



## **BEDFORD DEPOT PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Town Hall • Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

**Meeting of February 12, 2014**

### **MINUTES**

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

**Ex-officio committee members in attendance:** Ronald Scaltreto, Acting Facilities Director; Roy Sorenson (RS), DPW Director; Rick Reed, Town Manager (RR); William Moonan, Selectman liaison

**Others in attendance:** Donald Corey; John Peterson

JP called the meeting to order at 3:35 P.M. at Bedford Town Hall. He started with Item 3 on the agenda, the Depot facade and accessibility project.

JP asked Don Corey and Ron Scaltreto to provide an update on the Depot project. Bids came in two weeks ago, Mr. Scaltreto said. The low bid is from Campbell Construction Group, a company that the architect, Spencer & Vogt, has worked with in the past. It is thought to be a good contractor. Enough money is on hand to complete Phase 1 of the project. To complete the entire project as a single phase, an additional \$213,700 shall be needed. Mr. Corey reported that at last night's Community Preservation Committee meeting, the committee voted to support a \$215,000 appropriation for Phase 2 at the upcoming Annual Town Meeting. If the article is approved, funds would be temporarily borrowed from two reserve accounts so that it wouldn't be necessary to wait until July 1 to proceed with the project's second phase.

RR joined the meeting at 3:39 P.M.

RR affirmed that immediately after Town Meeting, we would have the ability to proceed with the entire Depot exterior project if the funding article is approved. Ron Scaltreto said we are awaiting S.O.M.W.B.A. information from the low-bid contractor, which RR said is necessary before the Town may award a contract to the company. RR anticipates that the Selectmen could award the contract on either March 3 or March 10. Mr. Scaltreto said he met with architect Patrick Guthrie today, and that Spencer & Vogt has the information they need to move forward with their responsibilities.

JP observed that once the Phase 1 contract is awarded, the contractor can begin to procure materials and ramp up the project. Some of the materials such as the tall window units are custom-made items and require longer lead times. He proposed that the contractor shorten the construction schedule to achieve less impact on the tenants.

Mr. Corey reminded the committee that the portion of the project involving Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) funds must be completed by June 30 to comply with the terms of the state grant. RR suggested that Ron Scaltreto and Marcia Pyles consider ways to implement a contract for Phase 1 prior to Town Meeting.

JS asked whether the contractor plans to use any space inside the Depot for a staging area. Mr. Scaltreto said no discussions have yet taken place with the contractor in this regard.

RR asked when the Unit 2 tenant, Babe Ruth Baseball, plans to remove its equipment from the space. Mr. Scaltreto replied the tenant would be dispensing sports equipment to its members in late March. RR said he discussed with Babe Ruth Baseball the possibility of the Town providing temporary alternate storage while work is occurring at the Depot. Since the Unit 4 tenant previously left the Depot, work may proceed on the northern side of the building without a concern of significant impact to the building's remaining occupants.

Ron Scaltreto inquired whether the Unit 3 tenant, The Glass Cooperative, will be temporarily relocated during construction. RR answered that a conversation with the tenant on this topic has not yet occurred. JP noted that the stairway area will be impacted during construction.

JP explained that he invited commercial realtor John Peterson to the meeting to offer guidance on renting the Depot units. For comparison, Mr. Peterson said that rents for units along Bedford's main roads that have good visibility are priced about \$20 and up per square foot plus utilities. Units in the Blake Block are renting for \$40 and more per s.f. Rents in the redeveloped area of Middlesex Turnpike are about \$55 per s.f. plus \$13 per s.f. for the common areas. He said the Depot is ideal for tenants looking for inexpensive rent. He recommended that \$10 per s.f. plus utilities and common area expenses be a base minimum—and that rents should increase after the facade and accessibility improvements occur. Mr. Peterson noted that the 54 Loomis Street development will enhance the overall value of the Depot Park area.

JP recapped the existing Depot rents of \$8 to \$12 per s.f. He proposed adding a handicap accessible restroom to the first floor, which could increase the rental income potential if the first floor is rented for retail purposes.

Ron Scaltreto said he recently checked Unit 1, and its tenant is in the process of moving out. JS noted that the original lease expired on December 20, and that the three-month extension that was granted to the tenant should extend to March 20.

JP suggested that we begin looking for tenants now so that we may begin renting units as soon as the exterior work is done. RR observed that the Chapter 30B Procurement Law must be followed and that we need to decide on the lengths of rentals. Mr. Peterson reiterated his opinion that the Depot Park area will become more of a draw and its value will increase as time goes on. The area is ripe for development. He suggested that shorter-term rentals now will provide an opportunity to attract a higher paying tenant in a few years. WM concurred with Mr. Peterson's assessments and recommended that future rental terms become co-terminus.

JP inquired about possible methods to advertise rental opportunities. John Peterson suggested a publication called *Action Unlimited*, and he offered his services as an Exclusive Agency through the Multiple Listing Service. He said it would cost the Town nothing and provide a massive visibility. JS questioned how the Town paying a realtor a commission might relate to the Procurement Law.

John Peterson left the meeting at 4:25 P.M.

JP said that prior to the meeting, he took photos of the vintage baggage carts that are being restored by the DPW. A \$488 grant was received from the Cultural Council to purchase supplies to restore one of the carts. The Friends organization is to advance cash from the grant to the DPW so that it may purchase supplies. Collected sales receipts will enable the Friends to later be reimbursed by the grant program. In the event additional funds are needed to complete restoration of the first baggage cart, JP suggested using the Revolving Fund as a source. He plans to apply for a second grant to support restoration of the second baggage cart.

JP said the damaged Special Places sign is in DPW storage. It will be necessary to rebuild the framework, RS pointed out. The Revolving Fund will pay for any needed materials.

Ron Scaltreto reported that a structural engineer provided a report on the Depot's rooftop signal masts. He will forward this report to JP. Mr. Scaltreto conveyed that architect Patrick Guthrie told him it is not necessary to adhere to any specific MHC requirements when repairing or replacing the masts. He advised to do whatever is necessary to make the new masts safe. JP said we need to determine a solution, and then obtain a cost estimate to implement it. Mr. Scaltreto said the masts could be wired to illuminate the signals. Don Corey noted that between \$5,000 and \$6,000 remains in the roof project, which may be used to pay for new masts. WM commented that now is the time to replace the old signal masts.

Miscellaneous business:

- JP said the committee needs copies of all Depot Park easements.
- JS related a complaint from a Unit 3 tenant that large snow piles are blocking parking spaces in front of the Depot. The VFW's contractor plows snow on the Town's section of the parking lot, JS noted. He recalled that work had begun a couple years ago to establish a memo of understanding with the VFW about easements and groundskeeping responsibilities.
- Ron Scaltreto reported that the Facilities Department ordered a fir wood door to replace the damaged Freight House front door. Fir is less prone to moisture swelling than pine, he explained. A delivery date is not known.
- Mr. Scaltreto said that the Freight House front door card reader is now functional, but he needs to program a set of fobs before the unit may be used.
- The committee discussed the ongoing building project at 111 South Road and the impact to the public of a trailer and a dumpster that are atop adjacent sidewalks.

Mr. Corey left the meeting at 4:52 P.M.

JS said the hard drive inside the kiosk's Macintosh Mini computer, which is now over four years old, is beginning to fail and should be replaced. The estimated replacement cost is \$95. RR proposed that the Friends organization purchase the new hard drive and submit a receipt to the Town for reimbursement from the Revolving Fund.

Ron Scaltreto distributed a Depot Park Revolving Fund financial statement dated 2/04/14. The current account balance is \$59,213.57. JP said some of this money will be used to cover operating expenses while the Depot is not fully rented and to pay for building a handicap accessible restroom in the building. WM stated that normal groundskeeping work performed by the Town's DPW should not be charged to the Revolving Fund.

Submitted by:

Jim Shea, Clerk

These minutes were approved by a unanimous vote of the Committee at its meeting of 4/01/14.

Documents and other exhibits used at this meeting:

- Meeting agenda, dated 2/12/14
- Depot Park Revolving Fund financial statement, dated 2/04/14