

MINUTES OF THE  
EMERY ESTATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MARCH 24, 2016

**PRESENT:** Pat O'Leary (Chair), Mary Jordan-Roy, Cathy Torrey, Laura LeBarron, Janelle Quinn, Bill McCarty, Ron Boretti and Heidi Lewis Smith

**OTHERS:** Mayor Robert Hedlund  
Ted Langill, Chief of Staff  
Nicholas Bulens, Administrative Coordinator  
Attorney Joe Callanan (by conference call)  
Lee Hultin, Recording Secretary  
Nancy Cameron, Resident

Chairwoman Pat O'Leary called the Emery Estates Advisory Committee meeting to order at 6:00 pm at Town Hall, Mayor's Office, 75 Middle Street, Weymouth.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Cathy Torrey made a motion to approve the minutes of December 1, 2015 and was seconded by Mary Jordan. Voted 7-0 (Laura LeBarron not there yet).

Mary Jordan made a motion to approve the minutes of November 4, 2015 and was seconded by Bill McCarthy. Voted 7-0 (Laura LeBarron not there yet).

Ron Boretti made a motion to approve the minutes of April 25, 2013 and was seconded by Cathy Torrey. Voted 7-0 (Laura LeBarron not there yet).

**MAYOR'S UPDATE**

All members of the committee introduced themselves to Mayor Hedlund. Mayor Hedlund stated he has not had much time since he became Mayor to focus on Emery Estate. Nicholas Bulens gave Mayor Hedlund a brief summary of the history of this committee and how it got to where it is today. The Cecil Group came up with three (3) possible usages for the property. The first was open space with walking paths throughout. The second was a CSA farm, and the third was an events venue. It was decided that all three uses should try to be incorporated. The group began by looking at CSA farming. It was determined that the soil was not good enough, and there were not many grants available for something publicly-run CSAs. Then the members looked at other event venues. The group went to visit similar types of places and finally went out to bid on a RFP. The Town received two (2) proposals and chose to decline them both as one did not meet the requirements (i.e., they were not a non-profit organization) and the other did not have experience managing similar properties.

The Planning Department staff reached out to the Trustees of the Reservation to see why they did not bid on the RFP. Nicholas spoke with the Regional Director about 3 weeks ago, and they had

concerns. (1) The timing to respond to the RFP was not long enough. We only allowed 3-4 weeks, and they suggested 3-6 months would be needed. (2) The term of the contract for 3 years was not long enough. They said a lease for a term of at 5-10 years would have been more appropriate to make a commitment. (3) The Town's promised capital improvements were not clear or sufficiently committed. (4) The review process proposed was too cumbersome.

The Chair asked if Mayor Hedlund wished to retain this advisory committee. It was explained by the Chair that the committee's mission in past years had been soft and non-specific – supporting events as needed by Mayor. Mayor Hedlund would like to hear comments from the committee as to what they would like to see up there.

Mary Jordan-Roy stated that the group has completed their task at hand and is not sure what their duties are now. They are an advisory group only.

Pat O'Leary said she would like to see them redo the RFP and do some smaller events up there to get people on the grounds.

Mayor Hedlund asked the committee to look at the Daniel Webster Estate in Marshfield. It was owned by the town and was not doing very well. A nonprofit group took over the estate and brought it up to speed, and it is very popular now. The only difference between the two sites is the parking.

Mary Jordan-Roy said the Cecil Group called for two parking lots with about 75 parking spaces, but there was an issue with the neighbors on Mount Vernon Road West. They report problems with drainage and are concerned that creating a parking lot would make it worse.

Mayor Hedlund suggested the group look at Winnie Kennedy Castle in Haverhill as another example.

Cathy Torrey stated that the committee looked at Endicott Estate. When we did a tour it was not doing very well. It has since been turned over to a for-profit management, and they are making money now.

In the fall the South Shore Chamber of Commerce did a cultural tour which included a stop at the Emery Estate. Following the South Shore Chamber visit a member requested use of the facility for a small meeting in the building, and the town was unable to approve.

Ron Boretti said the committee was actively looking for a nonprofit group with money to invest and that has not happened. The Trustees of the Reservation own most of their locations.

Because the town purchased this land with CPC funds, it allows us to deed it to a nonprofit and keep ownership of the land.

The Town's attorney Joseph Callanan said he has experience with private entities using publically-owned land. We can lease it for up to 10 years, if longer then you need an act of the legislature. Usually a bank will want a 10 year lease for loans. The Massachusetts Horticulture

got legislature, so it can be done. The MDC leases rinks out for hockey, and lighthouses are leased. The Town could use benchmarks to show financial capabilities.

The committee needs to redo the RFP with more specifics and include capital improvements that the town is willing to invest in. Anything that is over a three year term will need Town Council approval.

Mayor Hedlund will call the Director of the Trustees of the Preservation to discuss what their interest in Emery is.

Ron Boretti said the house isn't set up for weddings as there are no large rooms. The lawn has limited space as it slopes down. The building itself is in poor condition and the committee needs to decide if we purchased Emery for the building or for the land. If it was for the land then maybe we should consider tearing it down. The committee was reminded that CPA funds cannot be used for maintenance.

The Mayor asked the group to find out what the mood of the town is.

Cathy Torrey said that as a member of the Historical Commission, they have said they do not want the house torn down. The house has been sitting for too long.

Mayor Hedlund asked the group to come up with ideas and suggestions on what to do with the house. He would like to see a presence up there, and a short term plan to generate interest in the site. He offered to bring someone from the Webster House to talk to the group.

Heidi said we should have open houses and allow people to go through the house as well as walk the grounds.

*Mayor Hedlund and Cathy Torrey left at 7:00 pm and Laura LeBarron arrived.*

There was a brief discussion on what to include in the new RFP, now that the committee has been given the go ahead from Mayor Hedlund to get more involved and come up with ideas on what to use the Emery for. Everyone on the committee has different ideas. In order to use the house, you need to be able to charge a fee. The fee schedule needs to be discussed as well as getting a revolving account set up. Ted suggested that the Town could set up a revolving account.

Nick stated that the building inspector had already put together a list of things that need to be done to the house in order to use it. He will send that out to everyone for discussion at the next meeting. The furnishing are inappropriate for any event, the bathrooms do not always work, it's not handicap accessible, and nobody cleans the inside of buildings regularly. Maybe using the inside of the building is not realistic at this point, and we just have outside events up there.

Mary said that the Town doesn't have any more money to put into this, and we need to start raising money. Maybe the farmer's market could be moved up there. Nick stated that the Farmer's Market is already being moved to Legion Field this summer and could not be moved to

Emery Estate. It is not an ideal location for the market due to problems with set up, parking, and accessibility.

Bill McCarthy suggested doing the outside events such as Halloween, Christmas and small family events there. He has a logo for T-shirts and maybe we could sell them to raise money.

Nick Bulens will arrange for a tour for the committee at the Emery Estate over the next two weeks.

#### Eagle Scout Project at Emery Estate

David Chase, Troop 2 Leader and Antonio Chase came before the board to explain Antonio's Eagle Scout project.

Mayor Hedlund has already approved this project at Emery. Antonio will clean up the stairway off Commercial Street to the Emery house and make all necessary repairs to them. He will also repaint the railing and plant flowers on both sides of the stairs. He will then be cutting the path back to open it up and put some erosion control along the path along with installing a few railroad ties to create steps along the path. The path will come out to the driveway where he will then clean along the wall. There is a large stone there and he will have a bench donated to put there. Some limbs will be pruned along the way. The assistant troop leader will oversee this project and sign off on it.

Ron suggested having the DPW walk the site prior to doing the project.

The Chair requested the scout provide the committee with a one-page project summary. It was also noted that this is Town property, and DPW approval was needed.

#### Other Business

Jannell Quinn suggested reaching out to other groups in the town to see if they could do projects up at the Emery to help fix it up. It was suggested to reach out to the High School carpentry shop to help with some repairs at Emery.

Other ideas for Emery were: an Emery Garden Club, clean ups, holiday events, moving the movie nights up there, and open houses during the Farmer's Market. One event each month.

Next Steps for the committee:

- The group will have a walk through on April 7, 2016 at 3:00 pm.
- Each member of the committee will come up with five (5) ideas for using the property in the short term, to be discussed at the next meeting.
- The Chair will work with the administration on drafting a mission statement for the committee and for membership discussion.
- Nicholas will draft questions the committee must consider and answer before drafting a new RFP.

Next meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2016 at 6:00 pm.

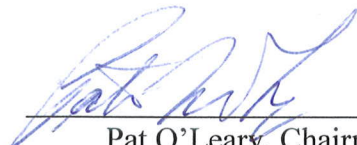
**ADJOURNMENT**

Mary Jordan Roy made a motion to adjourn at 7:35 pm and was seconded by Laura LeBarron.  
Voted Unanimously

Respectfully submitted by:

Lee Hultin  
Recording Secretary

Approved:

  
Pat O'Leary, Chairman

4/14/16  
Date