

Minutes for Northampton Residents' Council Meeting, March 15, 2023

Call to Order 10:00 Elly Rumelt

Minute of silence

Comings and Goings

New residents on Butternut at end of month

Gratitudes

To Rowena Roodman and Carol Neubert for many years of voluntary leadership of Healthy Bones and Balance
To the Music Committee for superb concerts, including Beethoven violin and piano sonatas, and Klezmer wedding music

To the Program Committee for very varied programs. In the past month these have included Mark Peterson's Mortal Mondays, a beautiful examination of the creative process in the documentary "Paul Taylor: Creative Domain" and Pi Day (now postponed to March 21).

To Dave Morrissey for his continued showing of movies with coordinated hot dogs.

To all residents who volunteered for the new residents' advisory committees, "Aging in Community" and "Environmental Stewardship" and to all who serve on the existing committees, including the often difficult job of the nominating committee

Treasurer's Report Jean Shackelford (appended)

Proposed action to be taken in accordance with our new status as a 501(c)7 organization: The Lathrop Northampton Residents' Association is now registered as a 501c7 and the IRS states that as such, "The club must be supported by membership fees, dues, and assessments." To satisfy this, Jean is proposing that each Association Member be assessed \$1 per year. That \$1 will be collected in one of the monthly Lathrop billings and funds transferred to the Northampton Residents Association.

This proposal was accepted by the Council without objection.

Minutes of January Council Meeting (appended)

Old Business Elly

Progress on Strategic Plan:

Update on Questionnaire on Aging in Community: The questionnaire results have been tabulated and shared with its authors, the North and East officers in the form of bar graphs, tables, and compilations of the open-ended comments. Except for the comments, a printed copy of the report and a summary of themes that emerged in the comments will be available in the library. The comments will not be shared more widely to preserve the anonymity of the survey. Elly noted that the survey had an unusually high rate of response, and also that many residents chose "I have it now" for many items of concern, which is a good sign that we are doing well at meeting current needs of residents. Two themes, or needs, that emerged in the comments were transportation—on and between campuses and for medical visits to Baystate or Boston—and togetherness—gathering for events and support for people who have lost a spouse; quite a few responses mentioned loneliness. There were quite a few comments about the allocation of spaces in the Meeting House, and Elly has made plans with Cindy to address some concerns. Specific actions will include converting the small conference room to a games room, with smaller tables to facilitate moving around in the space. The game tables will be removed from the Library and other changes will be made to make it a more cozy space for reading and other quiet pursuits. An afternoon café is planned for the lobby seating area. Other ideas for programs and groups are in the works, along with addressing the issue of accessibility to the lower level of the Meeting House for all residents.

Update on Environmental Stewardship and Aging in Community Advisory Committees:

Cindy has chosen the members of the Residents' Advisory Committee on Aging in Community from among volunteers: Audrey Bernstein, Elly Rumelt, Shelley Schieffelin, Michael Schwartz, Sonya Teter, and Margaret Zelljadt.

Northampton members of the Residents' Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability are all volunteers. They are Bob Buhner, Martha Cushman, George Kriebel, Dale LaBonte, Daphne Stevens, and Barbara Walvoord.

New Business Elly

Meeting House: Covered above.

Refrigerator Cards: Elly gave a shout-out to Donna King for creating laminated cards with a list of essential phone numbers with a magnet for the refrigerator at the request of Goldenchain residents. Anyone who would like one should speak with Donna.

Patio Cover: Jack reported that it is fair to say that progress is being made on installing a permanent structure as the most cost-effective way to cover the new patio. Holly Smith-Bové and Chris Hague have been looking at prefabricated options at a cost of about \$25,000, with a twenty-year lifespan, while a tent costs \$5,000 with a five-year lifespan. Holly said that there will be a request for community input once the choices have been narrowed down. Claire commented that considering the potential for the cover to have photovoltaic panels needs to be considered, as it involves building a new structure and we have committed to making all decisions about new structures through the lens of sustainability and climate change concerns. Jack said that there would need to be an overall Lathrop sustainability plan in place to guide such decisions, and we are not there yet; he also pointed out the urgent need for the patio to be covered for programs this coming spring and summer. Bob Buhner clarified that Claire's request was that any new structure be capable of supporting solar panels, even if the panels are not installed at this time. Marlisa confirmed that the Board is committed to analyzing environmental concerns in any future planning. Jean Krogh suggested that it might make sense to install a tent for this year's use. Elly noted that this discussion is one that we will be having often as the advisory committee on environmental sustainability's work and the Strategic Plan progress.

Committee Reports

Program Committee: Chris Hjelt

After reminding us that the Pi Day pie lunch will be next Tuesday, Chris mentioned that the balance in the new cash account after January's soup lunch allows the purchase of some special items—gluten-free options, notably—for Pi Day, so the payments of \$5 per person are providing funding as planned. Another March event will be Friday's St. Patrick's Day celebration on the porch. Chris described three programs planned for April. New Board member Dr. Daniel Lesley (the Bernsteins' son-in-law) will give a presentation on "Neurological Conditions of Aging." For Earth Day, Steve Svec (the Buhners' son-in-law) will present "Birding 101." And Dan Schieffelin will be giving an update on Antarctica. There will be a wine & cheese at the end of April.

Meeting House Committee: Dave Morrissey

Dave reiterated that the exterior painting and roof (Holly noted that it will probably need to be replaced) are priorities for 2023 and that the plantings at the entrance need work, either thinning or replacement. In response to a question from Holly Smith-Bové, Rowena suggested that the Native Plant Committee be consulted before Spring Valley does any replacing of plants. Dave noted that the AV system in the Gathering Room is starting to fail, with the TV unable to select channels or interface with the DVD player, and said there has been a work order submitted to have EPOS come examine the system. Dave also mentioned the plan for Holly Smith-Bové to purchase hanging plants for the porch as well as the question of accessibility of the lower floor of the Meeting House and the availability of architect's plans from eight years ago for an elevator. Jean Shackelford spoke of the need for a comprehensive discussion of the use of spaces in the Meeting House before making changes. Sally Ives asked if the cost of replacing the roof would trigger enforcement of compliance to ADA

standards, making it necessary to rebuild the ramp to the lower floor or install an elevator. Dave suggested that lane reps might get an idea of residents' priorities for the Meeting House in lane meetings, and offered to share photos of the lobby café set up at a community in Williamstown. Elly noted that the survey did get some indications of what people want, specifically places for people to gather. Jean noted that the survey had asked for input on the lobby café idea but not for ideas for other specific areas of the Meeting House, and reiterated that there needs to be a big plan rather than little incremental changes that may have to be redone.

Music Committee: Jeff Mitchell

Jeff began by speaking of the quality of recent concerts and in particular of the quantity and quality of the audience, whose particularly--but not unusually--receptive and attentive presence drew praise from the visiting musicians. Jeff said that musicians who come here appreciate the "discerning and sensible" way their performances are received. There will be three concerts in April: on April 2, cellist Mark Fraser and pianist Jerry Noble with a Beethoven sonata and other pieces; on the 16th, the Catalytics (formerly the Wranglers) with swing on multiple instruments; and finally Peter Blanchette on archguitar on the 23rd. Concerts are booked through July with progress on the schedule through August and September and on into the winter.

Fitness Committee: Joe Kulin

Joe seconded Jeff's comments about the quality of the audience at our concerts, mentioning a conversation with one of the Mt. Holyoke Klezmer Ensemble student musicians. Fitness Committee meetings have moved to Thursdays to allow Rob to attend, and Joe welcomed Jillian Hensley as a "new, active, and helpful" member of the committee. Joe reported that residents on both campuses are asked to submit letters about "What Fitness Means to Me" for publication in the newsletter; volunteers will receive a questionnaire to follow and the best responses will be selected. In regard to our fitness room, the question of access was raised by Sally Ives, and Jen Davis had noted that there needs to be more consistency in signing in in order to know how much the fitness center is being used. Joe reported that discussion of the labyrinth continues, with some study of portable labyrinths that cost under \$1000. There was discussion of ways to continue Healthy Bones and Balance following the retirement of Rowena and Carol Neubert. Jen Davis may be able to make a similar offering, and Rowena emphasized that the Fitness Committee and Rob need to be involved in asking RSVP, whose program HBB is, if they have a replacement. Elly noted that the survey results included requests for outdoor recreation such as pickle ball; Joe and Jean mentioned the need for a court, the existence of two vacant lots, and the options of croquet and Frisbee.

Board Committee Reports

Strategic Planning and Philanthropy Committees: Peter Van Pelt

The Strategic Planning Committee met on February 24 to continue work on the goals and objectives from January 23. There were no changes proposed and the goals and objectives will be submitted to the Board this month. The committee also edited the statements of Mission and Vision to read as follows:

Mission:

Transforming aging in a vibrant, supportive community influenced by Quaker values

Vision:

Residents and staff working together to foster a culture of personal growth in a sustainable and evolving community

The January 23 plan included ideas and action steps, mostly calling for study or review of possible actions. The two most costly are to explore building a commons building in Easthampton and to explore building additional housing that facilitates aging in community. The Senior Leadership Team will have a Strategic Planning Retreat at the end of March.

The Philanthropy Committee has been looking at the big picture and the longer term, which may well lead to a major capital campaign to fund any new construction and a capital reserve. Peter noted that Lathrop's finances

in the short and medium term are in good shape, but that an organization of our size needs medium and long term capital reserves.

The committee plans to re-launch an Annual Fund campaign after several years without one, to include an appeal to families of residents after discussion with residents to generate ideas and requests. The Board, reservation list, residents, and staff would also be targets of a “gentle ask.” Sally asked if this would be in addition to the two annual campaigns we have now, for funds to support resident activities and for staff appreciation. Peter replied that the Annual Fund will be on a much bigger scale, and suggested in response to a question from Joe Kulin about how the Annual Fund proceeds would be used that it might be used to take pressure off the annual increase in monthly fees, and expressed a hope that we can identify potential major donors among the families of residents. Elly noted that it will be very important to have the Annual Fund appeal not conflict with the activities and staff appreciation appeals and also avoid a problem with asking residents to contribute so often. Marlisa Parker said that there will be careful consideration of the calendar of appeals.

Board Development Committee: Marlisa Parker

Marlisa noted that the by-laws specify the number of Board members there must be in order to allow for two resident representatives from each residence, and noted that she had arrived a bit late because of a conversation with a prospective Board member. The Board worked at their last meeting on nominations for Board officers, which are ready for final approval before being announced. Members of the Board will be asked to reflect on their role and suggestions for improvement through a board assessment questionnaire; this has not been done in the past. With regard to our resident representatives on Board committees, Marlisa reported that our representatives have agreed to continue for another year on the committees where they will be finishing their one-year terms: Gary Fey, John Schieffelin, Hans Van Heyst, Peter Van Pelt, and Joan Wofford.

Lane Concerns

Aspen: Sally Ives

Sally asked for an update on replacing the administrative software, following up on an announcement from last year. Holly explained that Lathrop was the only Kendal affiliate not using Matrixcare and that since Kendal was exploring an upgrade to that, we are participating in the Kendal process. Holly is on the Kendal committee working with a consultant and vendor selection is expected to happen in the next few weeks with the conversion beginning in May. Holly is looking forward to having a system to handle all aspects of administration

Crabapple: Rowena Roodman

Rowena asked if we can receive our monthly bills electronically, and Holly replied that each resident will have an online account that will include electronic delivery of monthly bills.

Hawthorn: Arlene Jennings

Arlene Jennings requested a progress report on two safety concerns, lighting and a painted crosswalk. Holly explained that it is too cold to paint anything so the crosswalk should be done in the spring. On the issue of lighting and the conflicting concerns about the current lighting not being bright enough for safety and brighter lighting causing discomfort inside a townhome, there was discussion of the lighting system in Easthampton (lights that illuminate only the ground and have motion sensors that raise the level when there are walkers), of what might be acceptable to all on Hawthorn, and about management’s need to focus on safety. Elly noted that with shared governance, residents’ wishes need to be taken into account, and thus since the overwhelming majority of residents on Hawthorn want more lighting, that should be the deciding factor. Lighting which is motion activated was mentioned as a possible way to satisfy both those who want lighting for safety in walking and those who are concerned with light entering their homes. Arlene mentioned also that there was concern among Hawthorn residents that the new patio is too small to accommodate enough chairs; Jack and Sally

clarified that at 18 x 28 feet (504 sq. ft.), the new patio is larger than the 20 x 20 (400 sq. ft.) area covered by the tent.

Goldenchain: Sarah Ismail

Sarah expressed concern about visibility at the intersection of Goldenchain, Hawthorn, and Shallowbrook. Two problems are that there is no speed limit sign when heading towards Goldenchain from the Meeting House and that the trees on the left when leaving Goldenchain to turn onto Shallowbrook block the view of any oncoming traffic on Shallowbrook.

At this point in the meeting, Sally Ives asked for discussion of acoustics in the Gathering Room. She was finding it very difficult to hear the meeting, especially exchanges between two people, and others said they were also finding it very difficult to follow. Sally and Jean Krogh spoke of the advantage of Zoom meetings in this regard, especially as residents' approaches to COVID risks are unlikely to change. Elly mentioned that this was probably the last indoor meeting for a while, but asked if a different set up might work better—a hand-held mic instead of the lapel mic, for example; Jack Hjelt suggested we look at the way the tables were set up, with open space in the middle. Elly mentioned acquiring an all-directional mic, and learned that the men's group uses one for their meetings. It was generally agreed that the problem is caused by resonance in the room and that different amplification will not make a difference.

Management

CEO:

Holly Smith-Bové shared a report from Cindy Jerome on five topics. Cindy noted that the Aging in Community survey has been completed and is full of useful information. The officers will share the results, and the committee has been formed and is working on finding a time to meet.

She touched on the environmental sustainability committee and stated that all residents will have opportunities to contribute to the work of both committees. In response to questions about the option of residents who are experiencing financial difficulty using their entrance fee to help pay the monthly fee, Holly said that this is possible, but not encouraged because of the effect on financial management. A letter should go to Cindy or Holly specifying the amount of the fee one wants to offset. Currently about five residents between the two campuses are drawing amounts between \$200 and \$1000 per month.

Finance: Holly Smith-Bové

Holly did not have financial report slides to show. While interviews continue for a replacement accounting assistant, Holly is handling the responsibilities of that position. She did report that every apartment in the Inn is rented, with the monthly payments there of \$5500-600 per apartment having a very positive effect on the budget, and promised to have numbers to present soon.

Wellness: Rob Olmsted

Rob returned to the question of Gathering Room acoustics, noting that resonance has always been a problem, worse since the renovation and removal of draperies. He thinks there needs to be a task force to address the problem with professional guidance. Rob noted that COVID is no longer our focus, but that infectious disease management will always be a focus, with managing COVID being one responsibility. In December, nine cases were reported to Rob, five in January, two in February, and two so far in March. Most cases were asymptomatic and identified by people who test regularly. Rob expressed gratitude to Rowena and Carol Neubert for seven years of service leading Healthy Bones and Balance classes and doubts that we will be able to replace what they have done. Jen Davis is willing and able to offer something, but that will make her less available for individual consultations, although is it a cost-effective use of her time on campus if she's working with 12-15 people at once. Rob expressed delight with Erin Curtin's work so far. She will be relaunching the ongoing campaign to get all caregivers working on campus registered with Lathrop. Lathrop urges residents to use professional care agencies because they have liability and worker's compensation insurance and backup replacement caregivers. Rob mentioned that Massachusetts does not have "certified" care agencies. Lathrop acknowledges that residents may prefer private professional caregivers, as the care is more personal and more

of the payment goes to the caregiver. Management recognizes the right to individual choice, but wants to be sure that residents understand the choices they are making, and has a responsibility to know who is active in providing personal care on campus. Caregiver registrations go to Erin, who will be collecting them roughly twice a year.

Elly asked how the end of the federal and state COVID emergency in May will affect us. Rob noted that people are now making self-protective choices, and there may be changes to policies at the Inn concerning the dining room, guests, caregiver masking. Staff are not required to mask, but they are required to honor our preferences when they are working in our homes. The future of the COVID vaccination requirement and availability of free tests are not clear.

Bob Buhner noted that the crosswalk signs had not yet been replaced after yesterday's snow plowing; Rob said they have been very effective.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55.

Respectfully submitted by Claire Frierson

Treasurer's Report, March 2023

The current balance in the Florence Bank account is \$6665.55

The balance in the 'cash account' remains at \$44.63

Agenda item for council meeting.

The Lathrop Northampton Residents Association is now registered as a 501c7 and the IRS states that as such, "The club must be supported by membership fees, dues, and assessments." To satisfy this, I am proposing that each Association Member be assessed \$1 per year. That \$1 will be collected in one of the monthly Lathrop billings and funds transferred to the Northampton Residents Association.

If the Council approves this proposal, it will be taken up at the next Association meeting