

MINUTES OF THE
EMERY ESTATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JUNE 21, 2016

PRESENT: Mary Jordan-Roy (Vice Chairwoman), Heidi Lewis Smith, Ron Boretti, and Laura LeBarron

ABSENT: Pat O'Leary (Chairwoman), Cathy Torrey, Bill McCarthy, and Janelle Quinn

OTHERS: Bob Luongo, Planning Director
Nicholas Bulens, Administrative Coordinator

Vice Chairwoman Mary Jordan-Roy called the Emery Estates Advisory Committee meeting to order at 6:00 pm at Town Hall, 75 Middle Street, Weymouth.

EMERY ESTATE GRANT PROPOSAL PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING

Nicholas Bulens gave a power point presentation on the grant proposal. Nicholas stated that today's presentation is very conceptual. The grant would pay for final design plans to be developed.

Background:

- 24 -acre property purchased by the town for open space in 2011
- \$1.9M paid from Community Preservation Funds
- Estimated 20 residential homes could have been constructed onsite, if not purchased
- Mayor's Advisory Committee formed in 2011 to investigate potential reuses
- Reuse plan published in 2012, by the Cecil Group proposing trails, events venue, and community farm

Current Reuse Goals:

- Passive Recreation
- Programmed outdoor events
- Pedestrian connections
- Link to Legion's path system, Emery and Abigail Adam's House

Grant Opportunity:

- Massachusetts PARC grant program
- Funding to develop land for park and outdoor recreation purposes
- Maximum grant award is \$400K which is very large
- This is a reimbursement grant: Weymouth gets \$0.64 for every \$1.00 spent, up to \$400K
- This is a competitive program

Why PARC?

- Offers a large payout
- Emery could be very competitive
- Covers a lot of expenses: parking, bathrooms, shelter, seating, pathways, and lighting

Intention:

- Apply for a PARC grant
- Propose improvements for the grounds, not the buildings
- Propose concepts, not finished designs
- Propose passive recreation, not active recreation: NO sports fields, NO playgrounds, NO playing courts

Proposed Plan:

- Represents conceptual ideas sufficient for developing a budget (big picture stuff only)
- Nothing is set in stone
- Designs will come AFTER the grant award is announced
- There will be more public meetings, more chances to comment before anything is finalized

This grant is due mid-July. It will only cover improvements for the grounds, not the building. There could be some changes to the buildings but those would come from the town's pocket.

We are proposing concepts, not designs today. Normally we wait to hold a public meeting until after a designer has been hired and they've developed a design to 25% completion. This meeting is just the first of many, and it will help us in the grant application process. There will likely be two more public hearings on design, at least.

Nicholas then reviewed a map of the plans. This includes a mostly paved trail system. Parking areas are proposed that would fit approximately 90 spaces. This plan also includes plantings for about 40 new trees. There will be a pavilion that could hold 100 people for events and a separate building for bathrooms. There will be about 20 lights for the parking areas, pavilion, and restrooms. Ideally, there will be a sidewalk added to Emery Lane which will be the main access way. After studying the access from Commercial Street, it was determined that the route would be too steep and too dangerous.

Concept Overview:

- Looped pathways
- Parking for 90 cars
- New trees to screen parking
- Vehicle access from Emery Lane
- Pedestrian access from Emery, Commercial and North
- 1,800 sq. ft. pavilion
- 800 sq. ft. comfort building
- Lights for parking areas and pathways to pavilion and restrooms

Cost Estimates:

• Access, parking and drainage	\$580,000
• Pavilion	\$200,000
• Restroom	\$289,000
• Lighting	\$240,000
• Walking Paths	\$150,000
• Landscaping	\$65,000
• Sub-Total	\$1,524,000
• Contingency (10%)	\$152,400
• Total Estimate	\$1,676,400

These are rough numbers that still need to be reined.

This application is due July 13th. Awards will be announced in November or December. After that, it is a 2-year process. We have until end of FY17 to develop a final design and a full year after that for construction.

Public Comments:

Richard and James of Commercial Street – Richard & James, Diane & Steve, Dawn & Pauline, and Dan all live on Emery Lane and will be dramatically affected with what happens on the street. Richard and James lived for 34 years on Mass Avenue in Boston and do not want to live on a freeway again. He loves Legion Field and wants to see something at Emery. Widening the street and adding sidewalks would change the settings they all live in, and they would like the Town to keep them all in mind when planning this. Again, they moved from Boston to the suburbs and bought this big beautiful house which developers wanted.

Nick said that Emery Lane is their biggest concern. The town will look at all options.

Bob Thomas of 848 Washington Street – Asked if the National Park Service could be contacted to put up a memorial for the five Medal of Honor recipients of Weymouth. This would make it a historical site. Back in 2007 he drew up plans for this type of memorial and presented them to the committee.

Nick said that there isn't a lot of money in historical grants. They are also very restrictive and hard to obtain.

Bob Thomas said if the Town gets the Army Corp of Engineers involved, they will pay for an access road and that would help the neighbors.

Mayor Hedlund acknowledged and addressed what this community is doing to recognize all the Medal of Honor recipients.

Martha Webber of Hawkins Court - She is the President of the Weymouth Art Association and would like to see Emery used for culture. Many Towns have their own community art centers,

and Weymouth does not. Will this pavilion be heated? Is it year round access to it? She would like to see it be year round.

Jane Keating of 164 Candia Street – Is this CDBG eligible? Did the Committee look at the Endicott Estate? Could the house be rented for cultural events? She thinks the house could be utilized more.

Wayne Mathews of 952 Commercial Street – President of the EWNA. He is very happy something is happening at Emery. He understands the neighbor's concerns in regards to traffic and hopes the Town will work to minimize impacts. Does this require a BZA variance on parking? Bob Luongo said the idea is to provide some parking but for larger events, users will need to park offsite and bus people in. Would the lighting be on timers? Who will be responsible for locking the bathrooms? Will there be increased police patrols?

Nick said this is not eligible for CDBG funding. We are budgeting \$200K for a pavilion which would provide for a hip roof with no walls and generally basic. The property is currently zoned R-1. We will have to put a conservation restriction on it as the CPA requires, and the zoning will be changed to open space. Lighting will likely be on a timer, and the park will be open dusk to dawn. Only programmed activities will be allowed after dusk.

Kathy Curran of 26 Babcock Avenue – She likes this plan and would like to see more gravel on the pathways instead of asphalt. Busing in people is great. Will this grant prevent future uses of the home?

Nick said we have to dedicate the estate as a “park” forever. Buildings can still be used if they support the efforts of the park.

Art Newmar, Naval Historical – He recruited a volunteer group that worked on the USS Salem. They got it ready in even months when everyone said it would take 2.5 years. It's amazing what volunteers can do. Also, he recommends security cameras on site.

Nick said there is a camera on the house currently to monitor the outside. He stated again this meeting is not about the buildings. The Main House has an asbestos roof which will cost \$100K to dispose of whether or not the Main House is used in the future or demolished. There is lead paint on the outside, which is chipping. We could scrap and paint the house to create a nice back drop for the estate.

Nancy Pendergast-Cameron, Member of Historical Commission, Abigail Adams Society – She likes this plan and supports tying it into the Abigail Adams House.

Debbie Doyle of 19 Genevieve Road – In the last administration she suggested starting up a nonprofit or friends group to help the house and never heard back.

Nick said the Town cannot initiate this process. It needs to come from a group of citizens that are willing to set up a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Friends groups typically raise 1/3 of the operational budget for properties like Emery. Foundations also love to give to nonprofits.

Kurt Betcher, grew up on Academy Avenue but is no longer a resident of Weymouth – He is a General Contractor and rebuilds old houses. He is offering to volunteer to do some drawings. He saw the paint and you might be able to use dry ice on the lead paint. It falls to ground, and you vacuum it up. The EPA offers grants to help get dispose of hazardous waste on the property. The pavilion should be used as a breezeway to the house, and you should try to incorporate the bathrooms into the pavilion.

Bob Thomas – asked how close will the pavilion be to the main house? We now have federal rules on removal of lead paint. We should protect the residents on Emery Lane from contaminants. The grounds need to be covered when doing this.

Bob Luongo said this plan does not prohibit using or tearing down the building.

Mayor Hedlund addressed the crowd and said he appreciated the Emery Committee's input and Nick's work on this. He believes in historic preservation and recommends residents look at the Daniel Webster Estate in Marshfield. It was in worse condition and entirely through nonprofits they have restored the building.

Emily DaRosa of 20 Ashmont Street – She stated that she thinks 90 parking spaces is too much and might be disruptive. She spends a lot of time up there. It is beautiful. She likes the pavilion but the 90 spaces seem too much.

Nick said it doesn't have to be 90 but they will budget for it anyway.

Daniel Kenney of 9 Emery Lane – asked how many parking spaces are at Legion Field? It was stated about 70-75. 90 parking spaces is a large volume. It is hard to take a left out of Emery Lane on Saturdays/Sundays when events are going on at Legion Field. There is only about 60 feet from the entrance to Legion and Emery Lane. It is already a congested area. Cars are parking on both sides of Commercial Street already, and cars are speeding. He hopes there will be police details during events.

Richard of Commercial Street – said the parking on both sides of Commercial Street is very dangerous. The cars don't slow down.

Dawn Smith of 15 Emery Lane – He is an original resident of Emery Lane and asked if the circle will remain at the end of street. Nick said the circle has always been there in their discussion. He agrees it helps slow down cars.

Kurt Betcher, General Contractor – said a gravel driveway would be better. Maybe you could create parking along the Commercial Street entrance.

Bill Lawlor of 92 Mt. Vernon Road West – Legion Field is an accident waiting to happen. People are trying to cross the street with kids and cars are flying by. This will generate more people. He suggested putting a light to help people cross the street.

Nick stated that this presentation is on the Town's website if anyone wants to view it.

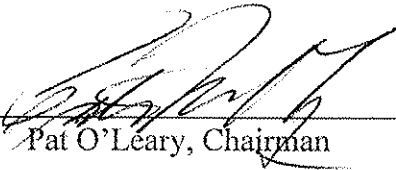
The next meeting of the Emery Estate Advisory Committee will be July 14, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the committee adjourned at 7:35 pm.
Respectfully submitted by:

Lee Hultin
Recording Secretary

Approved:


Pat O'Leary, Chairman

07/14/16
Date