

Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee Agenda & Meeting Packet

July 17, 2024

4:00 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.

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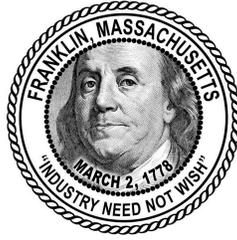
To participate in the meeting remotely citizens are able to join a [Zoom Webinar](#) using the information provided below.

- Zoom Webinar ID # 846 1456 4848
- Zoom Webinar Link [HERE](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84614564848) (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84614564848>)
- **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. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. [July 18, 2023](#)
 - b. [August 15, 2023](#)
 - c. [September 19, 2023](#)
 - d. [October 17, 2023](#)
 - e. [November 28, 2023](#)
 - f. [June 10, 2024](#)
 - g. [June 25, 2024](#)
2. 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



**Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 18, 2023**

A meeting of the Davis-Thayer Reuse Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday evening, July 18, 2023, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA.

Members present: Chair Deborah Pellegrini, Vice Chair Patrick Sheridan, Clerk Ted Cormier-Leger, Roberta Trahan, Sam Williams, Greg Rondeau, Chris Stickney, Gwyneth Morss, and Megan McCarthy.

Other staff present: Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, Deputy Town Administrator Amy Frigulietti, Director of Public Facilities Mike D'Angelo, Deputy Director of Facilities, Kevin Harn.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM. The Town Clerk was present to administer the oath of office to the new committee members. Each member introduced themselves.

The Town Administrator included a packet of materials on the core legal tenets of being a member of a public committee, including the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law and Ethics laws.

The Town Administrator included a version of the approved committee charge. Chair Pellegrini gave opening comments on the purpose of the committee. Clerk Cormier-Leger read the entire charge for the record.

Town Facilities Director, Mike D'Angelo, and representatives from Kaestle Boos and Associates (KBA), Joe Melotti and Paul Dominov, gave an hour long presentation of the latest draft analysis of the existing conditions at the school based on studies that have been done by KBA on the Davis-Thayer School in 2013 ("Study for the Davis-Thayer Elementary School") and 2020 ("Comprehensive School Facilities Report September 30, 2020), respectively. All studies and materials have been included on the Town website, as the files are very large in format sizing and in page length (and color). Copies are also available in the Town Clerk's office.

Along with the KBA representatives, Mr. D'Angelo outlined the previous 2013 and 2020 reports, and then extensively walked through a preliminary 2023 current conditions study on the screen. The reported findings anticipated a \$35 to \$40 million renovation of the building to continue it as a modernized facility. He outlined the numerous internal and structural limitations on the building including mechanical upgrades, ADA accessibility, modern code and a upgraded roof as the prime cost drivers of the soon to be 100-year old building. Complete copies are available in the Town Clerk's Office entitled "Davis-Thayer Elementary school Existing Conditions Report March 21, 2023".

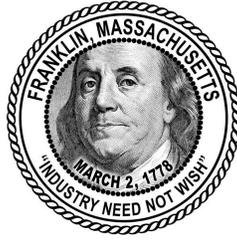
Many members of the committee provided inquisitive comments and questions around the material presented. Councilor Cormier-Leger asked several questions around the cost and preventative reasons about why this was a likely poor building for a Police Station. Member Rondeau asked about the property value and ownership of the parcel. Member Williams and Member Stickney asked questions about the structural capacities and engineering of the building. Member Morss asked about other similar projects and housing options. Mr. Hellen summarized the dialogue by suggesting at future meetings, the committee is charged with narrowing down potential uses for our staff and consultants to evaluate at a deeper level than presented.

In addition, two residents attended. Mr. Rick Ciccone attended to express his preference for the municipality to continue owning the parcel and using it for a new Police Station, as well as to ask questions on the feasibility of the building being used as a Police Station. Mr. Wayne Simarrian also attended to express his support for keeping the building in municipal ownership and preserving the structure.

The committee had a short discussion on the meeting schedule, potential open houses, procurement and other engagement techniques. **MOTION** to hold the next meeting on August 15, 2023. **SECOND** by McCarthy. No Discussion. **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn **MOTION** to adjourn by Sheridan. **SECOND** by McCarthy. **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12PM.



Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 15, 2023

A meeting of the Davis-Thayer Reuse Advisory Committee was held Tuesday evening, August 15, 2023, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA.

Members present: Chair Deborah Pellegri, Vice Chair Patrick Sheridan, Clerk Ted Cormier-Leger, Roberta Trahan, Sam Williams, Greg Rondeau, Chris Stickney, Gwyneth Morss, Megan McCarthy.

Other staff present: Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, Deputy Town Administrator Amy Frigulietti, Director of Public Facilities Mike D'Angelo, Deputy Director of Facilities, Kevin Harn.

Chair Pellegri called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

The Committee held an hour long discussion with the Town Facilities Director, Mike D'Angelo, and representatives from Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc (KBA), Joe Melotti and Paul Dominov, on potential future uses based on the existing conditions. The meeting committee dialogue evolved around the topics of potential housing solutions for many individual demographics, including seniors, artists, veterans and others; an arts center based on recent recommendations of a Town Council subcommittee of Arts and Culture; mixed use development; potential Recreation Center; and, further discussion on a Police Station. Options surrounded around potential sale of the land, leasing to an entity, or other nonprofit or for profit endeavors.

A few citizens attended to comment. Rick Ciccone attended the meeting, providing further encouragement to use the Davis-Thayer School as a police station and the former police station as an Arts Center, as well as a possible parking deck. Maxwell Morrongiello suggested the costs may not outweigh the benefits of a police station downtown at the Davis-Thayer site. He also opined on considering equity, lifting those up who have less, as a consideration of any final policy decisions. Wayne Simmariian also advocated for the Town to maintain ownership of the parcel and building and as a future site for the Franklin Recreation Department with arts and culture stakeholders having a floor to do their work. The committee discussed the process of a non-binding Expression of Interest to gauge ideas for the parcel.

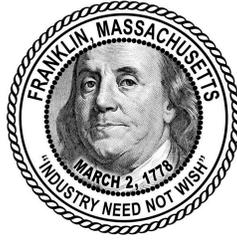
KBA described the limitations to a Police Station, including the parcel size, renovation costs and the structural requirements to build a station that are not attributes of the current facility. Staff and KBA explained that with an unlimited amount of funds, anything is possible, but not realistic due to the financial constraints of any municipality sponsored project.

The Committee discussed their preference for Open Houses to allow the public into the building for

the first time in many years and get a first hand view of the building. They also recommended that we hear from the Recreation Director and Chief of Police for their views on Davis-Thayer being used for these suggested uses, which the Town Administrator agreed to coordinate.

Chair Pellegri entertained a motion to adjourn. **MOTION** to adjourn by Pellegri. **SECOND** by Cormier-Leger. **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:19PM.



Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2023

A meeting of the Davis-Thayer Reuse Advisory Committee was held Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA.

Members present: Chair Deborah Pellegri, Clerk Ted Cormier-Leger, Roberta Trahan, Sam Williams, Greg Rondeau, Chris Stickney (Remote), Gwyneth Morss, Megan McCarthy. Members absent: Vice Chair Patrick Sheridan.

Others present: Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, Deputy Town Administrator Amy Frigulietti, Director of Public Facilities Mike D'Angelo, and Deputy Director of Facilities, Kevin Harn.

The Chair called to order the meeting at 7:00 PM.

As the committee requested, Recreation Director, Ryan Jette, and Chief of Police, TJ Lynch, were invited to offer their feedback on the potential of using the facility for a Recreation Center or a Police Station. Ryan Jette gave an overview of his 24 years as an employee and his work locations in that time period, moving from 16 East Street (current Fire Station) to 150 Emmons Street (former Town Hall) and now 257 Beaver Street. He gave an overview of the layout of the current structures at that site. He acknowledged that his current facility is well done, but they are slowly outgrowing his current Department space. He is not opposed to the idea of renovating Davis-Thayer, but has concerns of the total cost to rebuild it. Two citizens, Maxwell Moringiello and Rick Ciccone, engaged Mr. Jette and Mr. Hellen regarding the financial challenges of using the site as a Recreation Center and offered suggestions to raise revenue by selling the current Recreation Department Buildings to repurpose toward the restoration of the building.

As the committee requested, the Chief of Police, TJ Lynch, attended the meeting to offer his professional views on the potential of the site becoming a future Police Station. He gave an overview of the history of the current Police Station and supported the many constraints presented by the engineers at the last two meetings. He gave a short summary of the major needs of the facility, which include appropriate space for a multitude of modernized needs for both the Police Department, but also to be an interactive community space. He acknowledged the Police Station Building Committee is beginning its work on a needs assessment, which will further define the exact needs for the new building. He summarizes that it is his educated and professional opinion that the current DT site would be challenging, even more so with the current building.

Mike McCue, from KBA Associates, summarized a high level profile of a station at 30,000 to 35,000 building for a new station in a marketplace with very high costs from inflation. He explained considerations and assumptions of a police station differ from most buildings with most services on

one floor, less appetite for multiple floors, as well as other items such as training capacity. Numerous points were raised by numerous members on the timing, cost, profile and process for the police station project.

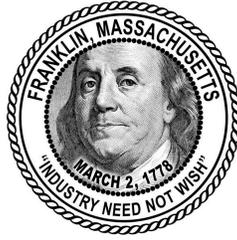
Town staff gave an overview of the Owner's Project Manager (OPM) hiring process. Mr. Ciccone asked about the financing of the OPM, which had been funded by the Town Council two years ago. Mr. Morriigiello asked questions around the future uses of the old Police Station and could it be leased, which it could be. Town staff answered questions about the potential use of DT as a training center on just one floor, which evolved into a discussion of Police training needs.

The Committee received a project update on the cleanout of the Davis-Thayer School. Mr. D'Angelo and Mr. Hellen reported that the school organizers crews have scheduled dates and will be cleaned out and ready for the public to be able to walk through unimpeded. A discussion ensued about leftover furniture and items that could be recycled, donated, or taken as part of a "yard sale" style giveaway.

The Committee and Town Administrator had a discussion of open house dates, which resulted in the two scheduled dates of October 20th, 2023 and October 21st, 2023.

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn **MOTION** to adjourn by Williams. **SECOND** by Rondeau.
VOTE: Yes-8 No-0, Absent-1

Meeting adjourned at 8:19PM



Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2023

A meeting of the Davis-Thayer Reuse Advisory Committee was held Tuesday evening, October 17, 2023, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA.

Members present: Chair Deborah Pellegrini, Vice Chair Patrick Sheridan, Clerk Ted Cormier-Leger, Roberta Trahan, Sam Williams, Greg Rondeau, Chris Stickney, Gwyneth Morss, Megan McCarthy.

Others present: Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, Deputy Town Administrator Amy Frigulietti.

Chair Pellegrini called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

The Committee discussed the upcoming two open houses on October 20th and October 21st, 2023. The committee and town staff discussed the logistics, an area for those to put down ideas and feedback, publicity of the open houses, accessibility and other events that weekend in Franklin at the Fire Department.

Continued discussion of potential future uses with discussions surrounding a potential non binding expression of interest, the Town continuing to own the land, Dean College's interest if they would pay taxes if they owned the parcel. Mr. Hellen answered many of the questions suggesting Dean College is not legally required, but have been excellent partners in recent years by agreeing to pay taxes at the same rate as other property owners.

Patricia Prewitt attended on behalf of a friend and at the suggestion of Member Williams who has recommended attending the meetings. She engaged in the discussion around how public input would be used and mechanics of the Expression of Interest. Mr. Hellen described the process by comparing it to recent examples with the Old South Church and Red Brick Schoolhouse. As the dialogue evolved, the committee generated a consensus to recommend to the Town Council to approve and submit an Expression of Interest to gauge the market for ideas.

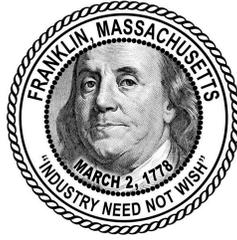
MOTION to move the committee recommends the Town Council prepare and issue a non-binding Expression of Interest by Clerk Cormier-Leger. **SECOND** by Sheridan. **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.

Steve Sherlock raised an issue of the timeline of the Expression of Interest and the conflict with the sunset of the committee charge on December 31, 2023. Member Trahan also noted that the goals of the committee are not yet fully completed and likely unable to get done by the end of the year as instructed in the committee charge. She suggested a committee extension from the Town Council and the committee had consensus to request an extension through June 30, 2024.

MOTION to move the date of the next meeting to Tuesday, November 28 by Pellegrini. **SECOND** by Cormier-Leger. **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0

Chair Pellegri entertained a motion to Adjourn **MOTION** to adjourn by Cormier-Leger. **SECOND** by Sheridan.
VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:06PM



Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 28, 2023

A meeting of the Davis-Thayer Reuse Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday evening, November 28, 2023, at the Municipal Building, 3rd Floor, Training Room, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA.

Members present: Chair Deborah Pellegrini, Vice Chair Patrick Sheridan, Clerk Ted Cormier-Leger, Roberta Trahan, Sam Williams, Greg Rondeau, Chris Stickney, Gwyneth Morss, and Megan McCarthy.

Others present: Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, Deputy Town Administrator Amy Frigulietti, Director of Public Facilities Mike D'Angelo, Deputy Director of Engineering Kevin Harn.

Chair Pellegrini called the meeting at 7:03 PM.

The Town Administrator gave a few updates. He suggested the non binding Expression of Interest would be before the Town Council in the new year and would prioritize a long window to allow interested parties enough time to submit thorough proposals. Clerk Cormier-Leger and other members of the committee discussed and recommended potential short term leasing of the parcel or building to Dean College, or another entity, such as Franklin Recreation or a private group who could utilize the space. The Town Administrator explained to the committee that these options are possible, but unlikely to materialize due to the fact that there are barriers, such as ADA accessibility, and there would have to be a public process to select a tenant.

Second, Mr. Hellen noted the staff have met with the Board of Assessors and Finance staff that the appraisal procurement scope was complete and a vendor would be selected for under \$10,000. It will be completed sometime in February or March.

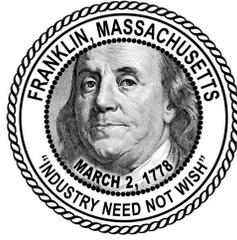
Finally, Facilities Director, Mike D'Angelo, and Joe Melotti from Kaestle Boos and Associates (KBA) walked the committee through their final existing conditions analysis if the municipality were to lead a project. Various alternatives such as a Recreation Center, Art Gallery and Center, senior housing would all cost between \$20-\$40 million in renovation costs if the town were to initiate a project. These are basic numbers that could change in a variety of ways depending on the assumptions.

The committee had a discussion on whether to make a formal recommendation or continue the discussion and request an extension of the committee charge. Member Trahan commented that she believed with some additional time and with a completed appraisal and submissions to an Expression of Interest, the committee would do a better job completing its mission.

The committee members discussed the exceptional attendance at the two open houses. Chair Pellegrini and others also discussed how wonderful it was to see so many families take a small desk/chairs or other small items for nostalgic value.

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn **MOTION** to adjourn by Cormier-Leger. **SECOND** by Williams.
VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:58PM



**Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee
Agenda & Meeting Packet
June 10, 2024**

A meeting of the Davis-Thayer Reuse Advisory Committee was held Tuesday evening, June 10, 2024, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA.

Members present: Chair Deborah Pellegri, Vice Chair Patrick Sheridan, Clerk Ted Cormier-Leger, Roberta Trahan, Sam Williams, Greg Rondeau, Chris Stickney, Gwyneth Morss, Megan McCarthy.

Other staff present: Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, Deputy Town Administrator Amy Frigulietti, Director of Public Facilities Mike D'Angelo, Deputy Director of Engineering Kevin Harn.

Chair Pellegri calls the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

The Town Administrator gave a brief overview from the Executive Summary of the property appraisal review titled "[Real Property Appraisal Report, Shepherd Associates, LLC - May 1, 2024](#)" The Administrator described the property is appraised at \$3.2 million for the land and building combined (fee simple) or \$1.4 million for just the land only (fee simple). These assumptions were on the current zoning, Single Family Residential IV, which limits what could be built. He suggested the Board of Assessors had the valuations of \$4.7 million for the land and building. The town has appraised the property at \$1.97 million for the land and \$2.7 million for the building. Both appraisals depict different assumptions, but this is typical. Member Stickney, as a certified general appraisal in the Commonwealth, suggested the appraisal was done well and has no major issues with the appraisal. He raised two observations from the Shepherd Report. The first being that the land value scenario as put forth seemed a little low and the building value scenario seemed a little high.

Chair Pellegri raised the idea to decide if the committee desires to recommend to the Council maintaining the ownership of the parcel, the building and to preserve the facade of the building.

Clerk Cormier-Leger asked TA Hellen to clarify the Committee's charge asking whether the recommendation can be broad rather than specific to a particular project. TA Hellen agreed with Clerk Cormier-Leger and clarified the charge and process to the Committee.

Member Williams asked about limitations to the proceeds from the lease or sale of the building. TA Hellen stated there are limitations on both the sale of the building and a lease, but it is less restrictive with a lease. He indicated the funds would need to go into a special account and funds from a sale would need to be spent on purchasing land.

Vice Chair Sheridan indicated he would like to keep the building facade.

The Committee discussed whether or not it was appropriate to ask if those interested in the parcel would entertain a ground lease and agreed that it was appropriate to have this discussion at this time.

The Committee invited those who have filed expressions of interest and were in attendance to give a preliminary review of their proposals. The five Expressions of Interest are listed below.

[Matthew Zajac](#) - Was not in attendance.

[Dean College](#) - Sandra Kane from Dean College was there representing Dean College. The Chairman of the Board at Dean College & Interim President was participating via Zoom. Ms. Kane indicated that in speaking with the Chairman and Interim President, Dean would be interested in a ground lease option for the property. Ms. Kane talked about Dean's proposal for an Arts/Cultural Hub and Community Center for the College at this location, indicating concern for the future use of the property as it is both an entrance to the Town as well as the College. She stated a desire to work with the Town on a project that benefits both parties.

Member Cormier-Leger asked about their willingness to invest in the property to comply with ADA, etc. and Ms. Kane indicated support for doing so as well as for paying taxes.

Member Trahan asked about a gallery space for Franklin Arts Association and Ms. Kane expressed support for such a space.

[Pennrose, LLC](#) - Was not in attendance.

[HFA and TMC Properties](#) - Sharon Charwick, architect from HFA was there representing HFA. HFA and TMC Properties are jointly proposing two options for the Davis-Thayer property.

The first option is an adaptive reuse proposal - "The Davis Thayer Center for the Arts". The primary function would be to preserve the building and celebrate the historic nature of the building as well as keep the ball field and enhance the youth activities that occur on the field. The proposal would activate the front lawn with a large balcony across the front of the building and create an engaging space on the front lawn with public art. The first floor would have a fine dining restaurant with an outdoor patio to the front lawn. The gym area would be a multi-level performance area. The proposal also envisioned a speakeasy in the basement and a function space on the second floor leading out to the balcony. The proposal makes space for a local organization such as the Children's Museum or Franklin Arts Association with gallery/studio space and/or a business use on upper floors. As part of this proposal HFA/TMC would seek to renovate the existing ball field and potentially relocate the Town Recreation Department next to the field. The proposal also rebuilds the playground and provides an area for food trucks - activating the area for the use of the community.

The second option is the "Facade Preservation and Redevelopment" which looks to provide multi-family housing at this location. This proposal maintains the front facade and creates a more dense site with housing. This proposal would also include social gathering spaces and performance spaces.

Chair Pellegri asked if HFA/TMC would be open to leasing the property. Ms. Charwick could not say for certain but stated she would defer to TMC and they would be able to answer these types of questions at the next meeting on June 25th. However, she thinks they would be open to it.

Clerk Cormier-Leger stated he loves the idea of keeping the field.

Chair Pellegri asked about the Recreation Department moving to the field and questioned the space capacity. Ms. Charwick stated it was just an idea, however she believes based on the site plan that they could build a new two story building at the site that provides more space than their existing building. She explained the thinking was to have a youth sports/community organization next to the field near downtown. Clerk Cormier-Leger indicated that he liked the thought of exploring this option based on feedback from the Recreation Department in the past regarding interest in the site.

A question from the audience was asked about a non-profit organization paying taxes on the property if there was a lease. TA Hellen explained that it depends on the use as to whether or not the organization would need to pay taxes. He explained that Dean College does pay taxes on many of their buildings. TA Hellen also clarified that any agreement would not preclude a PILOT - Payment in Lieu of Taxes.

[Camford Property Group, Inc.](#) - Brad Chaffee was there representing Camford Property Group, Inc. He discussed his thinking around trying to keep the school and ideas pertaining to an educational or community use. He stated that keeping the building or taking it down really comes down to finances. Also believes that some sort of mixed use is the likely option. This proposal would allow the back of the building to accommodate green space, a theater, and mixed use community space.

Mr. Chaffee indicated he would be open to ground leasing the property; however, he indicated it makes the deal more complicated but also provides some benefits. He also stressed the need for rezoning the parcel and any development deal would be contingent upon getting the parcel rezoned and the timing associated with a rezone.

Clerk Cormier-Leger asked if the proposal includes some senior housing. Mr. Chaffee stated that the proposal includes housing, but not specific to seniors. However, he would be open to a senior housing or mixed use housing proposal.

Clerk Cormier-Leger and Mr. Chaffee discussed performance space in the building and the capital expenses associated with this use.

Member Stickney indicated his support for a combination of these proposals stating he likes HFA/TMC's reuse of the existing building and Camford's activation plan for the rear portion of the lot. Member Stickney then went on to discuss financing and stated he believes the Committee should recommend to the Town Council that the Town leverage the stepped ground lease process to give the developers a leg up by not needing to come up with the capital to buy or take ownership of the property, essentially allowing the developer to lease at a very low price for a period of time so long as the Town is able to have recommended amenities. In his experience, Mr. Stickney does not believe this type of project is a money maker for the Town but more of a benefit to the Town with regard to what is developed.

Member Morss asked Mr. Chaffee if he manages his own properties and Mr. Chaffee indicated that he does.

Vice Chair Sheridan, Chair Pellegrini, and Clerk Cormier-Leger discussed the benefits of having senior housing at this location coupled with the ballfield. Member Rondeau stated an option of having senior housing in the back and a mixed use development in the front. Member Trahan cited the benefits of senior housing near downtown and the activity centers and felt that this type of housing could work well in this area.

Mrs. Charwick indicated the amount of hazardous material abatement required in the building and stressed that any new housing units might want to be part of a new addition and not a part of the main building/school renovation.

Member Trahan asked the Chair to solicit feedback from the members of the Committee and the Chair opened up the discussion to the members. Member Morss indicated she likes the idea of a mixed use development and wants to ask proponents what level of involvement with the Town would they consider. Member Stickney stated he is in favor of a lease scenario when Town maintains ownership of the land and enters into a mutually beneficial lease. Member Stickney believes this provides the Town with greater control as to what can and cannot happen on the site. He also feels strongly that housing be a part of any development on the site. Member McCarthy indicated her preference to preserve the facade of the building as well as keeping the property. Member McCarthy is excited about the proposals, but she has concerns about capital funding. She indicated her appreciation for the discussion around leasing options and would like clarity around proponent vs.

town expectations at the next meeting. Clerk Cormier-Leger believes that keeping the asset and the long term lease idea makes the most sense. He indicated his preference for a mixed use space, specifically concerning art and performance space. He stated his preference for a bustling hub with a restaurant and preservation of the park/field. Clerk Cormier-Leger is also amenable to senior housing as part of a separate structure, but stressed the Town's limited funds. He is less concerned about keeping the facade. Member Williams stressed the need to maintain flexibility, specifically regarding zoning, but also to understand benefits for both the developer and the Town. Member Trahan indicated a preference to save the facade but it is not a deal breaker. She stressed the need to do something with the building sooner rather than later and likes the idea of leasing the building so that the Town can keep the asset. Member Rondeau expressed a strong preference for the Town to keep the property and indicated an openness to a potential partnership based on financing. If not financially feasible, he has a preference to take down the building and maintain the parcel as ballfields. Vice Chair Sheridan stated his appreciation for all three proposals Chair Pellegri indicated her preference for a mixed use development, keeping the ball field as well as keeping the facade. She also indicated a preference for a restaurant stressing the importance of the location as an entrance to the Town. She asked TA Hellen to explain the leasing option and Town funding.

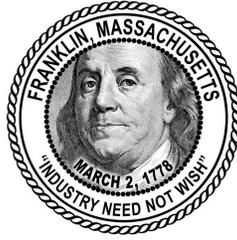
TA Hellen indicated that the Town does not have any money to subsidize this project, however CPA funding may qualify for some funding but not enough to make a difference in a project of this size. He explained that a lease would allow for a long term agreement between the Town and a developer/tenant to upgrade and manage the property. The tenant would have a low cost lease and would recoup costs based on the use.

Member Trahan asked when Town Council should be included in the conversation. The Committee discussed their role and agreed to have the four proponents back at the next meeting in order to make a recommendation to the Town Council.

Next Meeting Date: June 25, 2024

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn **MOTION** to adjourn by Rondeau. **SECOND** by Stickney. **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 PM



Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2024

A meeting of the Davis-Thayer Reuse Advisory Committee was held Tuesday evening, June 25, 2024, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA..

Members present: Chair Deborah Pellegri, Vice Chair Patrick Sheridan, Clerk Ted Cormier-Leger, Roberta Trahan, Sam Williams, Greg Rondeau, Chris Stickney, Gwyneth Morss, Megan McCarthy (remote).

Other staff present: Town Administrator Jamie Hellen, Deputy Town Administrator Amy Frigulietti, Director of Public Facilities Mike D'Angelo, Deputy Director of Engineering Kevin Harn.

1. Committee was Called to Order at 7:00 pm. A moment of silence and pledge to the flag occurred. Chair Pellegri indicated the purpose of the meeting is to review the four proposals/expressions of interest for the Davis-Thayer School. She indicated the committee's desire to keep the building and land. The Chair also indicated for the record that Member McCarthy is participating in the meeting via Zoom.
2. Expressions of Interest Presentations (anticipated times)
 - a. 7:00 to 7:20 - [Dean College](#) - Sandra Kane was at the meeting representing Dean College, along with Mark Boise, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Dean College as well as Acting Interim President of the College. Mr. Boise introduced himself and indicated that Dean College is now collaborating with Brad Chaffee of [Camford Property Group, Inc.](#) on a combined proposal as one entity with a proposal on "The Franklin Dean Gateway". Mr. Boise described their proposal as a mixed use proposal as part of the Arts & Cultural District that would provide educational spaces, recreational spaces, and commercial spaces as an entryway into Franklin and Dean College. Mr. Boise explained that this development would provide a new way for the College to work with the Twn through educational spaces, theater spaces, museum and gallery spaces and other innovative multi-use spaces. Mr. Boise explained the school's desire to expand and make additional investments in the school and in the community.

Member Rondeau asked a question about ratios between educational vs recreational vs housing use. Mr. Boise indicated they would be looking at this based on the cost perspective and return on investment. Mr. Chaffee then walked through the proposal explaining that behind the school building would be a green space with an outdoor theater with additional parking on the right hand side. The left side of the parcel behind the existing school would be two new mixed use buildings. Lower floors would be commercial space such as a restaurant.

Clerk Cormier-Leger asked if their proposal eliminates the ball field and playground and Mr. Chaffee indicated that it does. Clerk Cormier-Leger asked for their consideration in keeping the ball field and playground. Clerk Cormier-Leger asked about Dean's ability to finance the renovation of the existing DT school and desire to enter into a lease with the Town. Mr. Chaffee indicated that it would depend on the structure of the lease/agreement. He is also open to a sale

with a restriction on the building. Mr. Boise added that they are flexible on how the deal is structured. He also highlighted Dean's ability as the abutter to use currently owned land for community recreation space if there is a desire to keep the fields. Clerk Cormier-Leger explained the need for gallery space in the community and asked the presenters to seek to accommodate this type of space into their proposal and encouraged Dean to provide arts/theater programming for Franklin public school students.

Member Trahan made a statement about the history of the Franklin Arts Association and their lack of a stable home and asked Dean/Camford to consider a space for them as part of their proposal.

Member Stickney indicated a preference for keeping the ball field and playground even if at a different location nearby. He also indicated a preference for some sort of host agreement with not only the lease but also with programming or space for the public at no or low cost.

Resident Mark Manacelli provided feedback via Zoom. He indicated his pleasure with this collaboration between Dean and Camford. He would like the proponents to consider this project as an educational incubator encouraging collaboration between the college and the public school system. He asked how Dean chose the developer and encouraged an art area and keeping the ball field. Mr. Boise indicated that Ms. Kane followed up with Mr. Chaffee after the last meeting and felt they had a shared vision for the parcel.

A resident spoke about previously living in Amherst and Northampton and North Adams and their thriving art scene and the benefits of arts in a community.

- b. 7:20 to 7:40 - [Pennrose, LLC](#) - Carmen Chung and Charlie Adams were there representing Pennrose and Andrew Stebbins was there from the architectural team. Ms. Chung explained the mission of Pennrose is to build high quality mixed use multi family housing indicating that they are not only developers but also owners and operators of this housing with no plans to sell the property. They wish to be members of the community long term and care about how the property is built, what materials are used, and what it looks like long term versus short term. Ms. Chung indicated their desire to work with the community on the things important to them such as the ball field, art space, etc. She explained their proposal centers around housing, as they are housing developers and they believe this site is perfect for housing. Ms. Chung explained their experience with both adaptive reuse projects as well as new housing projects, citing two former school projects in Auburn, Massachusetts as examples and other projects in the Boston area. Ms. Chung explained accessibility issues with older schools and indicated it is best to add a new building on the back to achieve accessibility. They work to keep historic elements and traditionally use the existing classrooms into a single unit, as the classrooms are well sized for one bedroom units. These projects require all new systems, windows, etc. Ms. Chung pointed to Franklin's master plan concerning the need for mixed income housing and explained their experience building a variety of housing at a range of incomes as well as market rate housing. She indicated their ability to support senior and artist housing as part of this project.

Member Stickney asked the proponent if the goal of their project is to be entirely residential or if there is a desire to have mixed use or some commercial. Ms. Chung indicated that in the school building they would want to preserve the library and gymnasium as opportunities for another non-residential use and would be willing to collaborate with the Franklin Arts Association or others for the best use. Ms. Chung indicated they would not cut these spaces up into units so there is flexibility with these areas.

Member Morss asked the proponent how they come across properties that interest them and what interested them in Davis-Thayer. Ms. Chung indicated their love for renovating old schools and stated that they look for projects that will have community support and that can be integrated into the community. Ms. Chung expressed DT's proximity to the train station and amenities as another reason. Mr. Adams expressed the historic attractiveness of the building and likened it to other projects they have completed. He explained their desire to keep these historic buildings for another 100 years, just under a different use and as a benefit to the community. The team architect stressed the sustainable design, availability of tax credits to bring such quality housing to the market, and nearby amenities in Franklin. The development team also gave kudos to building staff for maintaining the building and keeping it in good condition.

Clerk Cormier-Leger asked if the development team would entertain a long term lease. Ms. Chung stated they have no issue with a long term ground lease for the land and frequently develop projects this way.

Resident Mark Manacelli asked the proponent about financing based on the 60-80 unit count and green space. Ms. Chung explained she believes they can make 60-80 units work based on market demand and also feels there is an opportunity to retain the field by splitting the parcel and configuring the building in a certain way close to the other building.

A resident from Pearl Street asked about traffic flow. Ms. Chung stated that this would be part of the discussion as to whether the project would cater to seniors or the general population but either way the traffic count would be lower compared to the school traffic. Would recommend a 1:1 ratio given the proximity to public transportation.

- c. 7:40 to 8:00 - [HFA and TMC Properties](#) Sharon Charwick was present representing HFA and Matt Clark was there representing TMC Properties. They are partnering on this project. Mr. Clark explained that they like the historic component of this property and stressed that they heard all the concerns of the community, from maintaining rights to the property to preserving the green space. Ms. Charwick went on to describe the site plan and project. The project is an adaptive reuse development - "The Davis-Thayer Center for the Arts". The project seeks to maintain the facade of the building, preserve and renovate the building. Their goal is to activate the whole site - keeping the playground and ball field while adding public art to the front lawn, a food truck area and possibly relocating the Recreation Department in the back of the parcel. A modern balcony would be added to the front as well as a restaurant and outdoor patio on the first floor. The plan also incorporates a speakeasy, two story function hall leading to the balcony, and performance space in the former gymnasium. There is the potential for commercial space on the side/first floor - a possible location for the Franklin Arts Association. The project team envisions artists lofts, and studios on the second and third floors. Mr. Clark feels a partnership with the Recreation Department/the Town and higher education for this project is important and honoring the needs of the community. He feels this project is feasible with a significant commitment from the Town or Dean College and would be sustainable and could last another 50 to 100 years. Ms. Charwick explained that they looked at housing at this location but ultimately decided to go with the Center for the Arts due to the feeling that housing was not a natural fit for this property due to the hazardous materials and upgrade that would have to occur. They also took into consideration other housing being developed in the area.

Member Stickney stated that the HFA/TMC interior concept and renderings were the most attractive to him, increasing the vibrancy and utility of the site.

Clerk Cormier-Leger asked a question about return of investment. The team indicated revenue generation via rentals, ticket sales, etc.

Clerk Cormier-Leger asked about ADA compliance and upgrades to the building. Ms. Charwick stated that they looked at adding elevators to the building as well as a central staircase and additional infrastructure needs. Mr. Clark stated that a lot needs to align to make this project successful and mention the potential to partner with higher education.

Member Morss asked if the proponent was most interested in the building or the location. Ms. Charwick indicated both - Appreciates the beautiful architectural elements of the old historic building with new modern addition and provides the opportunity to showcase the values of the Town as this property is a gateway to downtown.

Resident Mark Manacelli asked if the proponent has done old school conversions in the past, if they have approached Dean College about a partnership, and why they aren't presenting housing on this property. Ms. Chadwick indicated more support for their first approach with preservation and open space rather than housing.

TA Hellen discussed next steps per the Chair. TA Hellen discussed the [Draft Letter](#) recommendation to be reviewed by the Committee and then given to the Town Council. The letter does not pick a particular project or proposal. The letter recommends maintaining ownership of the land and building, prioritizing the protection of the facade, a mixed use concept, if possible, but does not limit options for the Town Council as this process moves forward.

Member Rondeau asked that the word "if possible" be taken out of the letter concerning maintaining ownership of the land. Member Stickney concurred. Member Morss added that the end date of the Committee be changed from the original end date to reflect the new date the Committee expires to June 30, 2024. Member Stickney asked that the number of proposals in the letter be changed from four to three, as two of the proposals merged into one and indicated a few minor non substantive grammatical edits. Clerk Cormier-Leger asked that they recommend the Town Council move forward with an RFP and ensure there gallery space in any new development..

The Chair entertained a motion to delete "if possible" from the recommendation. **MOTION** to delete "if possible" by Rondeau. **SECOND** by Stickney. **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.

The Chair entertained a motion to accept amended changes to the draft letter. **MOTION** to accept amended changes to the draft letter by Cormier-Leger. **SECOND** by Stickney. **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the final recommendation as amended. **MOTION** to approve the final recommendation as amended by Cormier-Leger. **SECOND** by Stickney. **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0

3. Adjourn

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn **MOTION** to adjourn by Williams. **SECOND** by Cormier-Leger. **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0