



BEDFORD DEPOT PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Town Hall • Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

Meeting of November 20, 2012

MINUTES

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

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

Ex-officio committee members not in attendance: William Moonan, selectman liaison

Chairman JP called the meeting to order at 3:06 P.M. at Bedford Freight House, 120 South Road. He asked the committee to tour the Depot building to view the results of recent painting and masonry projects and to consider other ways that the facade might be improved. JP recommended that the galvanized downspouts and gutters be painted to improve aesthetics. JS questioned whether the storm windows may be replaced as part of an overall facade improvement project. JP noted that the upper portions of the signal masts were not painted as specified. RJ said he will ask the painting contractor for a credit for not doing this work.

The committee returned to the Freight House at 3:16 P.M.

RJ reported that the painting and masonry work on the Depot is complete. JP asked whether a quote has been obtained for painting the bare metal downspouts and gutters. RJ believes the painter quoted a price of about \$2,200. RJ said he is not in favor of painting galvanized steel because in his experience, the paint does not last long. RW commented that the DPW paints metal traffic signal posts by first applying a special primer.

JP and RJ discussed replacing the Depot's storm windows with units that are maroon on the exterior side. RW said the Freight House has high quality Marvin windows that are finished in a stock maroon color. RJ observed that the alignment of existing windows is not far from the original openings; and a couple windows on the second floor are in poor condition. He is getting pricing on replacement windows for the Depot. JP asked whether the storm windows could be replaced as part of a Community Preservation project.

RJ said he sent a scope of work to Menders, Torrey & Spencer and asked the architect to prepare design options for improving the Depot's exterior appearance and accessibility. He discussed possible treatments that would recall the facade's original appearance. RJ distributed a cost estimate from MTS for its design services. A quote of \$5,350 is for design of facade improvements; and a quote of \$6,040 is for design of accessibility improvements. Both quotes include a building code analysis.

RR joined the meeting at 3:38 P.M.

JP said he feels the scope of work ought to focus on accessibility and appearance.

RW questioned the merit of installing new windows if they do not improve rental opportunities. He expressed that the recent painting of the Depot in the historic “cream and maroon” color scheme provides a significant upgrade in the building’s appearance, and suggested that the focus now be on improving its accessibility. John Peterson recommended that money not be spent on additional cosmetic changes unless rents can be increased as a result.

JP covered steps that would improve the building’s accessibility: installation of a ramp to the front door, widen the front door, widen the interior doors to Units 1 and 2, establish an accessible restroom on the first floor, and a possible chair lift between the first and second floors. John Peterson proposed that any accessibility improvements not be high-end or permanent in case the building receives a major renovation in the future.

RR mentioned that according to one representative of Babe Ruth Baseball, the tenant does not wish to leave Unit 2 at the end of the current lease.

RJ said that accessibility improvements ought to qualify for Community Preservation funding. JS inquired whether Community Preservation funds could be used to pay for MTS design services. RJ plans to check with Donald Corey on this point. RW suggested using the Historic Properties Stabilization Fund, which would require approval of the Selectmen but not Town Meeting.

RJ asked whether the committee ought to propose a Town Meeting article for funds to implement accessibility improvements at the Depot.

JS requested the remaining balance in the Depot roof account after the painting and masonry contractors are paid.

RJ distributed a worksheet that shows current Depot rents.

- Unit 1 - \$13.27 per sf
- Unit 2 - \$7.87 per sf
- Unit 3 - \$10.00 per sf
- Unit 4 - \$7.95 per sf
- Basement Unit B5 - 25¢ per sf

For comparison, John Peterson reviewed commercial rents elsewhere in Bedford.

- 363 Great Road - \$24 per sf
- Blue Ribbon strip mall - \$30 per sf
- Blake Block - low \$40.00 range per sf

JS added that the Chamber of Commerce is renting office space from Town Center for \$52.84 per sf. This tenant is also allowed use of a conference room, RR noted.

RJ informed the committee that the current Unit 1 lease expires on December 20 and that the tenant is interested in renting the unit for an additional year at a much reduced price. The committee discussed options for renting Unit 1 beyond the current lease. John Peterson feels that the current tenant would have a difficult time finding comparable space elsewhere in Bedford for an amount close to the current rent. He suggested maintaining the current rent amount on a one-year lease extension, if possible, or on a tenant at-will basis if the tenant is opposed to a lease. JP suggested that if a tenant at-will agreement is used, it should require a minimum of 90 days notice for cancellation. JS asked whether the protections currently afforded to Bedford under the existing lease would be preserved under a tenant at-will arrangement.

The Unit 1 tenant uses the building's common area foyer and sidewalk for display of merchandise, JS noted. He suggested that should a concession become necessary, RJ could offer the tenant full use of the B5 basement space at no additional charge, provided the current rent for Unit 1 is maintained in a one-year lease extension.

RJ proposed that Unit 1 pay for 25% of the building's O&M (operations and maintenance) charges versus the current 14.72%, but structure the rent so that the overall monthly payment would remain the same. JP wondered about the impact such a change would have on other tenant rents. JS questioned whether decreasing the rent but increasing the O&M charge would result in less money for the Revolving Fund.

RR pondered whether the Depot leases ought to end at the same time or on a staggered basis. After discussion, he and the committee concurred that there are advantages to Bedford if the lease terms are staggered. If all the leases were to end at the same time, the task of finding multiple new tenants might be burdensome.

RJ distributed a Depot Park Revolving Fund statement dated 11/20/12. The current balance is \$27,005.85. He noted that of this amount, \$14,828.32 is for DPW groundskeeping charges. JP expressed concern about the Revolving Fund remaining stable if this money is paid out. The committee discussed the concept of departmental cross-charging for services. RW expressed that the DPW could accommodate groundskeeping at Depot Park within its operations budget.

The bottom interior of the Freight House front door is moisture-damaged and appears to be sprouting fungus. RJ said he plans to price replacing the door prior to installing a card reader lock on it.

RJ highlighted recent expenditures. The materials cost to paint the Freight House deck was \$222.93. Repair of the Depot Unit 1 air conditioner will appear as a future charge.

JS reported that through 10/31/12, Freight House food gross profits, railroad car donations and rail-trail map sales proceeds amounted to \$4,586.73. Calendar year 2012 revenues are to be transmitted to the Revolving Fund in January. Despite a significant drop in bikeway activity this time of year, the Freight House continues to be open on weekends because some people travel from out of town to visit Depot Park. JS conveyed that many visitors say they appreciate the Freight House, railroad car and restrooms.

JP requested updates on a Depot Park task list dated 11/19/12.

RJ reported:

- A card reader lock has been purchased for the Freight House front door.
- A Facilities electrician will complete electrical wiring in the railroad car.
- Depot exterior painting is complete except for the upper portions of the signal masts.
- A contractor completed masonry repairs on the Depot's brick foundation.
- Touchup painting on the Freight House exterior was done.
- The Freight House deck was painted.

RW reported:

- He submitted a work order to address the railroad car's roof leak.
- No new progress has been made on a memo of understanding with the VFW concerning Depot Park easements.

RJ questioned when the public restrooms ought to be closed for the season. In the past, he said, the restrooms were closed once the ground is covered with snow. The daily charge for the

custodian is about \$20. JP suggested that the public restrooms be closed for the season on December 3. RW commented that when portable outhouses were used at Depot Park, they were removed by early November each year.

For next meeting that is scheduled for December 12, JP wants to discuss Revolving Fund charges, the architect's proposal for Depot improvements, and the rental of Unit 1.

JP invited motions regarding the draft minutes of the 10/02/12 meeting. John Peterson made a motion to accept the minutes. JP seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous vote.

JP invited motions to adjourn. At 5:13 P.M., John Peterson made a motion to adjourn. JS 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 1/16/13.

Documents and other exhibits used at this meeting:

- Meeting agenda, dated 11/20/12
- Depot Park Revolving Fund Financial Statement, dated 11/20/12
- Ongoing DPAC projects, dated 11/19/12
- Current Depot rents and O&M charges
- Designer price quotes from Menders, Torrey & Spencer, dated November 2012