

**Depot Park Advisory Committee**  
**Joseph R. Piantedosi, Chair**

**PURPOSE**

The Depot Park Advisory Committee's (DPAC) job is to oversee the operation and finances of the Depot Park complex, seek funding sources for future improvements, and recommend policies for use of the Depot Park Revolving Fund and the rental and usage of the buildings.

**FY20 HIGHLIGHTS**

- The committee worked closely with the Facilities Department to negotiate a lease termination agreement for the Colasanti Hair Salon that was going out of business due to the pandemic. The tenant is to pay a total settlement of \$6,000 which includes back rent and O&M (operations and maintenance) charges that will also cover the period October 1 through mid-January 2021 along with electricity charges through October 30, 2020.
- The committee also worked with the Facilities Department to obtain a renewal of the Babe Ruth Baseball lease which is to expire on December 31, 2020. The committee is urging the Select Board to renew the leases for the second floor tenants which are to end on June 30, 2021, and to lease Unit 1 (the former Colasanti Hair Salon) to a local barbershop, For the Boyz.
- The Friends of Bedford Depot Park received a private donation, reported last year, from the Bedford Frank W. Thompson Lodge for \$6,300. These funds paid for a new park bench in the Freight House plaza along with two new bike racks and an interpretive sign for the historic steam locomotive water column foundation adjacent to the railroad car. An historic switch stand from Bedford's former railroad yard was also displayed adjacent to the sign. The committee implemented this project with the assistance of the Bedford Public Works Director.
- The committee hired an architect with privately donated funds to create a slide presentation showing the before and after results of removing the old VFW Building to create additional park space and provide an improved view of the historic Depot Building from Loomis Street. This was undertaken due to an offer by an anonymous donor of up to \$50,000 for the proposed project.
- A number of smaller-scale improvement projects were completed including hiring a company that made major landscape improvements to the site which included removing the old broken split rail fence, clearing out the area behind the Freight House and along the bikeway, and trimming all of the shrubs in front of the Freight House and elsewhere on the grounds.
- The committee chair and Bill Deen from the Friends began work designing a mock-up of the original steam locomotive water column for public display.
- Depot Park's revenues and operating expenses are transacted through a Revolving Account that is managed by the Facilities Director with input and oversight from the Committee. The account's balance as of June 30, 2020, was \$69,013 (a 26.5% increase). For FY20, operating expenses totaled \$24,124 (a 28.2% decrease) and revenues were \$38,5989 (a 17.8% decrease) for a net gain of \$14,475. The reduction in revenue and expenses were due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Rents were waived for two months and some services such as custodial labor were temporarily stopped while the Depot Building was closed.
- Rail Diesel Car 6211 was open to the public on weekends during the bikeway season when the Freight House was open. It is available for rent as a venue for meetings, events and festivities. A total of \$288 in rental income was received during FY20.

- Depot tenants as of June 30 are Babe Ruth Baseball, the Glass Cooperative, Scott's Stone Carving Classes and Colasanti Hair Studio.
- Under a non-exclusive license, the Friends of Bedford Depot Park continued to operate a welcome center and museum inside the Freight House, primarily on weekends during the bikeway season. Proceeds from the sale of snacks and beverages are donated to the Revolving Fund. During 2019, the Friends raised \$2,022 to support the Depot Park complex. Due to the pandemic, the Freight House welcome center did not reopen in the spring.
- Restrooms at the rear of the Freight House were open last summer and fall as a courtesy to bikeway and Depot Park users, but did not reopen in the spring due to the pandemic. The Friends of Bedford Depot Park conveyed a donation of \$335.55 to open the restrooms on weekdays in November. This donation may reoccur annually to keep the restrooms open on weekdays earlier in the spring and later in the fall. This is the sixth year of this donation.

### **FY21 PROJECTIONS**

We intend for Depot Park to be financially self-supporting, well maintained and attractive, and enjoyable for the public. High priorities include:

- Installing a new interpretive steam locomotive water column replica on the original water column foundation using funds from the Frank W. Thompson Lodge donation and the Revolving Fund
- Continuing discussions with the Select Board on the tenant leases that expire on June 30, 2021
- Securing new contracts for snow removal and landscaping maintenance
- Identifying site improvements and maintenance issues, including the decking around the Depot Building which is deteriorating and warping