

Ad Hoc Bedford Museum Study Committee Minutes of September 15, 2014

Attending: members, Angelo Colao, Kara Kerwin, Selectmen William Moonan, chair, and Mike Rosenberg, Christopher Weisz, and Francis Gicca, Bedford Historical Society representative. Also present was Jan van Steenwijk of the Historical Society. Absent: members Gaye Carpenter, Linda Christen. The minutes of the Aug. 18 meeting were approved as corrected, 4-0-1.

Mr. Moonan said committee members shouldn't feel locked into the 3,500-square-foot prototype, especially if spaces meet other criteria. He said he is preparing a roster of prospective locations and a checklist that can be used for each site and facilitate prioritization. He asked how the committee can best follow up on Ms. Christen's list of area town museums. Mr. Rosenberg said perhaps members can spread out to cover the list.

Mr. Colao said the first criterion should be when the facilities can be open. Mr. Rosenberg suggested that representatives of the committee meet with library trustees and see if there is potential to pursue a museum there. Mr. Moonan said he will try to contact the chair of the trustees.

Mr. Gicca said he envisions a town-owned three-floor library annex, accommodating static exhibits, special exhibits and office and archive space. It could be open to the public day and evening.

Mr. Moonan said it is premature to discuss design details.

Narrowing the list is a challenge, Mr. Moonan acknowledged. The committee has established that a house museum needs to be open frequently. He said his criteria for prioritization include location, availability of on-site staff, parking and historical interest. The kiosk at the end of the bikeway is a prime spot for announcing special activities, he said.

Mr. Gicca said it would be interesting to see how many library trustees are members of the Historical Society. Mr. Weisz said there are some advantages inherent in the library's existing space.

Mr. Colao said it is important for each site to ask: Who will the customers be? The local emphasis cannot be measured against nearby national landmarks, he said. Mr. van Steenwijk said the keys are sufficient space for a permanent exhibit and "entertainment" – special activities to attract students and others. He said the society expects an increase in donated items once museum space is secured. Mr. Colao said the ideal space will include space for displays, meetings, business operations and archives. Mr. Gicca said members should keep in mind that the society operates at a deficit.

Mr. van Steenwijk confirmed that the Historical Society is concerned about several issues if the depot building is considered for a museum. Mr. Colao added that a remote site like that would need staffing.

The next meeting was scheduled for Sept. 29. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.