch on some of these issues in her report. The meeting then moved into Committee Reports to continue the discussion.

Committee Reports

Land Conservation: Dale LaBonte said she hopes for a real, deliberative process on the question of the purview of the LCC and suggested that looking at dollars spent may not be the best way to view the committee's work. She noted that the areas with steep slopes needing bittersweet removal are located near water and thus may fall under the LCC's purview. Elly asked if Land Stewardship, Inc. might be able to do the work on areas behind Goldenchain and Firethorn. Dale said that she would bring it to the LCC for discussion.

Dale also expressed appreciation for the map that Ruth Elcan posted showing where oriental bittersweet was removed and listing all the volunteers who worked there. Also, as requested by residents, wood chips from the recent tree removal and hay bales used for seasonal decoration have been delivered to the community garden area and may be used during the winter to construct a trial version of a labyrinth.

Program: Elly shared the following information about events in the coming month from notes she received from Chris Hjelt.

Remaining Holiday Events

Thursday, Dec 29, 2:00 in the Gathering Room, Handel's Messiah performed by multi-cultural talent in stunning locations across Canada. You can also watch at home. See link in Lamp Post.

Saturday, Dec 31, 4:00 in the Gathering Room, Dave will show Love Actually and we will toast the New Year at 7:00 Lathrop time, which is midnight in London.

Plans for January

Take down the holiday decorations first week in January—watch for date.

Trivia on Zoom organized by Shelley. Be sure to contact Shelley by December 31 if you want to play

January 9, 3:30 to 5:00, in the Gathering room Mark Peterson shares the video of Being Mortal followed by a discussion.

Friday, January 13, 2:00 Sing Along with Carol Werba in the Gathering Room.

Wednesday, Jan 25, 12:00 Winter Warmer Lunch. Soups provided by Lathrop resident cooks, great bread and dessert. Maximum cost \$7. Following plans from the monthly lunches initiated by Dave several years ago.

Monday, Jan 30, 3:30 Zoom session with Curt Martin on the Whalers' art of scrimshaw.

Fitness: Joe Kulin noted that programs are happening as planned. He reported on a meeting he and Jack Hjelt had with members of the Easthampton Fitness Committee, Cathy Riessman and Dolores Arroyo. Their fitness center is still under repair from flooding. Ideas were exchanged and Dolores and Cathy found our fitness area impressive and would like to institute walk-arounds on their campus. Joe has discussed creating a labyrinth with Cindy and knows that there is interest. Joe also reported that there was not a large enough group to set up a series of Alexander Technique sessions, but offered to help residents set something up individually. Joe also reported a request from new residents for a formal presentation of fitness offerings; Claire noted that new residents are expected to have an orientation session in the fitness center with Jen Davis and wondered if that might fill that need.

Music: Jeff Mitchell reported that concerts are scheduled through June at roughly two per month, and that the committee has made a plan for inviting musicians to perform through the summer. Joe Kulin asked if there have been any situations when the committee was not able to pay musicians enough. Jeff said that with the generous response to this year's community campaign, there generally has not been a problem and that he works from a budget based on an average cost with some flexibility, and he hopes that contributions to the Northampton Music Committee will continue to be generous. Joe requested that the committee inform the community if there is a problem so that willing individuals could make additional contributions.

Meeting House: Dave Morrissey reported that the committee has not had a formal meeting since meeting with Holly in early November, but that he and Gillian Morbey met with Holly to discuss desired changes to the library. Dave would like the committee to meet with Lisa to discuss improvements to the kitchen. A meeting of the committee will soon be scheduled and announced for a Thursday afternoon in January.

Management reports:

CEO: Cindy Jerome concentrated on reporting on Dec. 20 three-hour meeting of the Strategic Leadership Team, but first noted her enthusiasm for the sharing of ideas between the two campuses. The Strategic Leadership Committee is working on a document that will be presented to and approved by the Strategic Planning Committee and Board before it will be shared with all stakeholders.

For each of the five major goals in the strategic plan, Cindy noted the emphasis of aligning work on each goal with Lathrop's mission and values and of having robust communication in all areas.

Lathrop Together: work continues on mission, vision, values with emphasis on input from all stakeholders.

Organizational Systems and Practices: All are to be examined and improved to be put into the service of our community and values. Areas of investigation include the organizational chart, consistent application of values, technology (making use of parts of two Kendal IT committees). Emphasis is on equity, transparency, best use of resources, clarity about decision-making authority, and staff empowerment.

Aging in Community: An advisory committee consisting of the eight officers of the two campuses will take on two tasks: first, creating a survey for all residents by the end of January to give the new Wellness Coordinator, Erin Curtin, input about what we need. Then the advisory committee will produce a list or report on actions Lathrop can take to support Aging in Community, with input from residents and staff.

Environmental Sustainability: With assistance from the officers, an Environmental Stewardship Ad Hoc Committee that taps various relevant kinds of expertise among residents will take on two tasks, creating a list of short-term, “low-hanging fruit”—actions that can be taken quickly to improve our energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact. Then a longer report with input from all residents will make recommendations for management to move towards a greener environment while also considering financial health. It is essential to have consensus on any major investments.

Financial Resiliency: Cindy mentioned building fiscal health and resources to allow achievement of goals and fulfill our values through our budget. She noted the revival of the Board’s Philanthropy Committee, and the challenge of balancing building reserves while being able to seize future opportunities.

Finance: Holly Smith-Bové presented the November report, showing 96% occupancy in all three groups of residences, a 12.5% operating margin, 105 days Cash on hand. Joe Kulin asked if there has been discussion of the best place for the investments to be; Holly said that this will be discussed at the first meeting of the Board Investments Committee since she arrived. Sally expressed appreciation for Holly’s excellent work on our finances and for excellent communication.

Facilities: Chris Hague was unable to attend due to illness.

Wellness: Rob Olmsted reported that he has been working hard on preparation for Erin Curtin’s arrival next week. He anticipates that Erin will spend her first few weeks getting to know Lathrop and the needs of residents. The officers will be having lunch with Erin on Dec. 28. Rob is planning meet and greet events on January 4 and 11, but will provide details later about the format of those events. Sally Ives and Ginny Biggie expressed support for Zoom or individual lane meetings as the best way for everyone to be included and meet Erin, with particular emphasis on those who might be at once most in need of services soon and least likely to attend a group event. Rob encouraged residents to request home visits. He also emphasized the importance of residents informing him about their own or neighbors’ needs for support, as he can only help with what residents share with him. Gary Fey mentioned Congress’s decision affecting COVID outreach and the need to continue our own efforts.

Adjournment: Noon

Respectfully submitted, Claire Frierson, Vice-president substituting for Secretary Judith Hyde