



BEDFORD DEPOT PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Town Hall • Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

Meeting of May 4, 2010

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 Manager; Richard Warrington (RW), DPW Director

Chairman Joseph Piantedosi called the meeting to order at 3:40 P.M. at Bedford Town Hall.

RJ distributed an FY 2011 proposed budget that he prepared for the Depot Park complex. As the budget currently stands, he forecasts that the finances for FY 2011 will have a deficit of \$13,327. The budget will be near break-even if the remaining two Depot office units are rented.

RR said that he considers the projected deficit to be largely a “paper loss” because the snow removal expense—which is budgeted at \$6,685 per year—is currently covered by the DPW budget.

Custodial expenses to maintain the public restrooms are expected to amount to \$3,500 for the current fiscal year, RJ said, and anticipated to be \$4,800 in FY 2011. This is based on a labor charge of \$20 per day for 240 days.

The committee discussed possible ways to reduce operating expenses at the Depot Park complex.

1. RJ noted that a single meter measures electrical consumption of the Freight House building, railroad car and exterior site lighting.
2. JP recommended that the exterior site lighting be operated for fewer hours each day to reduce electrical expenses. JS commented that the Depot Park area and intersection become rather dark at night without the benefit of the site lighting. He suggested that the committee conduct a test by temporarily turning off the lighting one evening.
3. JS estimated that if the exterior lighting is operated for an average of 12 hours per day and at an electricity cost of 15¢ per kilowatt hour, the annual expense is about \$1,855.
4. JS proposed that separate clocks be used to control the parking lot and building lights so that they may be turned off at different times. He also suggested that a self-adjusting “celestial clock” be used to control the lighting so that it is not necessary to constantly adjust the on and off times of the existing clock to keep up with progressing sunrise and sunset times. This could help conserve energy, he said.
5. To curtail custodial expenses, JP suggested reducing the number of days when the public restrooms are open.

RW and JP recommended collection of parking fees at the Railroad Avenue lot to bolster Revolving Fund income. DC said that such a plan might have the added benefit of discouraging

Taylor & Lloyd employees from using the Town's lot. RR expressed concern that imposition of parking fees might motivate the public to park improperly elsewhere in the area. JS estimated that if an average of 35 vehicles each day paid \$2.00 to park in the municipal lot, April through November, annual revenues would amount to \$17,080.

RW suggested that all Depot Park expenses be included in the FY 2011 budget and that an evaluation be made at the end of the fiscal year.

The FY 2010 and FY 2011 budgets contain an expense of \$10,285 for landscaping/grounds maintenance and snow removal by the DPW. Thus far, no chargebacks for these services have been paid to the DPW. JS inquired how the the snow removal expenses were estimated. RJ said the figures were provided by the DPW.

RJ inquired whether \$4,000 is a reasonable estimate for Freight House food proceeds in FY 2011. JS answered that a better sense of future proceeds ought to be known after completing a full summer of operation this year—but he feels that income will be higher than \$4,000. Annual proceeds reached a high of \$7,322 in 2002, he recalled, which was prior to installation of a water fountain in front of the Freight House. Bottled water sales have declined significantly since then because free water is now readily available to the public.

JP asked for an update on the proposed Depot office rental by The Glass Studio, Inc. RJ said he met with representatives Susan Grieb and Barbara Purchia. They agreed to a monthly rent of \$10 per sf. for Unit 3. If a lease is granted to The Glass Studio, rental income is expected to be approximately \$8,000 per year. The Planning Board will consider a special permit application on May 25 that is required for the proposed rental.

JP said we ought to aggressively market the remaining vacant office unit.

JP requested an update on the railroad car rental. RJ said the rental income is being deposited into the Revolving Fund and that \$527 has been received so far in FY 2010. A rental is scheduled for May 8, JS mentioned.

RW asked whether there has been any followup with past renters to get their feedback. RJ said he believes that Fay Russo invites comments from past renters.

RJ said that the Facilities Department erroneously charged a purchase order for a Job Lane House expenditure against the Freight House interior fit-out budget. With the correction being made, RJ believes the Freight House fit-out budget is now in good shape.

JP asked whether the \$5,000 that was erroneously withdrawn from the Revolving Fund last year has been returned to it. RW agreed to check the status of the correction.

RJ distributed a Depot Park Revolving Fund statement dated 5/04/10. The current balance is \$32,979. This represents an increase of \$1,898 since 3/16/10.

RJ said all Depot roofing charges have been paid and that the remaining balance may be returned to the Community Preservation budget.

RW reported that the Depot's rooftop train order signals were repaired. They received new blades and roundels; and three of the four signal joints can now move.

JS noted that a small cupola or vent was not returned to the Depot roof after it was renovated.

RJ reported that a contractor will install flooring on the Freight House second level within a couple weeks. The Facilities Department is to touch up the painting on the building's exterior and complete the inside data wiring.

JP asked about trash pickup and groundskeeping at Depot Park. RW said that the grounds crew ought to be on a Friday/Monday schedule to empty the barrels. He suggested that the Facilities Department custodian empty the barrels on weekends after cleaning the restrooms. JP proposed the addition of a second solar compactor. RJ asked whether any thought has been given to having a trash dumpster at Depot Park.

JS conveyed that the proprietor of JRM Antiques inquired why no landscaping and removal of parking lot sand have occurred on the Depot side of the complex this year. The tenant is being charged for these services as “common area” expenses.

JP related that a VFW representative told him that the organization has difficulty obtaining a sufficient quantity of parking spaces on Sunday afternoons. RR said that according to his reading of the Town’s agreement with the VFW, the VFW has the right to park on their property and on the Town’s side of lot. RW explained that the spaces adjacent to the Freight House were intended for public use when the lot was designed. JP requested a larger copy of the parking lot site plan in advance of meeting again with a VFW representative to discuss parking lot usage.

JP commended the volunteer work that was performed by DPW employee Carl Silvestrone to fabricate four replicas of vintage “Bedford” signs for the Depot building. RW said he will speak with Carl to choose a day when he can attach these signs to the roof’s fascia. RJ and RW discussed mounting options.

JS distributed copies of a set of railroad car cleaning instructions that he prepared with input from Fay Russo. These cleaning procedures are to be followed by custodians after rentals occur in the car. RJ said that he reviewed the instructions and feels they are good.

JP invited motions regarding past meeting minutes.

- DC made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 17 meeting. JS seconded the motion; and it passed by a unanimous vote.
- DC made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 27 meeting. JS seconded the motion; and it passed by a unanimous vote.

JP noted that the state’s public meeting law has been revised. New regulations will require that an agenda be posted in advance of each meeting. Details of the new requirements are coming soon, RR added.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 19 at 3:30 P.M.

At 5:38 P.M., JS made a motion to adjourn the meeting. DC 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 5/19/10.