

**Maplewood Nursing Home Delegation
Sub-Committee Meeting
County Conversations
June 22, 2016
Cheshire County Courthouse
12 Court Street
Keene, New Hampshire**

Present: Representatives Michael Abbott, Richard Ames, John Bordenet, Paul Berch, Cynthia Chase, Daniel Eaton, Susan Emerson, Gladys Johnsen, William Pearson, Larry Phillips, John Mann, Jim McConnell, Marjorie Shepardson, Ben Tilton, and Lucy McVitty Webber.

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

Representative John Mann, Chairperson of the Maplewood Nursing Home Subcommittee welcomed those in attendance. He introduced the problems related to the Maplewood Nursing Home, the fact that standards of nursing care are in flux with added treatments for Alzheimer's and dementia being more prevalent and the existing need of extensive repair to infrastructure.

He related the current trends toward increased home and assisted living, thus sparing more expensive nursing care. This is leading to the demands for County nursing care being those of poorer economic means or more severe physical needs. He continued to outline the activities of the Subcommittee; visits to nursing homes in Cohoes, NY, Chelsea, MA, Merrimac and Carrol Counties in NH and the discussion among the members at their meetings as well as sharing of individual research.

In addition there was a study done by a professional, experienced firm, EGA, and from that have resulted six options to consider. Rep. Mann listed the options and directed attention to the drawings on the easels at the front of the room. The specifics were outlined. He added that there was the ongoing maintenance of the existing building to consider as well as what to do with the buildings if a decision is made to build in another location. He noted that the subcommittee is interested in comments as to why, where how, any and all comments being welcome and encouraged.

Representative Dan Eaton, chairperson of the County Delegation, took comments and questions from the audience. In answer to a question about Cheshire County's Assisted Living facility in Westmoreland he explained that there is a new regulation approaching that requires assisted living and nursing facilities to be on separate campuses. He explained that Cheshire County has applied for a waiver to that regulation since the county facilities are on the same campus. He added that the waiver will probably be granted, adding that even so, it would be accompanied by unknown time covered, i.e. 5 yrs., 10 yrs., then reapplication process.

Questions ranged in concern for the different approaches to nursing care in a Green House facility to concern for costs related to rehabilitation, renovation, site work at a new location, water and sewage costs to upgrade and rates of same in Keene, tax rate on a new facility.

A 30 year employee of MWNH stated that the current nursing home caregivers know their patients well and relate as well to them as caretakers would in a Green House style of care. She expressed her thoughts as to a Registered Nurse being charged with laundry, cleaning and cooking tasks, saying that she 'hadn't trained and paid for RN designation' to do that work, indicating that she would continue to pursue a job as a conventional registered nurse. It was said that some of the staff at Maplewood comes from Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Vermont, illustrating that relocation to Keene would not necessarily be more central for them. It was added that since 2008, only three residents have left to be nearer family.

Among other suggestions were added rooms for respite care, giving home caretakers time away from their patient, which would be a source of income to the county.

Some expressed their hope that the County's decision would not be made on numbers alone and that the wonderful quality of care referenced in Westmoreland would be available in any location. Others were definite about their desire to keep the location in Westmoreland, referring to its being peaceful, quiet with beautiful views.

A Keene resident asked about the bridge that poses a safety threat and was answered by Rep. Eaton who held that in his extensive experience with State of NH infrastructure legislation and Department of Transportation, he has never seen that bridge on a list of safety dangers. Kathryn Kindopp, Administrator at Maplewood, related experience of Hurricane Katrina when only the weight limited bridge was accessible, and said that it would have been used for an emergency, the weight limit prohibiting vehicles like 18 wheeler trucks. In ordinary climatic conditions the road and hill are well-cleared for emergency.

Several members of the audience testified as to their experience with superlative care and treatment given to relatives and families who have been at Maplewood.

Those who favor building new are concerned with the bathroom deficiencies at the current location, and even more often, with the nearness to the hospital or for visiting purposes.

As to the air conditioning, plumbing and electrical needs, a local person who has had extensive experience with construction and inspection spoke as to having toured the building at Westmoreland in May, 2015. He said that air conditioning could be added by using the space above the existing ceilings, and upgrades in plumbing and electrical are possible, adding that the building was not poorly designed or built, adhering to the regulations of the time in 1975-76.

He mentioned the extensive site work that the location on Rt. 101 would require, saying that the land topography is an elevation contour of 260 ft. +/- would possibly exceed the \$3,000,000 predicted savings from New Market Tax Credits. He suggested focusing on remaining on County-owned land in Westmoreland ("a blessing"), repairing and renovating, avoiding the "mothballing expense". He added that the new wing is a common sense approach to using taxpayers' dollars to the best advantage.

Ellen Corindia, a youthful person suffering the disabling of ALS, spoke about a friend of hers who also has ALS and is living in a Massachusetts Green House facility. She related her

experience of visiting there and the benefits of that type of facility. Another audience member from Alstead talked about his brother who is confined to a wheelchair and was declined admittance to other nursing facilities. He praised the treatment at MWNH and notes that any new design should take into consideration the care of the future 20-30 year olds who may suffer physical or mental debilitating disease and conditions. He referred also to the Patient Profile of 2013 and its information that most of the patients are not able to access bathing and feeding tasks alone.

Some stressed the need for more private pay patient availability, the county's need to be aggressive in pursuing clients to purchase or lease the existing facility, ADA compliance, private and semi-private rooms and bathroom facilities, transportation facilitated to and from Westmoreland facility, and the importance of the land in Westmoreland being preserved.

Representative Eaton explained that there has been no decision made to someone who expressed disdain for the process.

After the subcommittee, the executive committee and the commissioners make their recommendations, the county delegation (all of the county's State Representatives) will vote. A two-thirds (2/3) majority will be required to bond the option chosen. That there is a decision now is totally a misconception.

Linda Stavely, a member of the past Task Force, testified in favor of the Green House facility.

Earl Anderson, Surry resident who has attended meetings of the subcommittee, the commissioners and the public hearings asked that future meetings of these bodies as they move toward a decision be posted publicly for County residents' information. He was assured they would be. He also stated that his preference would be to keep the facility in Westmoreland, favoring that environment.

Ernest Perham spoke to the need for the decision to be reasonable for the public in consideration of tax increases.

Representative McConnell reminded that there would be an increase of those the county facility would serve in the future, those who are the neediest, economically and medically.

Representative Robertson summarized his thoughts by adding at the close of the meeting that the County's nursing home answers to service, not to profit.

This meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

The next public hearing is scheduled for June 27, 2016, in Jaffrey, NH, at the Jaffrey Town Hall, at 6:30 p.m., doors opening at 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane B. Johnson

