



BEDFORD DEPOT PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Town Hall • Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

Meeting of December 17, 2007

MINUTES

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

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

Others in attendance: Gordon Feltman; Kevin Latady

Chairman JP called the meeting to order at 3:03 P.M. at Bedford Town Hall.

JP highlighted a memo that the Town received from the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) concerning their Freight House renovation project. Contractor bids are to be opened soon, according to the correspondence. DC questioned MHD's estimated construction schedule of 450 days.

RW distributed an updated financial statement for the rail car renovation project. So far, expenditures amount to \$89,140.14. The account balance is \$35,859.86. RW said that he feels comfortable that the project would be completed with the available funds. He said that the rail car's interior has been completely painted and the lighting is operational. A flooring contractor is now at work inside the car. Seats are to be installed after the new flooring is laid. RW observed that MHD is to be responsible for relocating the rail car's HVAC condenser unit as part of their Freight House project. JP expressed his desire to hold future Committee meetings at the rail car.

RR joined the meeting at 3:12 P.M.

DC noted that the Massachusetts Historical Commission is inviting applications for their FY 2009 preservation grant program. If the Town does not intend to pursue additional funding for the Depot, then the Bedford Historic Preservation Commission would consider making an application for additional funds for tombstone repairs.

RJ joined the meeting at 3:17 P.M.

JP invited Selectman Gordon Feltman to share his thoughts about rental of the Depot. Mr. Feltman expressed that the Depot is a very important structure in the Town of Bedford. It is a lynchpin in the redevelopment of the Depot Park area. His objective is to make the Depot an attractive, exciting destination. He proposes to do this by announcing as loudly and broadly as possible to prospective tenants that the building exists and that the Town wants a desirable tenant. The Depot is currently a “diamond in the rough,” he said. Mr. Feltman believes that the current RFP does little to attract tenants who would be willing to invest in an interior renovation of the building.

The Committee reviewed with Mr. Feltman the history of the RFP process and the possible future uses of the Depot that were identified by the architectural study/preservation plan. RR noted that a restaurant tenant would be considered “highly advantageous” under the current RFP’s evaluation criteria. JP said it would be financially impractical for most tenants to pay for the estimated \$1 million renovation cost. RR said he feels it is premature to advertise an RFP for Depot tenants until the Freight House renovations are complete.

Mr. Feltman introduced Kevin Latady, principal of Latady Design Associates. Mr. Latady said he has an interest in seeing a tenant occupy the Depot who would advance redevelopment of the Depot Park area. He commented that he has a client who has potential interest in locating in this section of town. The Committee, Mr. Latady and Mr. Feltman discussed possible ways to attract tenants who would spur local economic development and possibly contribute towards renovation of the Depot.

JP proposed having a Town Meeting article that would authorize the Selectmen to petition the State Legislature for home rule legislation to rent the Depot on a long-term lease. He also suggested that we follow an informal procurement process to identify potential high-caliber tenants. Mr. Feltman suggested that we suspend the RFP process in favor of using an Invitation for Proposals (IFP) to garner interest from tenants. After discussion, the Committee agreed to draft an IFP document at its January meeting with a goal to have a final version in February. Then, 30 days would be allowed for responses.

JP entertained motions from the Committee. JS made a motion that the Committee recommend to the Selectmen that the RFP process be deferred for 90 days to allow an

opportunity for a Statement of Interest to be developed and advertised. DC seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

RJ distributed a Depot Park Revolving Fund statement dated 12/19/07. He reported that tenant Varney Creative might be in arrears by up to six months. The Committee discussed options for collecting back rent.

RJ noted that the Facilities Department has made repairs to the vacant Depot office unit, painted the Depot's exterior, and installed a new support beam inside the Freight House. The Facilities Department charged the Revolving Fund about \$7,600 for these services.

RR reported that the Selectmen gave preliminary approval for a Farmer's Market at Depot Park. Final approval would come after certain submittals are furnished by the organizer.

RJ said that he checked the Town's contract with Menders, Torrey and Spencer, Inc. The contract does not cover an option for roof design work. Therefore, RJ is to prepare a Request for Quotes for designer services. He anticipates that the Depot roof work would be accomplished in the spring or summer.

JS distributed to the Committee a draft letter that expresses its recommendations to the Selectmen about renovation and rental of the Depot.

DC made a motion to accept the minutes of the 11/20/07 meeting. JP seconded this motion, and it passed unanimously.

At 5:29 P.M., JS made a motion to adjourn the meeting. DC seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Submitted by

Jim Shea, Clerk

These minutes were approved by a unanimous vote of the Committee at its meeting of 1/16/08.