

**Cheshire County Delegation
Maplewood Sub-Committee, June 15, 2016
County Conversations
Westmoreland, NH, Public Hearing
Westmoreland School**

Present: Rep. Dan Eaton, Delegation Chairman; Rep. John Mann, Sub-Committee Chairperson; State Representatives Tim Robertson, Gladys Johnsen, Richard Ames, Paul Berch, Lucy Weber, Michael Abbott, John Bordenet, Marjorie Shepardson, and Jim McConnell;

Commissioners and Staff: County Commissioner Charles Weed, County Administrator Chris Coates, Finance Director Sheryl Trombly, and Maplewood Administrator Kathryn Kindopp.

Doors opened at 6:00PM and the Westmoreland Public Hearing began at 6:30PM. The public hearing was well-attended by Westmoreland residents.

Rep. Dan Eaton made welcoming remarks, explained the process of studying the Maplewood Nursing Home project and its progress to date. He introduced Representative John Mann, who is the Chairperson for the Maplewood Subcommittee of the Cheshire Co. Delegation.

Rep. Mann explained that the sub-committee had recognized the work of the previous Task Force and their recommendation but had taken the study further by actually visiting various facilities that were of the Green House model or a combination of Green House methods and more traditional methods. These sites were in Cohoes, NY, the Boston, MA area, and in Carroll and Merrimack Counties of NH.

He pointed out the diagrams or schematic visuals that were mounted on easels at the front of the room to give those in attendance the opportunity to view the floor plans and the footprints of the various options resulting from the EGA firm's study and subcommittee work to date.

In addition, handouts describing the EGA study, the options, the operational and construction costs and the property tax impact of each, based on \$160,000.00 home valuation. (These are available online at the Cheshire County website.)

The possible use of New Market Tax Credits to offset costs was explained and discussed. It was said that there has been no certain site in Keene or elsewhere designated as the location of a newly built facility.

Open discussion, questions and answers with the people in attendance evidenced that Westmoreland residents are most concerned about the loss of the nursing home if it is moved to Keene. Their questions focused on what might be done with the existing facility if Maplewood was moved away from their town. They expressed concern about the mention of a drug rehabilitation facility and the costs it would bring to them and expressed discomfort with the idea of having such a facility in town.

They are concerned about the loss of jobs if there is a removal of the nursing facility. Questions were asked about the cost of moving to Keene as it relates to water and sewage treatment, possibility of adding air conditioning to existing building due to space above ceiling. A number of people asked about

the effect on those who now staff Maplewood. They questioned as to how many would be employed in a new facility and how would they be trained if a more “universal” model of care was used. Another stated that in her research she had read that Green House nursing facilities experienced increased risk of falls, making it unsafe for less ambulatory patients. She also expressed concern for security problems increased by a move to Keene where there is greater incidence of crime.

A Surry Selectman stated that among New England nursing homes, Maplewood in Cheshire County has a reputation of being incomparable in spite of its age and location.

Westmoreland resident, Jack Zeller, expressed his support for adding a wing to the existing Maplewood Nursing Home. He added that a new building would experience similar deterioration if maintenance were deferred and not attended to as he felt had happened. Rep. Eaton answered that he disagreed with the feeling that deferred maintenance was the cause of Maplewood’s facilities problems.

Westmoreland Selectman, Russ Kotfilla, then addressed the work that is done in remodeling and repurposing areas in the Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, while the work with patients goes forward without interruption. He uses this example to illustrate that the same could be done at Maplewood.

Earl Anderson, Surry resident, recalled the statements made in meetings of the subcommittee by guests Yvonne Goldsberry and Jonathan McCosh. Goldsberry is a NH Dept. of Human Services employee who had previously worked at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Keene. McCosh was a DHHS inspector of nursing facilities. Neither of them recommended building a Green House facility at this time in Keene. There is the matter of the GH model being very new, not widely proven, and expensive. McCosh stated that the current economy does not favor such a project for Cheshire County taxpayers.

The question of the regulation that would mandate separate campuses for nursing homes and assisted living facilities was discussed. Both Rep. Eaton and Rep. Berch explained that Cheshire County isn’t alone in this concern. There are many in this country facing the same problem with that regulation change; however, both Eaton and Berch believe Cheshire County would receive a waiver for Maplewood in Westmoreland. If the facility is moved to Keene, the assisted living facility will be closed.

A number of current employees spoke, testifying to the positives of their workplace, the attitudes of residents, workers and the administration. They repeated the sense of “family” that exists there and how much they enjoy the atmosphere at Maplewood, both in the facility and in its pastoral location.

The Westmoreland residents and employees expressed support and satisfaction with Maplewood, its function and its history in their town. They demonstrated this in their comments and questions.

The Public Hearing was adjourned at 8:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane B. Johnson