**Lathrop North Residents’ Association Meeting**

November 16, 2022

**Comings and Goings**

June Morse is now settled in the Inn. Welcome to Fred and Beth Richter who have moved into 18 Butternut.

**Gratitudes to:**

* Lathrop Board for the inclusivity and transparency of the strategic planning process
* Wellness for a series of programs to help us move towards the goal of “aging in community”: the “VirtualDementia” training for staff and interested residents, the expansion of Kendal at Home, and the establishment of the new position of Wellness Coordinator
* Halloween programs of costumed walk around and cider and donuts
* Shelley for information about local politics
* Cindy and Chris for larger speed limit signs and crosswalk markings
* Easthampton Association officers and Cindy for monthly meetings with our officers as we improve coordination and information flow between campuses
* Jean Shackelford for changing our Association bank account to conform to IRS rules
* And to all for initiating, leading and participating in the on-going activities that keep our community vital: knitting group, “Aging with Grace‘ and men’s groups, tai chi and yoga, African-American book group, poker, and puzzle aficionados

**Minutes of August meeting approved.**

**Treasurer**’**s report**

 Current balance: $7160.85

 Jean Shackelford explained the process of transferring the treasurer’s responsibilities. A new name and tax ID number was needed for our account, as a 501(c)7 organization. We may need to file as a Massachusetts entity.  Our lawyer is looking into this. Easthampton’s status is not clear. Holly added more information about IRS regulations that made this change necessary.  The recent fund drive money is not showing in our Association account.

Approval of $6500 toward the expenses of the new patio.

**Old business**

**Strategic planning process retreat**--Carol Neubert and Marlisa Parker in dialogue

 The retreat brought Board, management, and residents together. We heard three presenters who broadened our understanding of what’s being done in other facilities like ours.  Carol reflected about the difference in this meeting compared to a similar meeting eight years ago with discussion centering on building.  This time we talked about what is special about Lathrop and how do we want to be going forward. These resident Board members felt very positively about the two-day experience. They encouraged us to trust the process and to tune into the Zoom coming up this week.

 N**ew Business**

* Elly reported that the year-end fund drive to show appreciation for staff is now underway

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* Monte’s March –Shelley Schieffelin
* Monte’s March is fundraising  for the Food Bank of  Western Mass. Our partnership in this fund drive with the Hilltown schools is going well.  Cindy will be marching November 22 with us to present Lathrop checks to Monte.  We will march for 1 mile from Richardson’s Candy store to Old Deerfield, carpooling from here around 2:30. Checks should be made out to Food Bank of Western Mass., Lathrop/Hilltown in the memo line, and sent to Shelley by this weekend.

**Committees**

**Program**  --Chris Hjelt

* Monte’s march
* Thanksgiving potluck
* Zoom with our Northampton town council rep
* Secret Santa
* Meeting House decorating
* Cocoa & cookies on the porch
* Evening vespers at Smith College
* Holiday sing followed by cocktail party
* Messiah concert

Discussion regarding holiday decorations; How do we a want to be an inclusive community, at the same time enjoying the warmth and cheer of the holiday season?

Joe Kulin requested adding Kwanzaa elements to our decorations. Dale LaBonte seconded Joe’s request and urged use of holiday lights only when people are present to conserve energy. Chris reminded the group that we use a timer for lights.  Carol Neubert suggested we think of our decorations as celebrating winter, rather than a Christian holiday, to continue the tradition of past holiday seasons.  Gary Fey asked what themes do we want to promote during this time, not anchored in religious observances. Joe said we could consider recognizing native American month in November.  Elly observed that this could be the province of the Meeting House committee. Fran likes solstice recognition. She also hopes we don’t turn out all our lights.  Bev called for particular requests for the singalong that would reflect other traditions. Chris asked if there are some things we don’t want to continue this year? Carolyn was in favor of continuing the tree and cheery lights.  Joan C. likes getting rid of Christian decor. Cynthia suggested having the tree be more inclusive of other traditions and said that we should learn about the genesis of other celebrations.  Chris commended the discussion and proposed keeping things the same this year and having a community discussion in the fall next year.

**Meeting House** --Dave Morrissey

* Roof assessment
* Enhancing functionality and appeal of each room
* Meetings will be held monthly; new members welcome

**Land conservation** –Dale LaBonte

* Leaves now in a pile near community garden, useful for new area
* Much bittersweet has been removed by many residents
* Advisory committee developing plan to replace diseased ash trees

 Jack commended Dale’s stewardship.

**Fitness** –Joe Kulin

* Recounted all the current activities
* Considering chair yoga, labyrinth
* Hope to have an entry weekly in the LampPost.
* New members sought.

**Music** –Jeff Mitchell

* Grateful for contributions to the music fund, a big increase.
* 15 concerts are planned through June; will be sending a list through NorthNeighbors.

 Joan C commended Jeff’s work.

**Safety** --Virginia Irvine Looking for volunteers to learn how to use MH generator in case of power outage.

**Lane concerns**

 Crabapple commends Ruth Elcan for bittersweet removal and wants Council to consider ways to fund further removal work.

 Dogwood is confused about mask policy. Rob said masks are optional except for groups of 20+. Outsiders can come into MH, wearing masks.

 Goldenchain’s questions about employee appreciation fund answered by Holly. As the extra money donated by residents is now added to staff paychecks it does get taxed. All staff under the level of directors are recipients, prorated by number of hours worked. After discussion with Cindy, we considered possibly next year making our gifts through the Association rather than Lathrop, so that the employee doesn’t have to pay taxes.

 Hawthorne wondered if tree removal is on the schedule.  Chris Hague said yes.  Will cut trees tagged as unsafe by the arborist.

**Management**

**CEO** --Cindy Jerome

Cindy wants to develop guidelines on car idling to warm up or cool a car, starting with Lathrop drivers picking up residents.

The budget for next year has been approved by the Board.

There was discussion of how the speed signs are working.  There is some concern that excess speed is once again a problem, after a period in which all were very careful about keeping to the speed limit. Michael Stevens expressed approval for Easthampton’s way of managing traffic and crosswalks.

**Finances** --Holly Smith-Bové

97% occupancy of townhomes for 4 years. Occupancy of the Inn is also high now and this has

made a big difference in Lathrop’s cash revenue.  We can now make choices based on strategy rather than fear.

 Features of the new budget include a 6% increase in resident monthly service fees and a 5.3% increase in expenses.

 The change in the way that the increase will be calculated this year was the subject of lengthy discussion. In the past, increases to the service fee were calculated as a percentage of the fee for each unit. This year there will be a flat increase to the service fees to all townhomes in each category.  Some residents saw this as equitable as all residents can take advantage of the same services. Others saw this as an unfair change in the agreement made with each resident upon entrance into the community.

As this budget has already been accepted by the Board, no changes will be made this year, but perhaps further discussion on the subject can take place before next year’s budget.

**Facilities**-Chris Hague

A lengthy list of maintenance projects that have taken place was given. Fall clean-up will be completed in the next days.

**Wellness** --Rob Olmsted

A candidate for the new position of Wellness Coordinator will be interviewed by a task force including residents tomorrow.

Further information and clarification from Lathrop at Home is forthcoming.

 The meeting adjourned at 12:30.