



Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee Agenda & Meeting Packet

June 25, 2024

7:00 PM

Meeting will be held at the Municipal Building
2nd Floor, Council Chambers
355 East Central Street

A NOTE TO RESIDENTS: All citizens are welcome to attend public meetings in person. **To view the live meeting remotely, citizens** are encouraged to watch the live stream on the [Franklin Town Hall TV YouTube channel](#) or the live broadcast on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29. Meetings are also archived by Franklin TV on the [Franklin Town Hall TV YouTube channel](#) and shown on repeat on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29 for those who miss the live meeting.

To listen to the meeting remotely citizens may call-in using this number: 1-929-205-6099. This will not permit participation in the meeting.

To participate in the meeting remotely citizens are able to join a [Zoom Webinar](#) using the information provided below.

- Zoom Webinar ID # 879 0695 2084
- Zoom Webinar Link [HERE](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87906952084) (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87906952084>)
- **Any participants who wish to speak** during the webinar must enter their **full name and email address** when joining the webinar.
- All participants will be automatically muted upon joining the webinar. In order to speak, participants - who have entered full name and email address - will need to select the "Raise Hand" function to request to be unmuted.
- All speakers will be required to state their full name and street address before commenting.

Agenda:

1. Expressions of Interest Presentations (anticipated times)
 - a. 7:00 to 7:20 - [Dean College](#)
 - b. 7:20 to 7:40 - [Pennrose, LLC](#)
 - c. 7:40 to 8:00 - [HFA and TMC Properties](#)
 - d. 8:00 to 8:20 - [Camford Property Group, Inc.](#)
2. Final Recommendation to the Town Council
 - a. [Draft Letter](#)
3. Adjourn

This is a meeting of the Franklin Town Council Sub-Committee; under the Open Meeting Law, this subcommittee is a separate "public body" from the Town Council. Therefore, unless the Town Council has separately notified and posted its own meeting, Councilors who are not members of this subcommittee will not be permitted to speak or otherwise actively participate @ this meeting, although they may attend and observe. This prohibition is necessary to avoid the potential for an Open Meeting Law Violation

Town of Franklin

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OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

June 25, 2024

Franklin Town Council
355 East Central Street
Franklin, MA 02038

Re: Recommendation from the Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee

Dear Franklin Town Council:

On behalf of the Committee, I am writing to submitting our formal recommendation on the future use of the Davis-Thayer building and parcel of land.

The Davis-Thayer Reuse Committee is composed of nine members, which was governed by a committed charge of the Town Council. I want to thank all nine members of the committee for their service. In addition to myself, the nine members are Town Councilor Patrick Sheridam Vice-Chair; Town Councilor Theodore D Cormier-Leger, Clerk; Planning Board Chair, Gregory Rondeau; Christopher Stickney, Roberta Debaggis-Trahan; Megan M McCarthy; Gwyneth Morss; and Sam Williams. The committee sunsets on June 30, 2024. The contents of this draft and associated exhibits will comprise the full report back to the Town Council.

The Committee was charged with four tasks, which are:

1. Conduct an assessment of current conditions and possible uses;
2. Conduct a market appraisal of the property;
3. Engage community stakeholders and citizen input through a public listening series; and
4. Evaluate potential future uses and make a final report to the Town Council by December 23, 2023.

All four tasks were accomplished. All materials are located on the town website for this project.

The committee conducted six meetings and two open house listening sessions over the past year. It was great to see such a large attendance at the open houses of so many generations of Franklinites returning to take a look at their former school. We reviewed an Existing Conditions Report from Kaestle Boos and conducted a baseline appraisal of the parcel, which listed a value of \$3.2 million for the building and land

in fee simple. The appraisal showed a \$1.4 million land value. It is worth noting that the assessed value from the Board of Assessors is listed as \$4,761,200 on the official town property card. They have the building value at \$2.76 million and the land at \$1.97 million. These appraisals are all based on current zoning for the parcel which is Single-Family IV, which the committee sees generally as restrictive to both future desirable development and maximizing the value of the town's asset. A zoning change is almost certain.

The committee also navigated numerous meetings regarding the structural integrity and condition of the building. Several reports have been completed by the town over the past decade and can be found on the website. In short, the building needs significant capital improvements in the tens of millions, including ADA accessibility, structural improvements, a roof and all new mechanicals, in addition to many other realities of any 100-year old building.

At the recommendation of the committee, the Town Council authorized an Expression of Interest to gauge market interest and do fact finding. The Committee received four serious proposals and had public discussions about their concepts. This material should give the Council many options and ideas to think about. As part of the Expression of Interest process, an additional two open houses were held to allow prospective applicants to view the building.

We offer the Town Council the following recommendations to consider as the community continues to decide the future of the building and parcel:

- The Committee wishes the Town maintain ownership of the 3.5 acre land parcel, if possible;
- The Committee wishes the Town maintain ownership of the building, if possible, and to prioritize protection of the outside facade;
- Based on the four Expressions of Interest and the brief presentations, the committee recommends that the Town Council prioritize a mixed use development where small commercial or retail business may also thrive with a mixed use of housing types (eg - senior housing or artist lofts). The Committee recommends that development may not also be limited to the current structure and we are open to using other areas of the parcel for these uses.
- The Committee recommends a potential long term leasing option to an entity that can improve the capital investment needed in the property over a period of time, while maintaining ownership of the parcel and relieving the expense to the taxpayer to maintain and revitalize the current building.
- The Committee also believes these priorities should not limit the Town Council from other options as they may become available, such as an Arts Center or other concepts that contribute to the Town's economic development. The Committee is dedicated to ensuring a balance is reached between maximizing the financial value of the public asset with the desire to develop the former Davis-Thayer School parcel into an accessible and inviting community space.

Please see the Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee website for all background materials:
<https://www.franklinma.gov/davis-thayer-building-reuse-advisory-committee>

The Davis-Thayer Building turns 100 years old this year! We hope this report can serve as a catalyst for further engagement and discussion within the community to realize a project that will unify the community and positively position the Town for another 100 years!

Warm regards,

Debbie Pellegrini, Chair
Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee

Cc: Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee
Planning Board
Master Plan Committee
Town Clerk

Exhibits: See [Town Website](#)

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