

**Coolidge School Re-Use Task Force  
Finance Meeting Room, Town Hall  
Maynard, Mass.  
5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3**

**Present:**

**Task Force Members:**

Lee Acker	Tim Hess	Jack MacKeen	Vicki Brown Stevens
Sally Bubier	Rick Lefferts	Ken Neuhauser	

**Also Present:**

Ellen Duggan                      Haley Fritz, MHS student  
Lynda Thayer

**I. Minutes** – The minutes of the Jan. 20 task force meeting were unanimously approved.

**II. Elect Chair and Secretary** – Unanimously elected were Sally Bubier, chairman, and Vicki Stevens, secretary.

**III. Draft Process for Coolidge School Re-Use Task Force** – Jack MacKeen passed out a draft of 10 steps our task force might best take to arrive at recommendation(s) we will deliver to the Board of Selectmen and the town by June 30. We went over the steps and our discussion included the following:

1. **Identify required deliverables** – our report due to Board of Selectmen June 30.
2. **Review dates and deadlines** – we currently have 11 meetings total
3. **Tour Coolidge** – We did, see below.
4. **Review documentation** – We have most known documents already but Jack said that he thinks the state archives may have original drawings of the Coolidge. He'll investigate.
5. **Define preservation** – does it just mean the outside of the building or inside architectural features, too.  
Jack also said that a circuit rider with Massachusetts Preservation may be able to come to one of our meetings to supply us with more info.
6. **Identify required items:**
  - Survey
  - Appraisal
  - Zoning changes if required
  - School Committee vote to declare surplus
  - Town Meeting vote to transfer ownership from School Dept.
  - Funding to currently care for building
  - Preservation – consultant, evaluation, restrictions, tax credits
7. **Likely uses and accompanying costs and conditions** – Although the town via Kevin Sweet, Town Administrator, and the School Committee have made it clear that they don't

want Coolidge, we as a task force want to explore all ways that it can continue to be an asset to the town. The consensus was we need to know what the public wants and it should be their decision. The Coolidge's historic value and its value as a civic and public space should be considered. The consensus also was that no use for Coolidge is off the table and that we need to come up with an unbiased list of uses as well as ways the building can be preserved.

8. **Candidates for those uses** – What is a productive use for Coolidge? Lynda Thayer noted that the School Administration and the Council on Aging each recently spent about \$40,000 to remodel sites for their temporary homes. Could they be candidates? Sally Bubier noted that the town has real budget challenges that are just getting worse so she thinks a productive use for Coolidge would mean revenue producing. Did English Language classes at Coolidge pay to use the space? Sally also said she'd like to have more solid facts about repair costs to the building. The roof, for example, which is leaking, was looked at by a contractor, Jack said, but a figure on its repair couldn't be determined until the contractor actually began work on it. Maybe Coolidge could also be used as the old Fowler in a public/private lease option.
9. **Neighborhood impact, possible public hearing** – The consensus was we need a public hearing sooner than later. We could have more than one.

**IV. Discussion of Jan. 26 Tour of Coolidge** – All members of the Task Force toured Coolidge. Impressions included:

- Rick Lefferts – The building would be difficult to rehab because of the large amount of common space in the foyer of each of the two floors. Those spaces would have to be preserved under historic preservation rules. He noted it could work for assisted living and an addition might work, too.
- Jack McKeen – He was surprised at the vastness of the attic, an undeveloped space that could be developed(?). He was also encouraged by the possibility that the roof may just need flashing to be fixed. We would need a contractor to truly find out.
- Ken Neuhauser – He noted the terrible loss of energy so apparent from our tour. There is no insulation in the attic and the two large chimney structures emerging from the Coolidge roof are actually giant air vents. Grates leading from the classrooms to these open shafts are essentially open windows that lose heat in the winter.
- Vicki Stevens – The obvious lack of maintenance of the building over the years was depressing to see. Air conditioners are still in some windows, allowing cold air to flood in, for a small example. Also, the Coolidge grounds are essential to the neighborhood and town for its safe and accessible sledding hill and playground. A future use of the Coolidge should keep the grounds open to the public.

**V. Public Hearing** – We decided we need one soon to make sure the public is aware of what is going on with the Coolidge and to get ideas and direction from the town's people. It will be framed as a listening meeting and will ask what a productive use might be for Coolidge and what use can benefit the town. We will need a facilitator to help structure the meeting. Sally Bubier said she would try to find one. It was noted that we have money to pay for a facilitator. We decided on Saturday, Feb. 28, 10 am to noon, as our meeting date. Lee Acker will find out if the library is free and Vicki will put in a calendar item in the Beacon Villager. Jack said he would put a notice in the town web site. And, Haley Fritz, a Maynard High

School student working toward her Girl Scout Gold Award which will focus on preservation of historic buildings, said she would write an article for the Beacon.

**VI. Adjourn and Next Meeting** – We adjourned at about 7 p.m. Our next meeting is 5:30 p.m., Feb. 17, at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,  
Vicki Stevens