



BEDFORD DEPOT PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Town Hall • Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

Meeting of March 8, 2007

MINUTES

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

Ex-officio committee members in attendance: Richard Jones (RJ), Facilities Director; Rick Reed (RR), Town Manger; Richard Warrington (RW), DPW Director;

Ex-officio committee members not in attendance: Angelo Colao (AC), Selectman liaison to Depot Park;

Others in attendance: Lynne Spencer of Menders, Torrey & Spencer, Inc.

Chairman JP called the meeting to order at 3:48 P.M. at Bedford Town Hall.

RJ informed the Committee that he spoke with tenant Varney Creative about a new agreement for rental of two office units, one on each floor. He said that RR told him \$750 per month would be an acceptable rent provided that back rent is paid in full. JS noted that at the January 17 meeting, the Committee supported setting the rent at \$750 if the tenant rented both second floor units, and at \$850 if the tenant occupied one unit on each floor. RJ added that Varney Creative is in the process of leaving the basement space.

Lynne Spencer joined the meeting at 3:53 P.M.

RW asked what historical period of time the proposed Depot renovations are intended to follow. Ms. Spencer said that the period of significance is about 1900 to 1916. RW asked whether it is possible to choose a different timeframe when the Depot might have had a better appearance. Ms. Spencer said that the building's appearance began to degrade in the mid-1960s, and that its 1900 appearance is likely to be very similar to how the building looked when it was built in 1874.

Ms. Spencer outlined triggers for code compliance. She said that any major work done to the building—outside of replacing the roof—that costs in excess of \$21,000 would require compliance with current building code. Assembly or restaurant/retail use would increase the “hazard ranking” of the building and require additional building upgrades.

Ms. Spencer said that she does not recommend keeping the Depot's second floor. She added that it is impractical to add an elevator to the building, and that the size of the lot would not permit an addition to the building.

Ms. Spencer distributed a matrix of possible building uses and their relative advantages and disadvantages. She said that her firm examined possible uses of the Depot that are compatible with the space and historical character of the building.

JP asked Ms. Spencer for her opinion of the likelihood that Bedford could get a variance from the Architectural Access Board to keep all or part of the second floor. She said that the Board has become increasingly conservative in its rulings.

Ms. Spencer proposed that the Committee select up to three interior renovation options for the Depot, and her firm would develop renovation cost estimates for each scenario. JP proposed that they drop the residential option. He suggested developing cost estimates for plans with no second floor (equivalent to schematic A2) and with a partial second floor (equivalent to schematics A1, B1 and B2).

RJ distributed a draft Depot Park financial model that forecasts income and expenses over the next 20 years. Both the Facilities Department and Department of Public Works provided estimates for the spreadsheet. The Committee discussed how to further refine the financial plan and whether to assign a portion of future capital costs to each operating year. RJ said that he would do further research into rents that are being charged at comparable buildings, including West Concord Station, and would update the draft for review at a future meeting.

DC said that the Community Preservation fund might be able to pay for certain future maintenance (e.g., exterior painting, roof replacement) of the Freight House and Depot.

RR said that future income might be greater if the Freight House was rented commercially and the Friends operated in a section of the Depot.

RJ left the meeting at 5:20 P.M. He provided for distribution copies of a Depot Park Revolving Fund financial statement dated March 7, 2007.

RR said that he spoke with Luisa Paiewonsky, Massachusetts Highway Department commissioner, about the status of the Freight House renovation project. He was informed that the state's share of the project cost is contained in a proposed bond authorization bill that is being considered by the Legislature.

DC made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 14 meeting. JP seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

DC made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 21 meeting. JP seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

JS proposed that the vacant Depot office unit be rented to generate additional income for the Town. RR said that we ought to wait on renting the unit until it is known whether tenants would have to leave the building due to proposed first floor stabilization work.

JP suggested that at the March 21 meeting, the Committee consider when to meet with the Selectmen to discuss possible renovation and use options for the Depot.

At 6:09 P.M., DC made a motion to adjourn the meeting. JP seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Submitted by

Jim Shea, Clerk

These minutes were accepted by a unanimous vote of the Committee at its meeting of 3/21/07.