

Bedford Depot Park Advisory Committee

FY 2005 Annual Report

In July 2004, the Selectmen established the Depot Park Advisory Committee with the following charge.

1. Provide oversight on the completion of the Depot Park project;
2. Seek funding (such as from grants) for the project's completion and other enhancements;
3. Oversee the Depot Park Revolving Fund and assist with developing financial reports for the Selectmen that show current and forecasted revenue and expenses;
4. Recommend policies for use of the Revolving Fund;
5. Recommend policies for the rent and other uses of Depot Park's buildings and properties;
6. Provide coordination with Friends of Bedford Depot Park.

The Selectmen appointed to the committee Joseph Piantedosi and James Shea as citizen members, and four ex-officio members: Facilities Director Richard Jones, Town Administrator Richard Reed, DPW Director Richard Warrington, and Selectman Angelo Colao. At the committee's first meeting on August 18, it elected Joseph Piantedosi as chairman and James Shea as clerk. Ten meetings were convened over the past year.

The Facilities Director presented monthly financial statements of Depot Park's income and expenses, including an updated Revolving Fund balance. As of June 30, the fund had a balance of \$64,269.09. Income exceeded expenses by \$7,019.29.

The committee has concentrated on the remaining Depot Park phases. The Freight House renovation project has been a primary focus. Despite some stops and starts, the architectural plans were completed by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin and forwarded to the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) for a final review. DPW Director Warrington believes the project will be advertised for bid sometime this fall. The project's estimated cost is \$325,000, and will be funded by the federal and state governments through the Transportation Enhancement Program.

Interior improvements to the Freight House are not within the scope of the MHD project. It will be necessary to perform inside work on the building before it may be utilized again. The committee has discussed possible ways to accomplish interior renovations using Town forces. The Revolving Fund is seen as a possible funding source.

Restoration of the railroad car ought to be completed within a year. A purchase order was executed by the DPW to purchase new window units and refurbished seats. The next step is to hire a contractor to perform environmental remediation services. Then, interior painting, lighting, flooring, and HVAC and electrical systems are to follow. This \$125,000 project is funded through the Community Preservation Act (CPA).

The intersection improvement project at Railroad Avenue/South Road/Loomis Street is now underway. The DPW estimates that it will be substantially completed by November.

At this time, the committee is uncertain how the Railroad Station might be renovated or restored. As this is outside the scope of the present Depot Park Transportation Enhancement Project, we will need to consider other financial sources. Members of the Community Preservation Committee have expressed possible interest in funding building work through the CPA.

In May, Babe Ruth Baseball contacted the committee to discuss rental of the Depot's garage. The committee recommended to the Selectmen a three-year lease that would commence on August 1. Upon execution of this lease, the Depot will be fully rented to tenants. Monthly rents are collected by the Facilities Department and deposited into the Revolving Fund.

In January, the Friends of Bedford Depot Park conveyed \$5,188.04 to the Revolving Fund. This represents the proceeds of food sales made by volunteers at the Freight House between January 1 and December 31, 2004.

The committee has followed with interest the Planning Board's discussions about a possible mixed-use rezoning of the Depot Park area.

In the upcoming year, the committee will continue to provide general oversight of Depot Park, advance completion of its remaining phases, and help ensure that the facility will be a lasting and valued asset for Bedford.

Respectfully submitted by,

Jim Shea, Clerk
October 7, 2005