



## **BEDFORD DEPOT PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Town Hall • Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

**Meeting of May 23, 2012**

### **MINUTES**

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

**Ex-officio committee members in attendance:** Richard Jones (RJ), Facilities Director; Rich Warrington (RW), DPW Director; William Moonan (WM), selectman liaison

**Ex-officio committee members not in attendance:** Rick Reed, Town Manager

**Other people in attendance:** Donald Corey; Kevin Farrell; John Peterson; Lynne Spencer of Menders, Torrey & Spencer, Inc.

Chairman JP called the meeting to order at 3:07 P.M. at Bedford Town Hall.

JP said financial reports will be deferred until the next meeting.

John Peterson and Kevin Farrell joined the meeting at 3:08 P.M.

RJ recapped the 2007 architectural study of the Depot building and its options for reuse. The total cost estimate in 2007 for a full building rehabilitation was approximately \$1 million. Phase One of the restoration plan, installation of a new roof, was completed in 2009. Phase Two of the plan is now being considered for implementation. Prior to a comprehensive rehabilitation of the building, JP said that a decision must be made whether to retain the existing second floor. The committee recommended in 2007 to retain the second floor for the immediate future to maximize rental revenue opportunities. JP does not anticipate the second floor would be removed in the foreseeable future due to the cost and other implications.

Lynne Spencer of Menders, Torrey & Spencer distributed and reviewed the Existing Conditions Report that was created by the firm in 2007. She said that test holes in the building's siding and interior found original windows with glass in place. Designs were made for various interior use options. Ms. Spencer noted that the original report used 2007 building code; and the code has since been revised twice. A code review is necessary before updating architectural plans and cost estimates. A complete renovation or restoration of the Depot would include structural improvements and interior demolition.

Ms. Spencer said that the Depot in its original form had six door openings and that the current Restoration Plan provides five openings. The current plan could work for public, retail or restaurant uses, she noted.

Page A-102 of the Restoration Plan shows a handicap ramp around the exterior of the building. Ms. Spencer said that handicap access ought to be provided through this means or another suitable method.

RJ reviewed the current uses of the Depot's four office units.

Ms. Spencer explained that if uses of the second floor do not require public access, she believes it is possible to request a variance from the Architectural Barriers Board.

John Peterson suggested that a stairway chair lift be used to provide handicap access.

WM joined the meeting at 3:31 P.M.

Ms. Spencer said restoring the Depot's exterior while retaining the existing second floor would present a challenge. Siding and existing windows would be removed, then new siding and existing windows would be added. She proposed that a decision be made about use of the basement because a second method of egress would be necessary if this space is to be utilized for a public purpose.

WM clarified with Ms. Spencer whether a sprinkler system must be added to the building. She replied that a sprinkler system and a new water main would be dictated by the building's proposed use and occupancy. Kevin Farrell suggested that grants might be available to help pay for sprinkler installation costs.

RJ recommended that a decision be made about the building's future use so that the 2007 renovation cost estimates may be refreshed.

The committee discussed the threshold of renovation at which the Depot would need to be brought up to current code. Ms. Spencer noted that the code takes into account three years of sequential repairs when determining this threshold. She proposed that a code assessment of the building be conducted by meeting with the fire chief and the code enforcement director. JP questioned whether doing a new code analysis would put existing Depot uses at risk.

Donald Corey asked if a new water main is installed at the Depot, should a gas line also be installed so that the heating system could be converted to gas. He suggested reversing the proposed handicap ramp to the bikeway side of the building versus the dumpster side.

Ms. Spencer proposed that an updated schematic design for the Depot be prepared. She suggested using spandrel glass in windows on the second floor. RJ proposed that the building be renovated one side at a time as funds allow.

DC inquired whether the committee would request a construction grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The next application period is spring 2013, RW observed.

WM asked whether it would be permissible from a structural perspective to reverse the orientation of the first floor so that the ticket agent's office faces the parking lot.

Ms. Spencer requested direction from the committee. It was agreed that in the short term, she will provide help on the planned exterior painting project and masonry repairs. She distributed schedules of proposed design services and cost estimates dated 5/21/12 and 5/22/12.

Mr. Corey asked how Menders, Torrey & Spencer would be paid for its proposed services. He said that the Historic Properties Stabilization Fund is one possible source of funds; and that a design from the architect would be needed before Bedford could apply for grants. Ms. Spencer noted that for the past couple years, Massachusetts Historical Commission grants have been a maximum of \$50,000.

Mr. Farrell commented that insurance surveys are another source of historical records.

Ms. Spencer distributed a cost estimate for maintenance design services.

JP reiterated that the committee wishes to have the Depot exterior painted and the masonry repairs completed this summer. RJ said that he plans to move expeditiously on these projects.

WM requested that a design be made that eliminates the Depot's existing second floor. JP called to his attention that such schematic designs currently exist from the 2007 study.

Mr. Farrell left the meeting at 4:19 P.M.

RW outlined a proposed mixed-used project for the commercial building at 74 Loomis Street. Ms. Spencer said that Smart Growth funding might be available for such a project. John Peterson believes Bedford's opportunity to rent the Depot will increase after building improvements occur at 74 Loomis Street.

Lynne Spencer and Donald Corey left the meeting at 4:35 P.M.

John Peterson distributed a directory of helpful Bedford phone numbers. He discussed ways to better advertise Bedford's rental properties and identified problems with Bedford's web site.

WM asked whether a museum use of the Depot has been considered. JP reviewed how the Historical Society submitted a rental proposal some years ago, but the proposed finances were insufficient. JS and JP provided an explanation of the longstanding concept of Depot Park and how the Depot is the complex's primary economic engine.

The committee's task list was updated by RJ and RW.

- The Facilities Department attached RJ-45 connectors to the railroad car's data wires.
- RJ has received information on a door access unit for the Freight House, but not a price.
- A Facilities Department electrician is to meet with JS about completing the railroad car's lighting connections to the night service clock.
- Facilities Department workers will paint the Freight House platform.
- RW said he went inside the railroad car during a recent rain storm, but did not find any leaks. He will continue to investigate the source of the car's roof leak.
- RW said that two directional signs for Depot Park are in order and should be in on Friday.
- RW is about half way done with the easement agreement with the V.F.W.
- RW has looked into getting new energy-saving light heads for the Loomis Street parking lot. An appropriation would be necessary to replace the existing fixtures.

JS remarked that the new Depot Park custodian has so far been doing a good job.

The committee discussed the colors of a street address sign that the Facilities Department is acquiring for the Depot building.

JP made a motion to accept the draft minutes of the 5/02/12 meeting. JS seconded the motion; and it passed by a unanimous vote.

The next meeting is scheduled for 6/20/12.

At 5:08 P.M., JP invited motions to adjourn the meeting. JS made a motion to adjourn. 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 6/20/12.

Documents and other exhibits used at this meeting:

- Meeting agenda, dated 5/23/12
- Ongoing DPAC projects, dated 5/23/12
- Menders, Torrey & Spencer: Bedford Depot - Exterior paint and masonry repairs, dated 5/21/12
- Menders, Torrey & Spencer: Bedford Depot - Exterior restoration, dated 5/22/12
- Menders, Torrey & Spencer: Bedford Depot - Existing Conditions Report, dated June 2007