Approved by the Council on 10/18/23

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING

Northampton campus, Lathrop Community

Officers present: Elly Rumelt, Co-President; Nancy Chamberlin, Treasurer; Alaire Rieffel, Secretary.

Lane Representatives present: Sally Ives and Pamela White, Aspen; Nancy Felton, Butternut; Rowena Roodman, Crabapple; Sue Bastek, Dogwood; Jean Krogh, Firethorn; Sarah Ismail, Goldenchain; Martha Cushman, Hawthorn.

Staff Members Present: Holly Smith-Bové, CFO; Sarah Gauger, Director of Resident Services.

Elly called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Gratitudes: After a period of silence, Elly expressed gratitude to Chris Hague and his crew for completion of the new Meeting House roof; to Holly for clarifying how financial responsibilities are shared between Lathrop and residents; to Jeff Mitchell and the Music Committee for the series of delightful concerts; and to the Program Committee, the kitchen, and culinarily-talented residents for the Labor Day picnic; for resident initiatives for our natural environment, including invasive plants and for planting a willow tree; for the return of Healthy Bones and Balance; for the weekly Thursday morning coffees; and for the start of monthly lunches.

Minutes: The minutes of the previous Council meeting were approved without corrections.

Treasurer’s Report: The Report of the Treasurer was approved. This report is attached below.

Old Business: A new management position of “Director of Resident Services” has been created and Sarah Gauger has been appointed to that position. Sarah reported that they hope to have the new intranet implemented by the end of October, beginning with a “soft start” with basic information. Residents will be provided with a training session in November, possibly at the Association meeting. Because “internet” and “intranet” sound so much alike, the latter will be designated in writing as “inTRAnet.”

Sarah also reported that efforts to improve the sound system are underway. Management has received two proposals for a new sound system (microphone, etc.) as well as acoustic tile in the gathering room. In addition, a new firewall to better control internet traffic is being installed that hopefully will help our service. This is a complex situation since we are part of the Kendal internet system. Kendal personnel are working both on the Easthampton campus and the Northampton campus to rectify this situation.

Sarah reported that the CEO search is underway with three interviews followed by a questionnaire for residents. Residents are encouraged to complete the questionnaire promptly.

Chris Hague reported on the efforts to improve safety at the Bridge Road pedestrian crossing. He attended a meeting of the City Council last month at which there was a discussion of Lathrop proposals to improved safety by making alterations to the section of Bridge Road near the Lathrop entrance. Such a project would be is problematical since it is a “state access artery.” Lathrop was successful in obtaining a left turn lane about 7 years ago and further improvements in the near future are unlikely. Chris asked that the stripes be repainted and was told that the Council was “taking that under advisement.”

Pamela encouraged the addition of speed limit signage in the other direction (leaving Lathrop). Sally added that bright clothing is also important, and residents have a responsibility to do their part.

Barbara Walvoord presented a request for $1,000 as part of an effort by the Land Conservation Committee to reduce invasive plants on both campuses and in the “wild woods.” Cynthia Stanton expressed concern about the detention pond behind 61 and 62 Goldenchain Lane. She asked that the pond be excluded from proposed efforts. Holly added that approval from the Lathrop Board is also required, and that this type of grant requires that Lathrop provide the funding up front and be reimbursed by the Grantor. In the past this process has gone smoothly. A copy of this committee’s report is attached. Sally Ives moved that this expenditure be approved, and Elly noted that approval was the sense of the meeting.

Sally Ives noted that the bittersweet behind #1 Aspen, at the corner of Bridge Road and Shallowbrook, is unsightly and should be removed.

New Business: As noted above, there is a new management position of Director of Resident Services. Sarah Gauger has been appointed to this position and will oversee concierge personnel, administrative assistants, and transportation. Nina Patnode is now Resident Services Coordinator.

Elly reminded residents that the Employee Appreciation Drive will be initiated soon to enable employees to receive their funds before the holidays.

Elly noted that she hopes that efforts to address climate change issues and related safety issues will be underway shortly.

Board and Committee Reports. Carol Neubert reported on the activities of the Board’s Diversity Committee. They are putting together a 2023-2024 statement of principles to be presented to the Board next week. She asked what having “diversity” among residents would mean and what we would be willing to change to accomplish it.

Peter Van Pelt reported on the Board’s Philanthropy Committee. A new independent consultant has been retained to initiate fundraising projects. An appeal for the General Fund will be launched early in 2024. Residents are asked to assist in compiling a list of things that are great about Lathrop to use in fundraising.

Jeff Mitchell submitted a written report of the North campus Music Committee, which is is attached to this document.

Virginia Irving presented a report on the activities of the Safety Committee. She and Rob Olmsted examined the area where a new crosswalk is needed near the entrance to Lathrop from Bridge Road. Rob is to be reporting back to the committee on a suitable location. Sally encouraged the addition of better signage along Shallowbrook.

Dave Morrissey reported on the Meeting House Committee. They haven’t met in recent weeks because they are waiting for the completion of jobs already in the queue. These include new plants, painting the exterior woodwork, and trimming the bush by the back door. In 2024 the Committee hopes to spruce up the library along with other projects.

Joe Kulin reported on the Fitness Committee. They have arranged for a volunteer to lead the Healthy Bones and Balance group two days a week, from 12:30 to 1:30 on Mondays and Wednesdays. Jillian Hensley will be leading a group to the Silvio Conte Nature Reserve in early October. This location has a boardwalk and is wheelchair accessible. Other activities being considered are private massage, reflexology, rolfing, and chi gong. Additional suggestions are welcome.

Lane Issues:

Nancy Felton reported on Butternut Lane: The lane notes the need for more members on the food committee, and especially someone to work with Lisa in Food Services to coordinate the monthly lunches. In addition, Nancy is compiling a list and brief description of the resident groups and committees here on the North campus and hopes to have a draft out soon.

Sarah Ismail asked about repair of the vinyl siding where air conditioners have been removed. Chris replied that he is going to have to hire an outside contractor to complete this job. The Maintenance Department continues to be short-staffed. They are currently interviewing two candidates.

Martha Cushman said that Hawthorn residents would like a bike rack to be installed near the Meeting House. Chris Hague replied that they would have to determine a specific location.

Management Reports:

Holly reported that we have 97% occupancy in townhouses and 180 days of cash on hand. The unoccupied house on Goldenchain will be available the end of the month.

Chris Hague reported that they are pursuing the installation of an elevator for the Meeting House. For structural reasons a traditional elevator is unworkable, so they are evaluating the possibility of a limited access elevator, which would be attached to the exterior of the Meeting House. There is one such elevator at the Dr. Seuss Museum in Springfield. He noted that the Maintenance Department completed 694 work orders last month. Painting of the exterior of the Meeting House is being scheduled.

Elly asked for input from the lanes on questions of diversity and what we would be willing to pay to implement changes.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am.

Respectfully submitted, Alaire Rieffel, Treasurer

**Addenda: Committee Reports**

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**Treasurer’s report for 9/20/23 Residents Council meeting**  
  
1) North campus Residents Assoc checking acct at Florence Bank:  
  
bank balance 8/31/23   $5176.31  
  (Includes 1 check written since 8/16 Association mtg for $68.92 - violets for 90s party)  
  
minus outstanding check 520    $50  
checkbook balance 9/18/23   $5126.31  
  
2) North campus Donor Advised Fund at Lathrop, administered by Holly Smith-Bove:  
  
LNRA balance 8/16/23   $14,251  
minus expenditures for -  
   - butterfly garden maintenance   $90  
   - 90th birthday food/drink 8/18   $283  
total 9/18/23.  $13,878  
  
3)  Petty cash acct administered by Donna King:     
balance 9/18/23   $66.53  
  
Nancy Chamberlin, treasurer  
Sent from my iPhone

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| **Land Conservation Committee:** |

Below is a summary of the project proposed by the Land Conservation Committee to control invasive plants in our environment. Barbra Walvoord will be at the Council meeting to present the project.  Money for the project will come from Northampton and Easthampton city funds, plus a "match" from Lathrop, detailed in the summary. Included in that match is $1000 from each of the Resident Associations.

Please read this before the Council meeting if at all possible so that you will be prepared for the discussion.

Elly

**Purpose of the project**

* The purpose of the project is to increase control of invasive plants in order to provide a nourishing environment for our wildlife.  A land dominated by invasives, in one study, had 91% fewer butterfly and moth caterpillars than a land dominated by native plants. A small part of the project is to hold one walk-talk for the public each of the three years of the grant, to inform people about our invasives work and its outcomes. Informational signs on the land are also included.
* We will remove invasive plants both in the residential areas and in a total of 110 acres of undeveloped land on both campuses, concentrating on the land that is in Conservation Restriction

**Where the money will come from and how it will be used.**

* The two cities together are being asked to provide a total of $121,000 to pay contractors to remove invasives on the Conservation Restriction land (the city Community Preservation Act can only fund CR land). On the north, that means the 14 acres around the trails and stream.
* As part of the overall project, and as our "match" to the city funds, Lathrop will provide the following:
  + Money to pay contractors like Jeff Allen and Land Stewardship Inc to help volunteers control invasives in the unmowed areas of the campus--the work that Ruth Elcan and her crew have been doing), and to address invasives in the land that is not in CR, including the forest edges behind the lanes (which a number of residents have asked for) and the land at the trail head that is not in CR.  Lathrop's operating budget will not contribute to this part of the project.  We will use only resident donations. The Land Conservation Committee has committed $25,000 from its funds (for both campuses). **We are asking each Residents' Council/Association for $1,000.** The more we can raise for this fund, the more work we can get done.
  + In-kind services from Lathrop, including some brush hogging around the retention pond; staff time to help me and the Land Committee organize the manage the project; and refreshments for three public programs per year in which we talk and walk to show people our invasives work and its outcomes.

Lathrop will pay to have Spring Valley remove and replace at least 5 invasive shrubs (total for both campuses) each year, and replace them with native shrubs.  We will do this ONLY by resident request and when a unit turns over. The most common invasive plant on the north campus is burning bush (also called winged euonymus,*Euonymus alatus*). It is spreading into our woods and can take over if we don't stop it.  The state has made it illegal to sell or propagate this plant, as well as a list of other invasives.

**Music north council report for 9/20/23**

So far this calendar year Music North has presented 16 concerts, with an estimated average attendance of a bit over 35. Five more concerts remain in 2023:

September 24 Windborne

October 22: Sophie et Adam

October 29 Forest Avenue

November 11 The Layaali Arabic Music Trio

December 3 The Pax Sax Quartet

Concerts for the first half of 2024 are now being scheduled. They will present a mixture of old friends and musicians who have not performed at Lathrop Northampton before. Please stay tuned for more information.

Jeff Mitchell

Program Committee

September 2023 Program Committee Report for Council

Since the last report the Program Committee has either organized, held together, or pushed ahead  several programs and include the following:

The very successful Thursday Coffee and Snacks organized and hosted thus far by Claire Frierson survived despite Claire’s vacation.

The 90s Pizza Party attended by over 65 residents

Van excursion to Tanglewood rehearsal featuring violinist Kavakos

Cancellation of Van excursion (lack of interest) to the Springfield Museums Nelson Stevens:  Color Rapping (Fine Arts); We Have a Story to Tell: Stories, Maps, and Relationship to Place (Wood Museum)

Cancellation of trips to local Farmers’ Markets due to lack of interest.

Van excursion to Jacob’s Pillow Compagnie Kafig

A Labor Day Picnic, on the Patio attended by over 60 residents

The Raging Grannies program followed by lunch attended by 44 residents and Grannies  Coming in October

Mark Peterson’s Being Mortal Monday programs reconvene on the second Monday of the month  at 3:30

Maxwell Navajo Code Talkers Program scheduled for September was cancelled and will be  rescheduled.

An Afternoon with John Shuman (actor), will be in the Gathering Room

Possible Van trip to Pioneer Valley Symphony

October 13th, 7:30PM,  Greenfield High School Auditorium,

We are beginning preparing for Monte’s March in November.

We are planning for a few more Global Forum programs, continuing Lou Ratte’s very successful  program from last year.

A wine and cheese celebration

Halloween and other fall surprises.