

BAR HARBOR FERRY TERMINAL PROPERTY
All Other Uses (Pie in the Sky) Sub-Committee
September 19, 2017
Meeting Notes

Attendees: Ruth Eveland & Kristy Losquadro, chairs; Joel Linscott, Mike Handwerk, Tom Burton, Jeff Wooster,

Ruth explained the sub-committee process and the importance of reviewing all the options and then winnowing them down to the best possibilities for Bar Harbor. This committee needs to focus on what would/could happen if the town buys the property outright from the MDOT for \$3.5 million. Stan Harmon has provided some borrowing and tax impact information. If the town bought it outright, the cost per household (approximately \$300,000 valuation) is \$48 per year.

The committee members favored buying it outright to preserve options and not be under the specific requirements of the MDOT. However, adding to the tax burden has been a real issue in town. Once the town decides what to do with the property, new revenues could offset that tax burden.

Cornell expects to hear from an engineer by Friday about any required environmental remediation. Prohibited uses in the covenant include schools, and it specifies no soil disturbance. The committee needs to understand the cost of remediation, and the cost of making it a green space.

Issues the committee wants to see explored include:

- The environmental covenant and how it would be handled if the property is sold. What else do we need to know to meet any applicable standard, and what is required of and by the state prior to a sale?
- What are the extended parameters of projects that would qualify as marine-related by the MDOT?
- What are the implications of not purchasing the property?
- Need to consider the possibility of gifting the land for conservation.
- How to quantify the public good for future generations?
- We need to be able to explain the operating costs to the public, including insurance costs dependent on the type of use for the property.
- Take advantage of the Hancock County Planning Committee for assistance with clean up funds.
- Would a cruise ship preclude other uses?

The property is big enough to do many things, include provide greenspace. It's important not to get locked into just one use. Music and cultural uses would be great, so would additional parking to relieve congestion in town.

The committee needs to know what would happen if the town does not buy the property? The MDOT has said it would sell the property, and has not indicated any constraints to a sale.

The property lends itself to a parking deck which could alleviate the parking problem in town.

Public comments:

- There have been boreholes drilled at the site (for fuel tanks that were below the building and have since been removed)
- Would the soil below the building to the right be contaminated, because you might have to dig down to make a boat ramp.
- I haven't seen a parking problem in town this year. I think that issue is overblown.
- The site could be an electric vehicle charging location

- Could a cruise line purchase it and put in their own pier?
- Need to work with the park on their transportation plan.
- There may be philanthropists who would help the town buy the property. Keep open the possibility of a public/private partnership.
- A person contributing money to the purchase might have strings attached.
- This might not be the best site for concerts, but thinking about concerts might
- Can fuel tanks be installed at the site now that the original tanks have been removed?

If the town is going to build parking, this is the ideal space for it. Could an amphitheater fit on the top level of the parking deck? Is there enough room on the site to accommodate 1-2,000 people and vehicles? The committee needs to better understand how many people and/or cars could fit on the site.

If the land value is \$6 million, it could be in the town's interest to purchase it outright, even if for the purpose of re-selling.

At the Maine State Pier in Portland, concerts are hosted by the city. It generates a lot of foot traffic and is a unique experience. The committee should consider a similar use.

Mike will look into the cost of site clean-up relative to possible uses. The committee needs to know from the DEP what was done in the past and what would be allowed going forward. The town might need to do a new round of environmental testing. This is an issue that pertains to all the sub-committees.

The committee wants a more specific understanding of how MDOT will define maritime uses that qualify for the \$2.5 million price. MDOT has offered to work with the committee. Is there enough room on the property to combine marine and non-marine use? The primary use has to be maritime transportation.

The property lends itself to use as a transportation hub for marine transportation as opposed to autos.

One possibility is to buy it outright and then take the time to determine what combination of uses would best serve Bar Harbor. It might end up being maritime uses, but the town would have the time to make a considered decision. However, the town council hears all the time that the public does not want taxes increased.

Ideas for non-marine uses include:

- Greenspace
- Farmers Market
- Park
- Parking
- Concerts
- Aquarium (developed by an outside entity, not the town)
- Dog park

All of these uses require management, and the town does not want to take on that additional responsibility.

If we charge for parking on the pier, then visitors will still go park downtown.

Another possibility would be selling or leasing the property to an outside entity for the uses the town desires. The property would then go back on the tax role.

Tom Burton will research how Portland manages the Maine State Pier for concerts and the revenue generated.

Joel will be in touch with Autumn from the Marine Use committee who is also looking into parking issues. They will take advantage of the work that's already been done in town on parking issues and remedies.

Mike will look into the remediation costs and insurance issues once we have more information from the engineer.

Kristi will talk to the existing farmer's market about whether this site would be desirable.

If the town sells the property, would that eliminate the town's Class A Port of Entry status? The customs official has stated he doesn't see the status changing. If a new cruise operations facility is built it would have to include a Port of Entry office. Cornell will be following up with Mr. Nadeau in Customs.

Next meeting is Thursday, October 5th at 4:00.