



BEDFORD DEPOT PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Town Hall • Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

Meeting of May 31, 2007

MINUTES

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

Committee members not in attendance: Donald Corey

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

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

Others in attendance: Lynne Spencer and Arthur Vogt, Menders, Torrey & Spencer, Inc.

Chairman JP called the meeting to order at 3:43 P.M. at Bedford Town Hall.

RW reported that he has not received any news regarding the Massachusetts Highway Department's Freight House renovation project.

RW distributed a financial statement dated 5/31/07 for the rail car renovation project. The account balance is \$43,280.48. He feels that the project is in good shape financially.

AC asked whether there would be a public address system and a fire alarm in the rail car. RW said that he anticipates these items to be added towards the end of the renovation project.

JP requested an update on the Committee's request to the Rangley Lakes & Sandy River Railroad for the Billerica & Bedford Railroad locomotive boiler that is in their possession. JS read an e-mail that he received from the group's president on April 16, 2007. President Archie Berry wrote that he is in receipt of the Committee's inquiry and that he plans to discuss it with his Board of Directors. He felt, however, that the directors would want to keep the boiler in Maine due to its historical significance.

JP made a motion to accept the minutes of the 5/21/07 meeting. JS seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. JP proposed to defer review of the minutes from the 3/21/07 and 4/25/07 meetings.

Lynne Spencer of Menders, Torrey & Spencer, Inc., joined the meeting at 4:03 P.M.

JP updated Lynne Spencer and Arthur Vogt about the presentation the Committee made to the Selectmen on May 21. We heard general consensus from the Selectmen on where we've been and where we're headed, JP said. He explained how the financial model is predicated on using Depot rent to support Depot Park's operating and capital expenses. The Freight House and rail car are to generate some revenue, too, but are chiefly a welcome center.

AC said that the Selectmen have some concern about the high cost estimate for a full rehabilitation of the Depot. Debt service on a \$1 million rehab project would be \$4,166 per month over 20 years, exclusive of interest charges. He suggested that the Town not make a large expenditure to rehab the building until we have a tenant who could afford to pay the rent. Perhaps we ought to pursue only an exterior facelift, he said.

JP said that under the state's procurement laws, the Committee could issue an RFI (Request for Information) to identify parties who have interest in renting either a part of or the entire Depot. The amount of rent a potential tenant would be willing to pay could drive a decision on how much the Town could afford to invest in rehabilitating the building. An RFI would not bind the Town to rent the building to any respondents. Ms. Spencer said that an RFI would require only schematic drawings, not design-development plans.

AC feels the likelihood of attracting a high quality tenant would increase if the cosmetics of the Depot's facade were improved.

Ms. Spencer asked how the amount of eligible Community Preservation funds shown in the Depot Park business plan was calculated. JP answered that Richard Jones determined the amount after consulting with the Town Manager. The Community Preservation funds could be used only for renovation work, JP noted.

JS asked what steps ought to be taken to complete the architectural study. Ms. Spencer said the next and final phase is design-development plans. AC asked that the plans suggest general uses, not specific tenants.

Mr. Vogt suggested limiting Depot occupancy to fewer than 100 persons so that more stringent building codes do not come into play.

Ms. Spencer outlined the two basic design-development plans that her firm will generate:

1. A single floor with two main rooms;
2. A single floor with a restored (circa 1914) floor plan.

An “add alternate” for a partial second floor will be provided that could be used with either floor plan. The design-development plans will show the additional costs for various utility requirements.

The Committee discussed how a rear deck on the Depot might be an “add alternate” for restaurant seasonal use.

RJ joined the meeting at 4:48 P.M.

JP asked whether constructing wall partitions inside the Depot would be the responsibility of the tenant or the Town. Mr. Vogt said that the tenant could decide where they want restrooms and be responsible for installing them.

RJ authorized Menders, Torrey & Spencer, Inc., to proceed to Phase Three of the architectural study. Phase Two of the study is nearly complete, he observed.

JP suggested that the Committee invite the public to a future meeting when a PowerPoint presentation about the architectural study, the Depot Park business plan and our final report could be shown.

The Committee discussed how to rent the vacant office in the Depot. RJ said that he plans to talk with the Town Manager about possible ways to proceed. He suggested that we issue an RFP to find a tenant who is interested in renting the entire building.

JP proposed that tenant Babe Ruth Baseball become a month-to-month tenant after their lease expires this summer.

RJ said that effective July 1, the Facilities Department will drop the monthly custodial charge that is currently assessed to the Depot Park Revolving Fund.

At 5:40 P.M., JP made a motion to adjourn the meeting. JS seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Submitted by

Jim Shea, Clerk

These minutes were accepted by a vote of 2-0-1 of the Committee at its meeting of 7/18/07.