

# BEDFORD DEPOT PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting of December 28, 2004

## MINUTES

**Committee members in attendance:** Joseph Piantedosi (JP); Jim Shea (JS)

*No ex-officio members were in attendance.*

Others in attendance: Donald Corey (DC), member, Community Preservation Committee

Chairman JP called the meeting to order at 7:42 P.M. at Bedford Freight House, 120 South Road. He said the purpose of this meeting is to discuss with Donald Corey, a member of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), a possible project to rehabilitate the exterior of the Railroad Station.

DC explained that the CPC has interest in the Depot as a possible historic preservation project. A minimum of 10% of the CPC's budget must be used for historic preservation projects, and the overall budget for FY 2006 is about \$1.7 million, he explained. Half of the Community Preservation funding comes from the state.

DC said he thinks the best strategy is to request a matching grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). This approach was followed a few years ago when exterior restoration of the Old Town Hall was performed. If the Depot's total project cost was \$200k, for instance, the MHC would provide \$100k, the state (through the Community Preservation Act) would contribute \$50k, and the Town would fund the remaining \$50k. Of the Town's \$50k contribution, about half would come from the residential tax base and the other half from the commercial/industrial tax base.

JP asked whether any conditions are attached to accepting money from the MHC. DC said there would be a deed restriction. JS pointed out that such a restriction is effectively already in place. He said the Town agreed not to sell the Depot when it accepted money from the federal government (the Transportation Enhancement Program) to buy the property in 1999.

DC stated that the MHC requires project plans as part of the matching grant application. JP recalled that several years ago, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB) prepared 25% design plans for exterior restoration of the Depot. JS circulated copies of VHB's 25% design schematics. JP suggested using Menders, Torrey, & Spencer, the architectural firm that worked on the Old Town Hall project, to update these plans and to provide a cost estimate.

The CPC requests a copy of any existing Depot plans/cost estimates that were prepared as part of the Depot Park project, DC said. JP asked JS to contact DPW Director Richard Warrington in the morning and ask that he make a copy of VHB's plans for the CPC. If these plans are not at the DPW, JS suggested that VHB might make the committee a new copy from its master file.

JS asked when the CPC wishes to pursue the Depot preservation project. DC said the committee currently has a "placeholder" for this project in its budget. He will check to see whether

it is for FY 2006 or FY 2007. It's possible that the project could be introduced at the 2005 Annual Town Meeting, DC said. The committee discussed the steps that would need to be followed to have the project ready for presentation in March.

DC said he would speak with his contacts at the MHC about the Depot project and the matching funds application. He said that normally, the application is made in the spring, and the Commission announces its funding decision in June.

JP said he expects the Depot restoration project would be implemented under the auspices of the Bedford Facilities Department. He plans to discuss this with Facilities Director Richard Jones at the next meeting. Also, he'll ask Angelo Colao to discuss the project with the Selectmen.

JS commented that beyond the aesthetic value of restoring the Railroad Station's exterior, it is in need of basic maintenance and rehabilitation. He said that when the Town initiated the Depot Park Transportation Enhancement Project in 1996, the Depot's roof was identified as needing replacement. Also, a central air cooling system was to be installed to replace the window air conditioners. Other repair needs have come up over the years, too.

DC asked whether any thought has been given to *interior* restoration of the Railroad Station. JS distributed a 1916 floor plan schematic of the Depot that shows its original room configuration: separate men's and women's waiting rooms, station agent's office, baggage room, Railway Express agency, et cetera. He said the Depot was originally one floor with cathedral-type ceilings. Sometime after James Stander purchased the Depot from the Boston & Maine Railroad circa 1960, he recalled, the current second floor was added. JP said that an interior restoration project would involve removal of the second floor, and this may adversely impact the rental value of the building.

Should Bedford have the will and means to restore the inside of the building sometime in the future, JS commented, the opportunity will be there. For instance, years from now the Town might want to use the Depot for additional municipal offices. Restoring and preserving the building's exterior now is a good first step, he thinks, regardless of how future plans may develop for inside usage. He also pointed out that Bedford Depot is only one of two stations (out of an original 13) on the Lexington Branch that have survived to present day. So, it is an important historical asset.

A separate conversation followed about the long-term plans for the Depot. JP said that from the start of the Depot Park project, the Selectmen's intent has been to rent the building to provide a revenue stream. This income would support maintenance and future enhancements to the property.

DC explained that in a few years, the Historical Society expects to have the financial means to rent space somewhere in town for a satellite museum. The Old Town Hall and Railroad Station have been identified by the Society's directors as potential sites.

Next, JS reviewed how the Depot Park Advisory Committee will be drafting an RFP to invite proposals by prospective Depot tenants. JP said that like the Old Town Hall RFP, it's possible to write the Depot RFP to favor rental of one of the units by a local nonprofit organization. This subject is to be discussed at a future meeting.

DC conveyed that the CPC wishes to see the rail car restoration project get underway. JP said that Rich Warrington held a kickoff meeting for the project, and that the Advisory Committee would focus on the rail car at its next meeting so that more progress is achieved.

At 10:05 P.M., JS made a motion to adjourn the meeting. JP seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by

Jim Shea, Clerk

These minutes were approved by unanimous vote of the committee at its meeting of February 23, 2004.