



BEDFORD DEPOT PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Town Hall • Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

Meeting of December 29, 2009

MINUTES

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

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

Chairman Joseph Piantedosi called the meeting to order at 3:04 P.M. at Bedford Town Hall.

JP asked for an update concerning the Depot rental lease that was awarded to JRM Antiques. RJ explained that when the RFP was drafted, certain building uses were marked with an asterisk to indicate they require a special permit. After the Selectmen approved the lease, Code Enforcement Director Chris Laskey noted that the tenant's proposed retail operation would require a special permit from the Planning Board. RJ said he had a discussion with Planning Director Richard Joly concerning this subject. Mr. Joly suggested that the Town apply for a permit for the entire building that would encompass all special uses. Site parking is expected to be a focus of the permitting process, RJ feels.

RR joined the meeting at 3:07 P.M.

RR recapped for the Committee how the two municipal parking lots at Depot Park were established.

RW presented a site plan of Depot Park for study by the Committee. He outlined boundaries that exist among the properties belonging to the Town, the MBTA, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Kenneth Larson.

JP noted that there are 160 total parking spaces between the two parking lots. JS observed that the MBTA is entitled to a number of parking spaces along the railroad right-of-way for commuter use. The railroad car is a vehicle, not a building, for the purpose of calculating parking requirements at the site, RW said.

RJ said that the retail zoning regulations mandate 4 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of building volume. Per this requirement, 6 parking spaces would be needed for retail use of the Depot building. He added that restaurant use of the building would need the highest number of parking spaces, 15.

RR questioned whether the Freight House's current use is covered under the present zoning. JP said that he was a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals in the 1980s when a special retail permit was granted to the building. RR suggested classifying the Freight House as retail which would require only 2 spaces on a parking site plan.

JP asked whether Farmers' Market ought to have a site plan review because the event fills a majority of spaces in both parking lots on Mondays between June and October.

JP inquired what percentage of Freight House visitors come from the Minuteman Bikeway. JS estimated that 90% of visitors come from the bikeway during the spring and summer. RW noted that there are bicycle racks at the front and rear of the building.

The Committee discussed the VFW's use of Town parking spaces by its customers and members.

JS asked why RR and RJ are proposing that the Town, rather than the tenant, apply for a special permit. RJ expressed that if the Depot building is fully permitted, the property becomes more attractive to future tenants. JP said the Town would remain in control with respect to whom the property is rented and how it is used.

RW noted that Article 37.2 of the Town's Bylaws requires that antique shops have a permit to operate.

At the conclusion of discussion, it was agreed that RJ would prepare an application for a special permit to cover all uses allowed under the Depot Area Mixed-Use Overlay District Bylaw. In addition, he will prepare a presentation for the Planning Board.

RR suggested that the proposed permit application be brought before the Selectmen for their support before it goes to the Planning Board.

JS asked how long the permit application process might take. RR answered that after the Planning Board makes its decision, there is a two week waiting period to allow time for appeals. JP added that abutters within 300 feet of the property, plus their abutters, would be invited to provide input on the permit application.

JP invited motions for a Committee recommendation of support for the special permit application. DC offered the motion: "The Depot Park Advisory Committee recommends approval of a comprehensive special use permit for the Depot building under the Depot Park Mixed-Use Overlay District Bylaw." JP seconded the motion; and it passed by a unanimous vote.

JP asked what could be done to help the tenant while he is on hold waiting for a retail permit. Although the tenant's lease and rental payments began in December, he is unable to use the space for his business until the permit is granted.

The Committee discussed snow removal procedures at Depot Park. JS noted that members of the public have been walking on the icy platform and steps; and he is concerned that people might become injured. JP asked whether the Freight House steps and platform will be kept clear of snow by the Town. RR suggested placing a chain across the steps to indicate that the Freight House is closed. If the platform is to be cleared of snow, RW advised that a plastic shovel with no metal blade be used.

RW reported that a contractor checked the Freight House HVAC system on December 3. They fully opened the ceiling air registers. The heating system appears to check out okay. It was not possible to fully evaluate the cooling system. Ceiling registers in the public restrooms were closed by the Facilities Department to bolster the flow of air inside the building. JS said the air flow on the first floor improved noticeably after these steps were taken. Heat generated from appliances is minimal, RW said.

RJ reported that a Depot lease with Babe Ruth Baseball is in process. Language is to be clarified about who bears responsibility for any capital improvements made to the rented space.

JP proposed that the minutes of the December 2 meeting be deferred until the next meeting.

At 4:19, JS made a motion to adjourn the meeting. JP seconded the motion; and it passed by a unanimous vote.

Submitted by

Jim Shea, Clerk

These minutes were approved by a unanimous vote of the Committee at its meeting of 3/17/10.