

**Cheshire County Delegation  
MWNH Subcommittee, June 19, 2015  
Cheshire County Courthouse  
12 Court Street  
Keene, New Hampshire**

*Present were: Subcommittee members Representatives Richard Ames, Paul Berch, John Bordenet, Cynthia Chase, Daniel Eaton, Gladys Johnsen, John Mann, Jim McConnell, Timothy Robertson; and Representatives Marjorie Shepardson and Michael Abbott; Cheshire County Commissioners Stillman Rogers, Charles Weed, Maplewood Nursing Home Administrator Kathryn Kindopp and Cheshire County Finance Manager Cheryl Trombly. Assistant County Administrator Rod Bouchard was absent.*

At 10 a.m., Chairman, Rep. John Mann opened the meeting with presentation of the agenda.

Representative Paul Berch gave an overview of his visit to Cohoes, NY, and the Eddy Green House Villages. He had seen the Green House Living Center there, the Marjorie Doyle Center, and the Hawthorne Rockwell Center in Troy, NY, and was, in his words, “struck by how different the needs serviced there were from the Cheshire County needs.”

First, admissions there are within strict parameters. Medically, and otherwise, the applicant must be approved with much discretion financially: no Medicare or Medicaid A and must be financially sound.

The Green House is a subsidiary of St. Peters Health Center which operates under a very large financial system, in excess of \$1Billion. The Green House budget is \$1.2 million/year and the conversion runs at a deficit with subsidization. 40% is Private Pay and is open to increase. The daily rates are \$450/day or \$164,000/yr. in comparison to Merrimac County’s in NH rate of \$275/day which is approximately \$100,000/yr. A \$4million grant from the state of NY allowed for the very expensive training for the transition to Green House. This is the only Green House facility in the USA offering their type of care.

When Rep. Berch had asked about applicants’ needs that must “fit in”, he was told they have one (1) bariatric patient/resident and that they don’t have significant behavioral issues because their screening process is stringent. They have had no need to call police in the past several years.

While the laundry costs are less than in a comparable institutional facility’ there is no resident interaction with laundry. Likewise, the residents are not involved in food preparation with one exception and that is a resident who has a food prep hobby, and he is allowed to practice.

Most of the residents in the Alzheimer unit were not significantly challenged. It was largely an assistant living community, mobile, self-toileting and bathing.

Rep. Robertson questioned why Rep. Berch would visit this facility for a comparison and was answered that this was the facility selected for visits by Green House supporters and that it is the only Green House serving memory challenged cases.

Rep. Ames commented that 60% are designated as impoverished—Medicaid and that Medicare is not relevant to long term skilled nursing. He also asked about staff on duty time. To this question Rep. Berch answered that he had not learned, but would research that online and get back with an answer.

Rep. Ames also asked about action taken if one becomes difficult,

The answer from Rep. Berch was that the situation doesn't arise to a problematic stage due to control exercised by very careful admission screening.

Rep. Ames commented that Nursing Homes are more expensive than Assisted Living facilities.

Rep. Mann commented as a subcommittee member, not as Chairman, that it would seem Green House facilities were designed for patients who don't require intense care and that the emphasis is on comfort and enjoyment. He gave an example of having been told at Eddy's Green House in Cohoes, NY, that the focus was not on dietary restriction but on enjoyment of foods. He continued to share his thinking that a certain building style is not necessary to a facility being patient centered.

Rep. Berch agreed, saying that the quality of the staff is the most important feature, not building style. All agree that at Maplewood Nursing Home our county's staff is exemplary of excellence.

Rep. Ames agrees that there is no physical model that cannot be 'worked around', but referring to the letter written by Gina Cutler, MWNH Physical Therapist, he continued that physical environment does matter.

Rep. John Bordenet expressed concern about a statement heard in past meeting about the number of falls in Green House facilities, to which Rep. Robertson expressed his thought that this was due to the increased freedom of mobility in comparison to that in an institutional style facility. Others discussed that no studies have been shown to the Subcommittee to prove or disprove this theory.

Rep. Dan Eaton moved that Rep. Berch's motion be removed from the Table and Rep. Ames seconded the motion.

Rep. Berch explained the intent of the motion. The motion asks for a set of numbers:

- A. Ask delegation to engage an independent analysis (no conflict of interests) of the cost of development and operation of a nursing home in Cheshire County,

- 1) Green House in Westmoreland, Green House on Rt. 101 or other New Market Tax appropriate land in the County (noting that Hinsdale could possibly be more appropriate in regard to building up an economy in an area);
- 2) Green House STYLE on any land (Westmoreland, Keene, other New Market Tax Credit);
- 3) Traditional on any land (Westmoreland, Keene, other New Market Tax Credit);
- 4) Hybrid, a blend of Green House style and Traditional, on any of the above mentioned locations. The premise of this analysis is a nursing home of 150 beds, with a resident population as reflected at page 162 of the Maplewood Compendium, 1/1/2013.

B. That the company/individual engaged in this analysis should have no conflict of interest, nor any financial or other interest in any of the proposed designs or locations.

C. That the same or other person/company conduct a similar analysis of the cost of rehab of the Maplewood Nursing Home up to the “tipping point”, together with a similar analysis of operating costs.

D. Engage in a due diligence search for and analysis of alternative and/or additional funding sources for the construction and /or operation of either a new nursing home in any of the above described locations and for the possible rehabilitation of the current Maplewood structure. These funding sources would be in addition to NMTC and taxpayers and could include foundations, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and other grant sources. This may be conducted by the County Commissioners’ Office or may be contracted to a person or business that has no conflict of interests as described above.

E) That the commissioners be funded by the Cheshire County Delegation in a manner that will accomplish the above purposes.

F) That the Commissioners report back to the Cheshire County Maplewood Subcommittee from time to time and at the completion of the report which shall be no later than \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_2015.

(See Berch Motion)

Rep. Bordenet raised the question of the the definition of “tipping point” in paragraph 3C while Rep. Robertson suggested paragraph 3C be removed due to the question of “Westmoreland or not”.

Rep. Eaton pointed out that to strike the paragraph would draw severe criticism from the public. Rep. McConnell agreed, saying the public and the committee needs to know what the costs are to rehabilitate.

Rep. Chase raised the question as to the worthiness of the expense of having cost analyses performed.

Representative Berch replied that the possibility of spending \$20-\$30 Thousand to get honest numbers is small compared to spending \$40 Million, and that if adding a wing, some of the rehab must be done, thus making a cost analysis valuable.

Rep. Ames pointed out what he considered ambiguity in Rep. Berch's motion: Paragraph A, items 1 through 4 which define the types of buildings and locations to be evaluated.

Rep. Berch answered that investigation of other alternatives are necessary to start getting a handle on costs, and up to now, we primarily considered costs of Green House facility. He added that when Rep. Ames' motion was not accepted, this option was a reaction to a report of Compendium figures possibly being inaccurate.

Rep. Mann added that there is need to know figures for the Green House-like facilities in Merrimac and Carroll Counties.

Rep. Johnsen moved to Table the Berch motion, Rep. McConnell seconded the motion to Table.

Vote: Unanimous.

Rep. Bordenet moved to remove Rep. Ames' motion from the Table, seconded by Rep. Chase.

Rep. Ames moves that the Cheshire County Delegation Maplewood Subcommittee adopt and act on each of the Subcommittee's findings as set forth in this motion.

(see attachment: Ames Motion)

This motion proceeds to cite the mission of Maplewood Nursing Home, commending the staff and administration "in spite of severe limitations and challenges presented by funding restrictions and decaying infrastructure and outmoded design features of the current physical facility in Westmoreland."

It suggests that the current structure being unsuitable for long-term use and recommends it should either be replaced by a new facility or substantially altered at the earliest possible date.

The Ames Motion also mentions the mission of the Subcommittee and states that it expects to hold a series of public hearing after further development of information related to alternative options.

This motion calls for the County to seek to maximize alternative funding sources from state, federal or private sources and alternative modes of operation that will serve to reduce the burden on property taxpayers in the County while protecting and reinforcing the Nursing Home's Core Mission.

The motion also suggests employment of MEDC to explore development of a facility in Keene, taking advantage of NMTC program.

The Ames Motion also speaks to the possibility of potential development in Westmoreland, new, renovated or redesigned, and that the existing facility in Westmoreland, housing Assisted Living and Nursing Home is a valuable County asset and any plan for the long-term future of the County's continuation of nursing home services must include a plan for the future use or disposition of this County asset.

Rep. Chase questions whether the cost of disposal of the existing nursing home structure is germane to the subcommittee's charge. Others assure her that it is part of the overall cost and must be considered.

Rep. Ames' and Rep. Berch's motions are very similar in intent. Rep. Ames has critiqued the Berch Motion as being ambiguous, while Rep. Berch said that while the Ames Motion holds to obtain information, it simultaneously pushes for specific options.

Representative Eaton moved to Table the Ames motion and Rep. McConnell seconded the motion. The Subcommittee voted unanimously.

Rep. Eaton made a motion that Rep. Ames and Rep. Berch work together to consolidate their motions' intents into one motion. Vote: Unanimous.

Representatives McConnell and Robertson then read motions they had drawn and distributed them among the subcommittee members.

Rep. McConnell presented his motion and its intent. This motion specified that any designs considered should be contained under on contiguous roof and have a central kitchen and laundry, not precluding smaller kitchens in various areas of the building. The question of designs including showers, lifts and other patient considerations in each room should be determined by the Maplewood staff. Another requirement specified was that at earliest opportunity and in advance of the completion of the architectural/engineering firm's report, the County Commissioners shall schedule a series of public meetings to explain progress to interested residents. Attached to that motion is a blank worksheet suggesting specific areas of costs.

Rep. Ames moved to Table the McConnell motion after discussion proved it to be quite similar to others with less detail. Rep. Eaton seconded the motion. Voted Unanimously.

Rep. Robertson presented a motion. This motion limited structure to single bed rooms, no more than two occupants to the use of one toilet, a Keene location, and the facility be constructed in sub-units to serve 10-12 occupants.

After some discussion, Rep. Berch moved to Table the Robertson motion and Rep. Eaton seconded the motion, which passed on a vote of 7-2.

After some discussion of the demands of the schedule of the House of Representatives regarding the delay in deciding the State Budget, time planned for vacation, and other items effecting the work of this subcommittee, it was decided that each member should make their own list of priorities as to definition of the various types of structures they have studied and return for a meeting on Friday, June 26, 2015.

Rep. McConnell moved to adjourn, Rep. Bordenet seconded. Unanimous vote.