

Bedford Depot Park Advisory Committee

Meeting of February 23, 2005

MINUTES

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

Ex-officio committee members in attendance: Richard Jones (RJ), Facilities Director; Angelo Colao (AC), Selectman liaison to Depot Park; Rick Reed (RR), Town Administrator; Richard Warrington (RW), DPW Director

Chairman JP called the meeting to order at 3:39 P.M. at Bedford Freight House, 120 South Road. He distributed an agenda. He proposed that the next two meetings be held on March 16 and April 20. The committee members agreed to meeting on these dates.

JP asked RW for a report on the Freight House exterior restoration project. RW said that he has met with a Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) District 4 official to seek authorization to use Chapter 90 funds to pay Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB) for their design services. VHB is ready to resume work on the 75% plans once they are paid approximately \$55,000.

JP requested that we have a meeting with Luisa Paiewonsky, MHD Deputy Commissioner, to sort through the project's problems. AC suggested that a chronology of events be prepared for Ms. Paiewonsky so that she is aware of events that occurred before she assumed her current job. RW said he is optimistic that the necessary approval will be forthcoming. He suggested that we hold off on taking any action while he continues his dialogue with Ms. Paiewonsky.

RW said that a MHD environmental representative visited the Freight House last week. The representative made photographs of the building. The inspection was prompted by the Historic Register status of the property that was obtained by the Bedford Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Once a property is on the Historic Register, RW explained, the state is obliged to survey it before a state construction project impacts the site. RW said he asked HPC chairman Donald Corey to write a letter of support for the restoration project.

RW commented that in view of the delays, the construction cost for the Freight House exterior restoration and restrooms addition might reach \$350,000. (The state has \$250,000 allotted to the project in the FY 2005 Transportation Improvement Plan.)

JS expressed that the delays suffered by the Depot Park project have been extreme and unnecessary. He referenced two Transportation Enhancement projects that were successfully completed in the neighboring towns of Lexington and Billerica. Both of these projects were initiated after Bedford's Transportation Enhancement project began in 1996, and both were completed before construction of Depot Park started in 2002. Lexington built a park adjacent to Lexington Railroad Station and Billerica restored the historic North Billerica Depot building, he said.

JP asked RW to keep him updated by e-mail about developments with the Freight House project and any communications with MHD.

RW reported that he has an agreement with Dan O'Brien to provide consulting services for the rail car renovation project. He received a cost estimate from an environmental company to prepare a report on #6211, he said. JP suggested getting additional quotes. He recommended checking with Covino Environmental Associates.

The intersection improvement project has been designed, RW said. It is to be advertised for bid in about one month. The construction cost estimate is \$710,000. About 15% of the cost is to pay for required police details. The project is funded by state Chapter 90. New sidewalks will be built and the intersection will be tightened. The traffic signals will be black so that they complement the Depot Park lighting fixtures. There is a "change order" option in the bid package for ornate, historic-looking signal masts. JS asked whether the intersection improvements will include additional street lighting. RW said no—the signal heads themselves provide some illumination—but he added that it's possible to put a "cobra head" on a utility pole if additional lighting is later deemed necessary.

The committee discussed long term plans for renting and renovating the Depot. JS provided a brief recap of the committee's meeting with Community Preservation Committee member Donald Corey on December 28. RR said that he has not done anything relative to a Depot RFP. He referenced the RFP that is being used to solicit tenants for the Old Town Hall. The completion of the intersection project is linked to renting the Depot to higher-paying tenants, JP explained. He said the rental value will increase once the intersection and Depot Park projects are finished. The area will become more desirable. RJ commented that the market for commercial property continues to be weak.

RJ presented an updated Depot Park Revolving Fund financial statement. Income should exceed expenses for FY 2005, he said. He noted that in January, the Friends of Bedford Depot Park transmitted \$5,188.04 in proceeds from 2004 food sales. The Revolving Fund has a current balance of \$69,437.15. The committee discussed whether the Fund was in danger of reaching its maximum limit as set by an article at the 2004 Annual Town Meeting. RR will check on this point.

JS noted that the cost to operate the exterior Depot Park lighting appears in the Freight House electric bill. He asked whether the outside lighting could be metered separately to provide a clearer picture of the common area costs. RW said he will check into getting an "S2" rating from N-STAR Electric for the exterior lights to reduce Depot Park's operating costs.

RJ reported on Depot maintenance items. He said that the building's hot water heater failed and will be replaced. Come spring, the Facilities Department plans to make repairs to the bulkhead door, signal mast and hand rail. RJ said he needs to remind tenant Don Varney about removing hazardous materials from the Depot. JP asked whether the Town or the tenant pays for hot water. RJ offered to check.

RW said that DPW staff has communicated with David Cerundolo about completion of landscaping work on his property. He will speak with him in the spring to coordinate this work.

RW observed that one of the picnic tables on the eastern side of the Railroad Station is sitting on the bare ground. The next time sidewalks are being constructed in Bedford, he will see about having the contractor build a concrete pad for it. In the spring, RW plans to prune the overgrowth and make the picnic area more visible and inviting to the public.

JS noted that at lunchtime during good weather, Depot Park and the picnic area are used by employees from nearby companies. He has found empty pizza cartons and other trash left behind on the tables. He asked whether a barrel could be placed at the picnic area to encourage proper trash disposal. JP and RW related their experiences with people filling public trash receptacles with household waste. RW said it is sometimes difficult for the DPW to keep pace with overflowing barrels—one crew spends a full day each week collecting trash from Town receptacles.

JP asked AC whether he has discussed with the Selectmen the possibility of Depot Park parking fees. He said he'll do this at the next Selectmen's meeting.

JP requested that RW consider installing a fence between the municipal parking lot and the Taylor & Lloyd property.

JP made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 15 and 28 meetings. JS seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

At 5:29 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 March 16, 2005.