

***Coolidge School Working Group***  
**Meeting Minutes, 3:45 pm Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019**  
**Finance Meeting Room, Town Hall, Maynard, MA**

**Committee Members Present:**

Linde Ghere - chair

Vicki Brown Stevens

Donna Dodson

Sarah Donnelly

**Also Present:**

Ellen Duggan

Linda Thayer

Katie Young, assistant town planner and  
conservation agent

John Masseur

**I. Minutes** – Our meeting minutes of the Feb. 6, 2019, meeting were approved.

**II. Updates from Team Members**

- **Feb. 13 meeting with Town Planner Bill Nemser, Assistant Town Planner Katie Young and Rick Lefferts** – Linde and Donna were at the meeting where everyone agreed that we should take the following steps to allow multi-family use of the Coolidge building:
  1. Obtain a permit from the Planning Board to allow Coolidge to house multi-family units in the current GR (General Residential) neighborhood zone.
  2. Seek a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals to relax the current dimensional requirements of 5,000 square feet per unit to 2,000 square feet/unit. With this change, more units could be built within the footprint of the school building. We think this change is essential to attract developers.
  3. Decide where the boundary lines should be in subdividing the Coolidge building from the rest of the park land. We hope to visit the Coolidge next week with a tape measure to consider lot lines.
  4. Decide how many units can be developed in the building.
- **Donna Dodson** – Donna is still trying to find a manager of an artist live-work space to talk to us. The Coolidge is not zoned for such a use and right now we're not planning on seeking a zoning change to allow it because, as we discussed, it could potentially bring in commercial use to the neighborhood (classes, open studio, etc.), which may not be appropriate.
- **Sarah Donnelly** - Sarah said she'd like to check out coop housing for the Coolidge, a residential use in between apartment and condos. Donna mentioned that she had resided in a coop previously and that was an option that might work well for Coolidge.
- **Linde Ghere** – Linde talked with a local developer, Dan Goguen, who said he considers the Coolidge a good prospect for housing. Among the pointers he offered her are that the lot containing the Coolidge building need not be rectangular. It can be bent and angled to conform to the town's needs and still satisfy the developer. Also, a lot line at a distance of

less than 15 feet from the building may be acceptable. He also suggested asking developers to extend the hill behind Coolidge or other concessions from developers.

**III. Lot Boundaries** – We are all concerned about how to subdivide the Coolidge away from the rest of the grounds so that the public is still welcomed to enjoy the sledding hill as well as the field and playground. Where would we like the lot boundaries?

- **Vicki** – She would like no boundaries so the public could roam the property as they have for the last 100+ years. Failing that, she would like one or, better, two easements or public paths from Bancroft Street to the playground and hill so people had access from all sides.
- **Donna** – The lot line behind the Coolidge and the hill should be between 0 and 15 feet and a right of way on top of the hill would allow the public to be there, she said. She and we wondered what the liability looked like for an easement. Could people be there at their own risk to minimize owner liability?
- **Sarah** – No restrictions for the public would be ideal but an easement and right of way for the public would be great. She admitted feeling distressed that occupation of the Coolidge will limit public access to the grounds. She really would rather be rid of the building to free the park to the people.
- **Ellen** – If parking were also allowed on the north side of Coolidge, maybe that would leave plenty of room for a public easement from Bancroft or perhaps even some parking.
- **Lynda** – She wondered if a fence could work and suggested restricting the sledding to a portion of the hill not directly behind the building.
- **Linde** – Agrees with the rest of the team’s opinions. If it was the right fence, a low decorative fence behind the building to protect the building, she would be fine with that.

**IV. John Masseuro** – John showed us his plan for a well-developed Coolidge and an addition of two to four townhouses to the south side of the existing building. Although he understood that our group is not currently encouraging such intense development, we thought it was helpful to see his vision.

**V. Public Meetings** – Linde reserved the Roosevelt Room at the library for the following dates and times:

Tuesday, March 26, 7-8 p.m.

Thursday, April 11, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 27, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

We hope the different days and times will allow anyone interested a convenient time to attend. We want to get the word out to abutters first so they are aware of what we are doing. The town assessor’s office can help us get in touch with them. We will also publicly post the meetings on the town web site.

Linde said she views the meetings as a time to clearly communicate all we have done and considered as well as our next steps. In addition to a presentation, we think it wise to form small groups during the meeting so everyone can be encouraged to be speak and ask questions.

**VI. Next Meeting** – Our next meeting will probably be Tuesday, March 5 or Tuesday, March 12. We hope to meet at the Coolidge to look over lot boundaries.

**VII. Adjournment** – We adjourned at about 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Vicki Brown Stevens