

HALP Executive Committee

Meeting of 04/19/2023

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (laurelparkec@gmail.com): Presiding Officer and President: Ruth Anne Lundeberg (presidentlaurelpark@gmail.com), Clerk: Aaron Bissell (clerklaurelpark@gmail.com); At Large: Wil Morin (atlarge1lp@gmail.com), At Large: Lauren Anderson (atlarge2lp@gmail.com), Financial Officer: Kathy Murri (treasurerlaurelpark@gmail.com), Vice President: Andrew Lehman (vplarelpark@gmail.com), Property Chair: Peter Russell (propertycommitteelp@gmail.com).

ABSENT:

HOMEOWNERS: Tryna Hope, Lauren Vitiello, Patricia Althea, Joni Sexauer, Sandra Matthews, Sheila Rhodes-Dow, Sandra Hanig, Ani Gonzalez-Rivera

GUESTS: Michael Pancione, Tricia Pancione (Property Managers)

HOMEOWNER MATTERS:

1. **Proposal to Donate Bench to New Playground Area - (Sheila Rhodes-Dow)**
 - a. Sheila is donating A Goshen Stone bench to commemorate her late husband, and father to her son Cole, who grew up in Laurel Park.
 - b. Sheila and the contractor in consultation with the playground group will choose a site 10 or more days after the playground is completed, and installed. Proposed site is facing the playground.
 - c. Sheila will pay for the bench and its installation.
 - d. Designer/Contractor is Ross/Natural Stone Creations.
 - e. There were questions about the other benches that are being refurbished for placement around Laurel Park. Location for those benches hasn't been determined yet.
2. **Proposal to Landscape the Front Gate Area - (Joni Sexauer, Patricia Althea)**
 - a. Request for funds from the EC. There is currently \$5,000 allocated in the budget for landscaping which could be used for this project.
 - b. Proposal is for \$4950. 70% for materials and 30% for labor.
 - c. Start of work would be around the beginning of June. Project would likely take a few days.
 - d. Green Gardens is the designer/contractor. Several other options were investigated. All the estimates were about the same.
 - e. They will provide an insurance certificate with HALP named insured.
 - f. The Property Committee has already given their approval.
 - g. Current front gate garden is so overgrown that it would be hard for residents alone to get it under control. There are too many invasive species (sassafras and bishop's weed, etc.); there aren't enough volunteers to maintain the garden area. It's not a very nice "face" for Laurel Park at the moment. New plants would be low maintenance at Joni and Althea's request.
 - h. Suggestion that current mountain laurels by gate could be relocated to somewhere in Laurel Park better suited to their growth. They would be replaced with another variety of laurel that would grow better by the front gate. The flower bulbs in the front gate area would also be relocated.
 - i. **Motion: Fund current front gate landscaping project for \$4950. PASSED.**
3. **Request for a noise reducing wall to protect front cottages from road noise and vibration.**
 - a. Homeowner is gathering information to present at an upcoming meeting.

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- b. Previous research has shown that it would probably be very expensive and perhaps not very effective.

A. REPORTS:

1. PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Ruth Anne Lundeberg)

- a. Wil Morin has been elected via email to the At-Large position vacated by Jill Taglia.
Motion: Elect Wil Morin to fill At-Large position. PASSED.
- b. The president has been working closely with the Property officer, Pancione Associates, Nick Grimaldi (HALP's attorney) and members of the EC.
- c. The president has addressed/is addressing multiple Homeowners matters such as construction plans, requests, complaints and administration.
- d. The president has been overseeing the activities of EC members and providing assistance as needed.
- e. The President will provide updates on specific units' construction work if requested.
- f. For those homeowners who have made requests not addressed in the meeting, you can always email the EC for an update.
- g. Financial information about homeowners is not available, due to confidentiality rules.
- h. A more detailed report on the president's activities on behalf of HALP will be provided on request.

2. VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Andrew Lehman)

- a. Laurel Park Association and Social Union News
 - i. LPA, SU and Andrew will get together at coffee hour on 24th.
 - ii. Issue of signage for 9 acre woods area. Are more or different signs needed?
 - iii. Idea of using a calendar on a website for organizing and displaying LPA, SU, EC events/meetings.
- b. Orientations
 - i. Orientation was done for new owner of unit #8.
 - ii. There are some updates that need to be made for the orientation package. Pancione Associates address and who to condo fee write checks to should be at the top of the list.

3. FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT (Kathy Murri)

- a. [See Linked Report](#)
 - i. Income is on target for the current time of year.
 - ii. Spending is also mostly on target. Electricity spending is still very high. Northampton has just raised water use rates by 210% which will increase Laurel Park's bill. Propane is also high, but that may change now that the weather is warmer. Rubbish removal is high too, with further pricing increase expected.
 - iii. Kathy will be working on collecting arrears where needed.

4. PROPERTY OFFICER'S REPORT (Peter Russell)

- a. [See Linked Document](#)

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- b. Tree work is progressing. Spreadsheet of 24 trees that would ideally be attended to (trimmed or removed) this year has been produced. Shea Tree survey will be providing a cost estimate.
- c. Woolly adelgid and hemlock elongate scale treatment is still proceeding according to contract previously approved. Currently only treating some of the large hemlocks. It's also not clear how effective the treatment is. Peter will attempt to assess the current state of hemlock trees that have been treated to try and figure out treatment effectiveness.
 - i. Question about the asset value of the trees. It's not entirely clear what that value represents. Trees that are removed can't usually be sold because they may contain metal in their trunks.
- d. Water runoff near the dining hall has been tested and would be safe to swim in.
 - i. Continued testing could be a good idea to help assuage the health department. Cost is \$50 per test.
- e. Plan to create an integrated septic map of the entire neighborhood is in progress. First step is to figure out which units need better individual maps.
- f. Condition of Dining Hall still presents problems in several areas.
 - i. Toilet does seem to be flushing properly at the moment. Fixing any septic issues would likely be expensive. Other solutions might be more cost effective.
 - ii. Looking at saving money by painting the dining hall interior ourselves.
- g. Pancione has received paving quotes. Costs would be high. Paving the end of North Warren would be around \$10,900. Northampton St end would be \$14,800 for repaving. Trinity Circle work would be about \$16,750. Contractor who provided the estimates has produced good results in the past.
 - i. Proposal for this year is to repave the end of Northampton Street and for North Warren to wait until next year.
 - ii. Consensus is that the area of North Warren does need to be paved. The question is when it will be done, not if.
 - iii. Feeling that more information is needed with more complete estimates.
- h. Laurel Park is following the conservation practice of "No Mow May." Mowing will begin on June 1st.
 - i. Could the frequency of mowing be decreased to once every three weeks? Yes.
 - ii. Notification to homeowners of mowing and other noisy landscaping work will be made in advance when possible.
- i. Location of compost bins by the community garden is in question.
 - i. Compost barrels have proved unwieldy in the past.
 - ii. The compost could use better management. Currently inappropriate items (animal fats, etc) are put in the compost bins.
- j. Laurel Park is trying to take tree replacement more seriously because of tree removal.
 - i. Most of the trees currently look stressed for one reason or another. The Property Committee is working on a plan.
 - ii. Northampton is giving out free young trees for arbor day this year. The Property Committee wants to encourage residents to get trees and will be developing a plan about what to do with them.
 - iii. Idea of gathering saplings from 9 acre woods was proposed. It might be feasible, but it would need LPA input.

5. CLERK'S REPORT (Aaron Bissell)

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- a. No Report
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- 6. AT-LARGE ONE REPORT (Wil Morin)**
 - a. No Report
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- 7. AT-LARGE TWO REPORT (Lauren Anderson)**
 - a. No Report
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- 8. LONG TERM PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT**
 - a. First ever Laurel Park “Septic Summit” is being arranged: a three-committee meeting with Long Term Planning, EC, and Septic Committee.
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- 9. PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE REPORT**
 - a. **What's been accomplished**
 - i. We had several families help us at the playground workday, April 15th. We widened two sides so that there will be a full safety zone for the new structure as well as behind the swings. We took down the old slide and swings and added 4 new swings.
 - b. **What's still remaining**
 - i. The new structure will be installed Monday, April 24th.
 - ii. We need more mulch. In addition to the extra two feet on the dining hall side, much of the existing area only has about 2 inches, though some has 4+. Nine inches would be the safest, I was going to settle for 6, then bought 4, but the ground is uneven, so some spots only have 2.
 - iii. We need to add a triangular structure on the side of the metal swing set for additional safety. Ryan is investigating whether we can remove the steps from the old ladder and then jackhammer the concrete block in half so we could use one half of the ladder on each side to make a triangle. If that doesn't work, we may need to use wood. When I looked up buying two more galvanized pipes, they were around \$800 a piece.
 - 1. Swings are currently safe but would be safer with additional stabilization.
 - 2. Suggestions for some local metal working shops, who might be able to help, were provided.
 - iv. Two people outside of the park have volunteered to take the old slide. If the first person doesn't confirm within the week, I'll offer to the second. In the meantime, we need to get all the scrap we aren't using out of there and take to a scrap yard.
 - v. Remove the old trampoline as well as the 2nd trampoline that just appeared.
 - c. **Target completion date**
 - i. The substantial work will be done with the installation of the new structure on Monday, April 24th.

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- ii. I'm not sure about the rest of it because it's all just happened. When will Ryan have time to try to break up the concrete block? Will it work or will we need to pivot to a Cedar structure? Will we have enough money for a cedar structure or will we need to fundraise more? Once we know all that, we can order the additional mulch based on how much of the funds remain.
- d. **Is there any assistance required/sought**
 - i. So far we've raised an additional \$300. That could go toward more playground mulch or toward a new structure for the one end of the swingset. We would of course love more financial support from the EC to get these accomplished, but I don't believe there is any in the budget.
 - ii. I would also like to get playground mats underneath the swings because the mulch gets moved so much. Looking into prices.
- e. **Any significant plan or timeline changes**
 - i. Some of the above pieces are changes to the plan because of additional information.

10. PROPERTY MANAGER'S REPORT (Michael Pancione, Tricia Pancione)

- a. Pancione Associates was involved in much of the work already described. ([See Property Officer's Report](#))
- b. Wood chips have been created from the many fallen trees and branches. They are available in the blue barn parking lot for homeowner use.
- c. Sand barrels and plowing guide stakes have been removed and stored for next year.
- d. \$3,800 is the current estimate for work on the dining hall entrance and side walls.
- e. New signage for the Coles Meadow Road entrance to Laurel Park has been ordered and will be installed upon arrival.

11. Library Committee Report (Tryna Hope, Erin Nelson, Patti McManamy, Liz Duffy Adams)

- a. New blinds installed on the windows.
- b. Step stool has been provided for the higher shelves.
- c. New shelves added for DVDs and audio books.
- d. Special section of books by Laurel Park residents has been created.
- e. The library is open every day 10–8 for borrowing books, spending time reading or working, or for small group meetings.
- f. Games and picture books are available.
- g. Special reading nook for little ones is still in place.
- h. Library space has provided a good location for new homeowners orientations.

B. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Investing a portion of our reserves:

- a. Proposed investment is in no-risk CDs

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- i. It's a very simple and transparent type of investment.
 - ii. There are guaranteed returns of a specific amount.
 - iii. There is no risk.
 - iv. There is no commission, meaning we make more money.
 - b. The financial planner chosen by the previous EC is non-responsive.
 - c. The EC President (Ruth Anne) proposes that with the guidance of the Finance officer, the investment be made through Vanguard instead.
 - d. Advice is available from Vanguard if needed.
 - e. Detailed plan with projections available on request.
 - f. **Motion: Because of time elapsed, leave further discussion until more updated information can be obtained. PASSED.**
- 2. Water Runoff Coming Down Hill Near Playground:**
- a. EC was alerted to water runoff near the playground by Northampton Health Department.
 - b. Water has been tested safe.
 - c. It's probably now okay to remove the fencing, although we are still waiting for an official go ahead from the Northampton Health Department.
- 3. Laurel Park Association and HALP agreement, part 3 has been approved by the EC.**
- a. Signing is underway.
 - b. The 9 acre woods will be the responsibility of LPA, but homeowners are welcome to use them.
 - c. LPA supervises the use of common buildings, with the exception of the Post Office.
 - d. LPA retains revenue from space rentals and ticket sales.
 - e. LPA offers cultural opportunities in the park for the public and homeowners.
 - f. Copy of agreement available on request.

C. NEW BUSINESS:

See Homeowners Matters

D. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

1. **Motion: Enter Executive Session.**
2. **Motion: Leave Executive Session.**
3. **Executive Session Discussion Produced no votes.**

Meeting adjourned. 8:30 pm.

Next Meeting - Wednesday, May 17th at 6:15 via Zoom. (Link to [Next Meetings Agenda](#))