

Minutes, Lakeside Committee Meeting, March 8, 2018

Time of the meeting: 6:30 to 8:00pm

Notes taken by: Peter Landgren

Present at the meeting:

- **Committee members**

1. President: David Cho
2. Vice President: Will Smith
3. Treasurer: Sravya Jangareddy
4. Social Chair: Liz Davidson (absent)
5. Garden Coordinator: Kyle Oskvig
6. External Relations Delegate: Nancy Lu (absent)
7. Secretary: Peter Landgren
8. Webmaster: Jon MacArt

- **University**

1. Olivia Martel

- **ACC**

1. Mark Clemmons (absent)

- **Residents**

1. Private
2. Christine, member of Graduate Student Composting Initiative

Meeting Summary:

- Update on the power outages: Lakeside is technically off-campus, and the power outages were the result of larger problems with PSE&G's network. The committee is following up on several specific requests.
- Update on Internet outages: Hotwire, Lakeside's ISP, went down throughout much of NJ as a result of downed power lines in the area. This was not a Lakeside specific problem. Lakeside is not on "puwireless" as it was deemed to be cost-prohibitive when Lakeside was built.

- Composting is going well, and now has perennial funding!
- We discussed adding a position to the committee focused on sustainability. We'll talk about this at future meetings as well.
- The meadow will be planted soon.

Discussion Points:

1. Power Outages and Wi-Fi

Resident: I'm concerned about electricity going out during the last two storms especially since we pay for our electricity while residents in the Graduate College don't.

David: I wanted to pass some info along from ACC. Lakeside is technically considered off-campus so we are not connected to the CoGen plant or the campus Wi-Fi.

Resident: Can we acknowledge that this situation is suboptimal? The situation at Lakeside is worse than it was on campus during Hurricane Sandy, and people here rely on power and Wi-Fi for research.

Resident: Can this committee pass a statement stating that we should rely on campus resources?

Jon: This has been explored in the past, and at least to change to "puwireless" for Wi-Fi would be very expensive, potentially in the millions of dollars.

Resident: The CoGen plant doesn't provide power for all of campus. There are certain areas on campus that require power for safety reasons, but there's no way they could provide power to everyone, including us. Also, just to take a step back there are many people who lost power, our situation is pretty normal for the Princeton area. We are incurring the same issues that other residents are, which is not ideal but reflects a bigger infrastructure problem of having power lines above ground.

David: Most of the town and the surrounding Princeton area lost power.

Jon: The nice thing is that we also only lose $\frac{1}{3}$ of our power due to the backup generators. So that's why some sockets work and some don't.

Resident: I think the most vital problem is that the heating system depends on power. It gets pretty cold, or at least it did for us. I don't know if that's a problem for others in NJ, but perhaps there's a compromise where we could have heating.

Jon: Three years ago when power went out for longer periods they did bring in backup generators. So for more serious situations, they can do that.

David: According to ACC, the reason that we lost power over the weekend was that the local PSE&G substation went offline due to high winds, which affected the entire Princeton area. The outage on Wednesday (March 14th) was due to high winds in the area and falling trees taking down power lines. The Internet outage on Wednesday (March 14th) was a broader issue with our ISP, Hotwire, which suffered outages throughout much of NJ. So this was not a Lakeside-specific issue, but pretty broad-based; that's why it took so long to restore Internet access at Lakeside.

Jon: Also, a lot of these decisions were made for cost reasons when Lakeside was first designed; so we'd need to take these concerns a few levels up with the University.

Resident: But perhaps we could ask for some redundant systems, like heat or Wi-Fi just in the common room. That would give residents somewhere to go and offer a backup plan.

Resident: On that note, could we arrange the power networks in order of importance so that the more important things will have power? It would be good to be organized about this.

Resident: So there's not a "puwireless" hotspot in the study room, right?

Jon: No, but the Ethernet in the study room wasn't working anyway because the Commons didn't have power.

Resident: Honestly, many of things I'm hearing seem a little unrealistic. We can't require the University to rewire all of Lakeside. But if there is a small request to be made, it would be good to have a "puwireless" hotspot in the commons.

David: Good idea. I don't have a good explanation for what parts of each building get backup power or not. We can raise this with ACC in terms of re-prioritizing which systems are attached to the backup generator.

[N.B. Mark: The backup generators only power *emergency services* at Lakeside (specifically, fire systems, elevators, emergency lighting, CACS/door access) and are not connected to individual units. This is why ACC regularly sends out e-mails in which residents are reminded to prepare for storms well in advance. PSE&G provides 3 phases of electricity to Lakeside. Fortunately, most of the power outages at Lakeside up to this point have not entailed the loss of all 3 phases of electricity, which is why most units have still maintained at least some power during previous storms. On a related note, a backup generator is currently being installed for 200 Lakeside Road and the Parking Garage so that both buildings will still have power for emergency services going forward. *But again, this backup generator will only be used for emergency services.*]

Resident: Did you take down my advice too? I think that would be an easier plan too.

Olivia: I've been taking notes, we'll bring some of these things up.

Resident: Is there a way to get Internet access via cellular networks in the Commons?

David: We can raise that as well.

[N.B. Mark: The installation of either a "puwireless" or a cellular-based Wi-Fi hotspot in the Commons would still run into the same issue in the event of a power outage at Lakeside. Given that only emergency services are connected to the backup generators, it would not be possible to supply power to just a Wi-Fi hotspot in the Commons during an outage.]

Jon: Lakeside was well maintained outside.

Resident: And I appreciated all the emails and the specific info from ACC.

2. Transportation Issues

David: Nancy is going to the next Transportation Advisory Board Meeting soon. Do any residents have issues or complaints?

Resident: The shuttle app seems to show inaccurate estimated arrival data along the Lawrence/Lakeside line.

David: We can bring that up.

Resident: Are the expected times based on the posted schedule or GPS?

Olivia: It's very helpful for transportation to get very specific feedback when problems arise (i.e., include specific times and bus line information).

Jon: In general, although the bus drivers are pretty cautious, they tend to drive pretty fast and in the middle of the lane on Lakeside Road. There have been multiple times where I've had to dodge out of the way of speeding buses. Most of the drivers seems okay, but a few seem to be more reckless.

Will: Regarding transportation, it would be helpful to get more timely information on when buses will stop running in the event of storms.

Olivia: That's a great idea, but it's also hard to know in advance or get an estimate. I can talk to transportation and parking.

3. Committee Updates

David: ACC will be seeding the meadow area around Lake Carnegie in the Spring. So there will be a period of time this Spring when folks can't go out to the meadow area. ACC will send out an e-mail requesting that residents refrain from setting foot on this area while the new grass is growing in. Hopefully, the renovation of the meadow area will be completed in time for everyone to go out there this Summer.

[N.B. Mark: The seeding/planting of the meadow area already took place in November 2017. However, ACC is asking that residents refrain from going out on to the meadow area when the weather warms up in order to allow for the seeding to successfully take hold. ACC will send out e-mail notifications to residents to refrain from foot traffic in the meadow area.]

4. Composting

Christine: Last year, Sarah Hammer and I started a composting initiative at Lakeside through the Office of Sustainability. We noticed that people were using the composting bins quite heavily; so we started a new Graduate Student Composting Initiative. We have perennial funding now and ACC will be purchasing the composting subscription with double the capacity for bins. We conducted a survey at Lakeside, which indicated that about 70 out of the 140 respondents

reported using the composting bins on a regular basis. We were also able to uncover some of the issues that prevent people from composting, such as not having the correct countertop bins in their apartments or not knowing how to do so. The new composting bins will arrive in time for Earth Day in April, and we plan to organize some educational events about composting here at Lakeside. We'll also be giving out some countertop bins to residents and doing educational sessions at the bus stop in the morning. In addition, we'd like to buy countertop bins and sell them at cost to residents; is that okay, Olivia?

Olivia: I can look into it.

Christine: We're also looking to be more aggressive with the placement of composting signs. The first step was to bring composting to Lakeside, which is going well. The second step is to get grad student residences integrated into the larger campus composting and recycling plan. So thanks again to the Committee and ACC for their help.

5. CSA and Potential Committee Sustainability Position

David: Do you have any details regarding the CSA and its operation for the upcoming year?

Christine: I think it's pretty straightforward given our experience from the past two years. We'll stick with the system of dropping boxes off in the Commons on Tuesday mornings like last year. We have a few posters from the farm that we'll be putting up around Lakeside. Also, we'd like to send an email announcement to grad students who will move to Lakeside from the Grad College this summer so they can participate in the CSA as well. Sarah will serve as the volunteer coordinator this year. However, there is still a question of how we will keep the CSA going in the future because right now it's basically tied to me. I was on the Committee when the CSA started, and we were initially concerned with the immediate issues of forming and establishing a new housing committee. We borrowed the bylaws from Lawrence and Butler, and I feel that we weren't very forward thinking when we did this because I think green issues should become an increasingly larger part of the Lakeside Committee going forward. Often times, people will point to the Garden Coordinator to handle green issues even though this position already carries a lot of responsibilities. So I've been wondering if this could be an opportunity to rethink the roles of the Committee in order to create

space for a Sustainability Representative who could serve as a point person for the CSA and for green issues more generally. Personally, I feel that this is a big issue that affects every resident at Lakeside. And I believe that constitutions and bylaws should evolve over time. These changes could be implemented by the Committee on its own or driven by residents.

Olivia: Alternatively, one method could be for Lakeside residents who are passionate about green issues to become EcoReps through the University and the Office of Sustainability.

Christine: As I see it, the problem is how to make green issues an ongoing concern. How do we find a person every year who has this interest and also has the authority to resolve these matters? I really think that this initiative should be handled by the Committee since it exists to serve the residents year to year. Also, any such changes would not necessarily have to affect the current Committee; I'd like to make changes to the institution so that it can best handle future needs.

Olivia: Another way to approach this would be to try and add another to the Lakeside Committee. The GSG just went through the process of adding a new member. Adding a member to the Lakeside Committee would go through the Graduate Housing Advisory Board.

Christine: I was thinking about whether or not it would be possible to redistribute the current Committee responsibilities in an equitable way so that one of the members could be freed up to handle green issues. So then we could have a conversation about whether we need to add a ninth Committee member or if we can combine some of the existing positions.

Kyle: As I interpret the bylaws, there are two ways to amend the Constitution: (1) The Committee can amend the Constitution by fiat, or (2) 20 residents can sign a petition, which would force a vote among Lakeside residents. If 15% of Lakeside residents participate in the vote and $\frac{2}{3}$ of all voters approve the amendment, then it passes.

Christine: Bottom line, should we rebalance the roles of the Committee or reform the positions in order to integrate sustainability? These changes should also be general and not tied to any one specific problem. As a resident, I would have liked to have seen more community building by the Committee. There haven't

been many community building events over the past year, and the events themselves have been scattered.

David: It's partly a budget issue. Large events in which free food and alcohol are provided tend to be very heavily attended by Lakeside residents. However, such events are expensive and use up a lot of our budgetary funding. Could we clarify if we're talking about the CSA specifically or sustainability more broadly?

Christine: To me, the CSA is about building community; it brings people together and helps local businesses. It's also not reliant on the University, and people pay for it themselves. I feel that composting also brings residents together; so this is another avenue for community building outside of the usual events.

Kyle: Can we talk about what a Sustainability Committee Member would do? My impression was that, thanks to your hard work, the new Graduate Student Composting Initiative would be focused on sustainability issues.

Christine: I'm concerned that the CSA will go away if there's no interest. So the Committee could have a person who gauges interest in the CSA and is accountable to residents on this front.

Jon: But isn't this how the CSA already works now? If there is sufficient interest among Lakeside residents, then the CSA proceeds as in previous years.

Christine: What will happen when I am gone next year and am not around to set up the CSA?

Jon: But there's already a community that has built up around the CSA over the past two years. So, just playing devil's advocate, won't the CSA continue to self-propagate if the community is strong enough?

Christine: I think this is a good time to reflect on the roles of the Committee and make sure that it's prepared for the future. So it may be the case that the CSA is run by a resident in the future, but if we don't appoint a permanent point person who is in charge of these issues, then they won't be addressed going forward. I wanted to share these concerns based on my own experience and my desire to help the community. It's up to the Committee now to talk about it among yourselves, and depending on your response, I can also organize some residents and push for change.

Olivia: I don't think anyone is doubting your intentions; we know that you want what's best for this community. If you could think about and clearly articulate the

top sustainability issues that you'd like addressed, that could be the best way to move forward.

Kyle: If the continued operation of the CSA is the only concern, then I don't think we'll make much progress because the Committee has not expressed a desire to assume complete responsibility for it.

Christine: But that's why the CSA should be institutionalized; so it can continue. Going back to Olivia's point, I think we can have a larger conversation about the wide variety of sustainability issues that the Committee could address.

Kyle: I wouldn't expect an internal conversation among the Committee to turn out much differently than it has in the past.

Christine: To go back to the timeline I presented, these changes could take effect in the fall. But committees are institutions that will go on, and we should fashion them so that they best serve the residents. I'm asking you to focus on the institutional aspect going forward.

David: Personally, I'm uncomfortable institutionalizing the CSA as a Committee responsibility given that it involves private financial transactions between residents and a business entity outside of the University. At this point, other than the CSA, it isn't clear to me that there are green issues which haven't been adequately considered by the Committee and require substantive changes to how the Committee operates.

Christine: Maybe this was missed in my passion for the CSA, but I'm not saying that the Committee should have to keep it going. But if there is interest in the CSA, someone on the Committee can be the point person to inform residents about it.

Jon: Maybe we can think about the different ways to frame this and the different things we want. The Committee already does things that enable community, including sustainability. So perhaps we could make a list of the new roles and responsibilities that the Committee would adopt?

Christine: It's about having a streamlined approach to sustainability initiatives that can build community. Isn't it time to institute in the bylaws a focus on sustainability?

Jon: Right now, the issue is having a clear path forward. A draft of how to reshape the Committee in a clear, concrete way would be helpful.

Olivia: In order for these changes to have legs, they need to be clear. The Committee is interested, but we need it to be spelled out clearly.

David: Once a proposal has been drafted, we can decide on whether another position is needed or if the responsibilities can be divvied up among the current members of the Committee. We're certainly open to changing the roles of the Committee if necessary.

Christine: Once again, thank you to the Committee for sending out emails and your help.