

**Coolidge School Working Group**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, December 19, 2018**  
**4:00 – 5:30 pm**  
**Finance Meeting Room, Town Hall, Maynard, MA**

**Committee Members Present:**

Linde Ghere

Donna Dodson

Sarah Donnelly  
Aaron Miklosko

**Also Present:**

Ellen Duggan  
Jeff Swanberg

**1. Minutes** – The minutes of the Dec. 5, 2018 meeting were approved.

**2. Updates**

- Ayer Historic Fire Station Reuse Update – Donna Dodson shared highlights of her conversation with Alan Manoian, Director of Community & Economic Development for the town of Ayer. Mr. Manoian was responsible for overseeing the RFP process for the sale of the downtown Ayer historic firehouse. He mentioned that the town was working with the new owner to pursue both a local Community Preservation Act (CPA) Fund grant, and a US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). These two grants would fund a substantial portion of the comprehensive redevelopment of the historic fire station and would make it feasible to construct high-quality affordable residential units. Mr. Manoian said that he would be happy to meet with our team in the future if needed.
- Sarah Donnelly reinforced the need for a cost/benefit analysis of potential Coolidge School reuse options.
- The entire team expressed appreciation for Vicki Brown Steven's effort to begin the Coolidge RFP.
- Linde Ghere mentioned that she had an update meeting scheduled with Greg Johnson for December 21 at 9:00 a.m. and invited any available CSWG members to join her if available.

**3. Jeff Swanberg, Chair of Maynard Cultural Council**

Jeff spoke about the benefits of creating Artist Live/Work Spaces in Maynard and answered questions that the team had.

Research shows that artist live/work spaces have staying power. They preserve or enhance the uniqueness of each community and are financially beneficial to towns because of the additional dollars spent locally. Artist live/work spaces are also good for

the environment since no cars are needed for artists to commute to work and artists can easily walk downtown. Artists also benefit from lower overall expenses since they don't need to pay for a separate studio and may not need a car.

Jeff then shared examples of how artist live/work spaces connect with Maynard's draft master plan. Examples of these master plan connections are listed below:

- land use goals
- housing goals, particularly maintaining and encouraging a range of housing options and ensuring that quality housing developments are sensitive to the character of the neighborhood
- Fostering synergy with the downtown revitalization effort
- Reinforcing connections between businesses and cultural venues
- An opportunity for artists to both live and work in or near downtown, thereby promoting a venue for and encouraging further concentration of art, cultural and entertainment attractions in the downtown area.
- Supports the continued promotion and protection of the town's historic and scenic resources.
- An opportunity to redevelop a vacant or under-utilized property
- By converting Coolidge to artist live/work spaces (within the original building footprint), the town also maintains the accessibility of the Coolidge open space for residents (the sledding hill, hill slide, playground, basketball court, ballfield and open space)

Jeff mentioned that an artist live/work space would need to be thoughtfully designed so that it did not end up inadvertently competing with ArtSpace. Donna mentioned that ArtSpace has a long waiting list, so did not think it would become an issue.

The team asked several questions, including:

- Are the units typically rentals or owner-occupied? Jeff answered that the units are typically rentals.
- Are there examples of mixed use, for example, a mix of seniors and artists? Jeff said that could be an option. Ellen Duggan shared the example of Sullivan Mills in Lowell as a mixed-use development.
- The team wondered the legalities of focusing on one particular segment of the population (such as seniors or artists) to the exclusion of other segments of the population. Jeff stated that the rentals would be open to all applicants, but that developers simply do more marketing to artists.

#### **4. Cost/Benefit Analysis of potential Coolidge School reuses**

Attendees began to brainstorm and collect like ideas for the various potential reuses of the Coolidge School. Linde will type up and share the list with team members so that more work can be done on the cost/benefit analysis for each option at future meetings.

**5. Next Meeting** - Wednesday, January 9 from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

**6. Adjournment** - We adjourned at about 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linde Ghere