

MINUTES OF THE
EMERY ESTATES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MAY 10, 2012

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OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK
PLYMOUTH, MASS.

PRESENT: Dan Condon-Chairman, Pat O'Leary, Laura Gedutis-LeBarron, Mary Heinrichs,
Mary Jordon-Roy, Bill McCarty, Janelle Quinn, Cathy Torrey, Ron Boretti

OTHERS: Jim Clarke, Bob Luongo, Cecil Group

Chairman Condon called the Emery Estates Advisory Committee Meeting to order at 7:00 pm at the McCulloch Building.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mary Roy made a motion to approve the minutes of April 25, 2012 and was seconded by Laura Gedutis-LeBarron. Votes 8-0 (Bill absent)

SETTING GOALS AND CRITERIA:

Chairman Condon stated that the committee is coming close to a conclusion and will outline a timeline to achieve a final report. This evening the committee will comment on the matrix and then there will be a vote. From there the Cecil Group will develop a draft report to be sent to this committee on May 24, 2012 and the committee will meet again on May 31st to comment on it. After that they would like to have an additional open house at the Emery Estates on June 16th and a public forum on June 21st followed by another committee meeting in early July for review and final comments. From there, there will be a final meeting with the Mayor to hand over the report. All these dates mentioned this evening are tentative and Jim Clarke will confirm them.

Bill McCarty arrived.

Ken from Cecil Group reviewed the Emery Estates Market Study and Use Analysis. The committee will vote using the dot system. There is a list of criteria that will be voted on based on High Advantageous, Advantageous, Least Advantageous and Unacceptable. Green dots are high priority and blue dots are least priority. This matrix will be included in the final report. The following criteria were reviewed: Financial Criteria, Multiple Events, Public Uses, Design and Impact, Preservation and finally Ownership.

Financial Criteria: Ron stated that some rooms could be used at minimal or no cost right now. We should figure out which rooms we should utilize and furniture them so we can begin using them. Laura agrees, as we just bought it residents will not like it if we take out more bonds.

Mary Roy said that they still do not know what the maintenance costs of the property are for the town. Cathy added she would like to also know what the town can afford to spend.

Janelle stated that they also need to know what needs to be done to make the building usable. Ken said that the idea is to have someone come in and make capital improvements to the building for their purposes. Mary Roy wondered why the town would want to relinquish it to a third party and instead of run it themselves? The answer is because of the costs to improve the building. Dan stated that what we need to do is use this tool to figure out how much initial capital investment we need and how do we get this money? From the town or a private investor. There is also the investment of the land for walking trails, parking etc.

Pat said we need to look at the Endicott strategic plan because it is not working there. Our view is the biggest investment.

Ron stated that he was wondering if would be possible to put a small retaining wall on the side instead of a platform. It seems that the next step should be a master plan with parking and walking trails.

Ken Buchland reviewed the categories for voting.

Multiple Events: The idea that there are private revenue generated events and enough free public events for residents. Maybe it is about the size of the events and not the amount or more specifically what type of event. You could regulate this any way you want.

Public Uses: The ways the building is used.

Design and Impacts: This includes traffic, drainage, public access which seems to clear that it will be off Commercial Street, traffic generated and the possibility of a CSA. We will need to have a structural engineer look at all the buildings to see what will stay and what will need to be taken down.

Preservation: This will happen after someone looks at the integrity of the buildings and could the buildings be preserved. This will include the 3 car garage.

Ownership: The town will always own the property but perhaps we will lease it out to someone in exchange for capital improvements. Pat asked if the town can lease it when it was purchased with CPC funds and the reply was yes but it would have to be in line with the deed restriction.

Ken stated that you could be very specific in your RFP as far as design criteria and ask them to reply to them or you could leave it open ask them for their ideas.

Ron is worried about restrictions on the property if you lease it out and other people control it. He wants to maximize the number of residents using it. He believes the property needs too much money in improvements along with the driveway that it will be hard to find someone who is

willing to put that much money into it. Ken stated if they are making a million dollars a year, they will be willing to invest into it. This is something we need to find out.

Mary Heinrichs states that she thought this would be a phased in plan with outdoor weddings and almost mothball the building for awhile and perhaps use the farm money to invest back into the building.

Ron thinks the public is ready to use the building now with minimal costs to the town. You could have a classical music concert, and art show a meeting room with a table and 12 chairs. Ken said you could have a "Friends of the Emery Estates" and see what they could do with it much like the Endicott Estates. You could begin to use the building and then begin to phase in a management RFP.

Pat is not sure that is the way to go as referred to the Endicott Estates as to why. We should learn from their mistakes.

Janelle stated that if we go with events we really need a management company. Another example to look at is South Shore Country Club. One half is leased and the other half is for public use.

Ron said another model is Stetson Hall in Randolph. They have a fundraising mentality and have a three person committee that runs it. They developed a master plan with Mass. Historical and received state funding. Ken said they have also talked to Randolph and they don't have many events but part of that is due to the lack of parking.

Chairman Condon would like this committee to start to make some decisions and narrow things down with specifics.

Ken stated that this committee should know do some prioritizing with the dot system. The green dots are the highest priority and the blue dots are the lowest priority. A large blow up of the Emery Estates Market Study and Use Analysis was placed on the wall so all committee members could go up and vote.

After a quick review of the results Ken stated that the one that received the most positive votes was Private revenue generating uses, events and programs. (Most members do want to make money in some way). The one that received the most low priority votes was lowest level of modification to public streets and utilities. The idea of change to get access and make improvements into the property is not important, it is important to make money. Lowest level of operating costs was also an important one. Ken will take this information and the minutes of the last meeting with the committees priority list and see how they fit with this as well as focusing on parking. There are three sections that will need to be merged.

Ken handed out an Emery Estates Final Report Outline for the committee to review:

Chapters

1. Goals
2. Description of Property and Assets
3. Land Use and Activity Program
 - a. Options
4. Physical Improvement Plan
 - a. Financial Impacts
5. Management Options
6. Funding Plan
7. Schedule
8. Implementation

Pat asked if the wedding/event planners were coming in to speak with them as requested in a prior meeting or is that part of an RFP or a request for Letters of Interest.

Ron stated that he thought an Artist/composer or writer residency was a creative idea a resident had.

Jen Ranger, 30 Eden Street – Is there any way to make donations to the Emery Estates? Is there a box at the house? It was stated that this has been talked about to create a “Friends” to accept donations. Jim Clarke will discuss this with the Mayor to see if this can start immediately.

Barbara Salucci, Windsor Road – She is an event planner and Watertown owns the Commander House with 3 employees and the house is very profitable. It has a brick patio and they use Taylor Rentals for a tent. You are renting the views and should begin renting right away for outside weddings. You do not need a kitchen, most caterers bring in their food. They do 70 functions a year and the Saturday weddings bring in \$4,000. Every event pays a \$25 catering license and a \$30 liquor license which brings in revenue to the town. This could be phased in and still remained owned by the town. She would not recommend putting in a permanent tent in front of the house. If you need it, put it off to the side. The town can run it and make money it is easy to lease it.

Janelle said a resident suggested to her the idea of 4H and wanted to bring it to the committee. Pat indicated a resident suggested that the Emery house maybe a fit for Junior League of Boston Showhouse. (info@jlboston.org)

Ken will prepare a draft for the committee to be ready on May 24th. I will be about 60 pages so everyone will receive a hard copy. Jim will try to get this on the website and at the library as well.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 31, 2012 at 7:00 pm.

The idea of the next public hearing is to show what this draft report looks like. There will then be another opportunity for public comment and then the committee will revise the document.

Lisa Beatrice, Mt. Vernon Road East – Asked if they could make reverse 911 calls or something to let residents know about the next open house. No, but we can look into using the schools connect ed.

Bill made a motion to adjourn at 8:45 and was seconded by Laura. Voted Unanimously.

Approved by:



Mary Roy Jordan
Clerk