

BRUNSWICK SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

MAY 14, 1998

7:00 P.M.

MUNICIPAL MEETING FACILITY

7:00 P.M.

Chair McCausland called the meeting to order and asked for the Pledge to the Flag.

Councilors Present: Chair McCausland, Michael Feldman, Eleanor Swanson, Robert Galloupe, Timothy Dotts, Clement Wilson, Ervin Snyder, and David Gleason.

85. The Town Council will consider action on the option it holds on the Maine Street Station Property and take any appropriate action. (Manager)

Manager Gerrish explained that a nine month option was negotiated on the Maine Street Property on September 17, 1997. A great deal of effort has been made regarding the potential development/uses for the site which would be in line with the direction the Council earlier had decided upon. This included the public use of a railroad station and any other development which may prove beneficial to Brunswick. A development program has been offered which would include the Bowdoin College as a potential user or owner of the site. Mr. Gerrish was pleased as he anticipated that the railroad station would be part of the development/use of this site.

There still remains much work before everything can be finalized. The owners have agreed to the request for an extension until July 21, 1998 with a cost of \$10,000 (not to go toward the purchase price of the property). Bowdoin College has agreed to pay half the cost of the extension as their good faith effort demonstrating their interest in the project. If the extension is granted, the Town of Brunswick and Bowdoin College will be working with The Boulos Company to put together a program which will take a look at the development of this site. Final discussions, however, have not taken place. It was Mr. Gerrish's opinion that this has great potential for the Town. He recommended that the Council authorize this project to go forward.

Theo Holtwijk, Director of Planning and Development, agreed with the Town Manager that this will provide the community an opportunity to work pro-actively with the College on a project which will address everyone's long-term interest.

Councilor Gleason felt that the cost of \$10,000, as well as the time frame of two months was reasonable.

Councilor Gleason moved, Councilor Feldman seconded, to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a 64 day extension on the original option on the Maine Street Station property at a cost of \$10,000 and that the Manager be authorized the sign the option on behalf of the Town after review and approval of the Town Attorney.

Councilor Wilson asked if additional costs would be incurred during the next two months over and above the \$5,000 Town share of the \$10,000 extension.

Manager Gerrish anticipated additional costs from \$10,000 to \$15,000 as the Town share, which Bowdoin College has agreed to match this amount.

Councilor Galloupe believed that if Bowdoin College was willing to put money up front, this demonstrates that they are seriously interested in this project. It was his opinion that the College is a stable facility which will not leave the town with vacant buildings. He felt everything should be done to get this project underway.

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Bill Bryant of Birch Meadow - stated he was appalled with the unwarranted rush to develop the old railroad station. He urged the Council to either purchase the property outright or lease the property for an additional year. He further suggested that a committee of citizens be formed to put together a sensible development plan based on a long-term approach for future needs. It was his opinion that the Village Review Board should also have input into what goes on this site.

Henry McCorkle of 8 Harpswell Place - commended the Council and the College for doing something positive for the Town. He pointed out that one of the most serious problems in town is the lack of parking and suggested the Council consider a major parking facility with whatever plans are being considered.

George Gilmore of Middle Bay Road - was encouraged by the progress made. He felt it was a wonderful opportunity for the Town to control the ultimate use of this downtown parcel. However, he cautioned the Town against accepting \$5,000 from Bowdoin College, but rather pay the full \$10,000, so as to maintain control of the use of the land without any ambiguity.

George Glover of 19 High Street - asked what kind of public process had taken place to find a potential purchaser for this parcel. He was in favor of extending the option on the property but was uncomfortable that a potential compromise might occur. He further asked what the sentiment of the Council was for a train station.

Manager Gerrish answered that they had met with several developers and banks possibly interested in this property. Ultimately, Bowdoin was the only entity that was seriously interested. He explained that the only agreement made is to explore with Bowdoin further as a primary user of the site. No agreement has been made to sell the property, with Bowdoin or anyone else. More time is needed to look at the best possibilities to develop the property while meeting the public needs to put in a train station.

Eddie Palmer - stated he was in favor of the train station but was curious that this property had been vacant for several years and there appeared to be no interest in the property until the Town of Brunswick bought the option on it.

Marybeth Burbank of 11 Cumberland Street - stated that she was personally involved with the Maine Street property and the potential use of this site as a hub for alternative transportation. She noted there were three public purposes addressed in urging the Council to take an interest in purchasing this property. The first consideration was urban design in that the design purposes would be appropriate to the site and the town. The Second consideration was to ensure the potential rail transportation coming into the state from the south into Brunswick and that trains would start in Brunswick and continue on to the Rockland and Waterville area. The third consideration was for pedestrian/bike path access across the site. The clear sense of direction was that the Town would purchase the property, the Town would extract it's public uses, making ample provision for all public interest. Private interest would be sought after these considerations were met. Ms. Burbank was concerned in that the private uses were being extracted in hopes that there might be some public use left over. Her second concern was taking money from any private entity which might put a curious slant on open negotiations. She felt it was vitally important that the public interest to benefit from purchasing this property be protected from every angle. Private development should come after the determination of the what the public good is. She urged the Council to remember how consideration to purchase this property began. Extracting the public interest was to take place first with a partnership with the State of Maine. Private development such as Bowdoin College should be encouraged afterwards.

The motion was voted on and carried with eight (8) yeas.

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It was decided that in the future, Councilors Gleason and Moll will be working on the negotiating team for this project. Councilor Swanson will be the alternate Council member.

Chair McCausland adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM. A TAPE RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE AT THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE DURING REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS.

Deborah S. Cabana

Town Clerk

May 27, 1998

Date of approval

Council Chair

