

**Danvers Hay Barn Committee**  
**Open House**  
**Saturday, November 9, 2019**  
**Meeting Notes**

The Danvers Hay Barn Committee held an Open House on Saturday November 9, 2019 at Endicott Park, Danvers, MA at 9:00am.

**Hay Barn Committee Member(s) present:** Mike Grandmaison  
Bob Hemeon  
Sally Kerans  
Mike Landers  
Bill Nicholson  
Art Skarmas

**Hay Barn Committee Member(s) absent:** John Keohane  
Diane Langlais

**Staff Present:** Steve Bartha, Town Manager  
Aaron Henry, Director of Land Use and Community Services  
Rodney Conley, Finance Director  
David Mountain, Recreation Director  
Nick Campion, Assistant Recreation Director  
Christopher Sanborn, Director of Natural Resource  
Carolann Powers, Recreation Dept.

**Media Present:** None

**Others Present:** Refer to Sign in Sheet

Steve Bartha opened the meeting 9:11am. He thanked those in attendance for coming on a cold Saturday morning. He stated he was looking forward to sharing with them what has been happening regarding the Hay Barn plan in an interactive way. He gave them a brief history of the Hay Barn Structure. He noted that in 2017 the town applied for and received a grant of \$1m for the preservation and rehabilitation of the structure. He noted that the Department of Housing and Community Development approved the award in October 2017, noting the facility's potential as a venue for meetings, events, and celebrations, and its potential to generate economic activity for local businesses. Mr. Bartha also noted the building's potential to generate modest revenue to support the building and the park. With that in mind, the Hay Barn Committee was formed in December 2017 to explore the barn's possibilities beyond just a storage facility.

Spencer, Sullivan and Vogt, Architects (SSV), who specialize in historic preservation, were contracted to design options for the preservation / rehabilitation of the Endicott Park Hay Barn.

The design plan proposed was recently presented to the Recreation Committee and the Board of Selectmen and now it is time to pivot and present the proposed plan to the public.

Mike Grandmaison, Chairman of Haybarn Committee thanked for everyone for coming. He familiarized the group with the members of the Hay Barn Committee noting the committee consisted of attorneys, a catering expert, a selectman liaison, town board representatives from the Financial Committee and other town commissions and committees. He noted the Hay Barn committee started by simply tossing around ideas of how to approach the Hay Barn preservation and rehabilitation and what it could potentially be used for. All of this was done prior to involving an architect firm. It became apparent to the Hay Barn Committee that Community Meeting Room/Space was ideal and needed investigating. In addition to the committee discussing potential usage of the building, they also found it important to explore potential issues associated with this project such a parking, lighting and entrance and exit to the facility without having a big impact on the park. Also discussed by the committee was utility needs (water, sewer, electric), meeting ADA accessibility and the idea of year-round use which would require HVAC installation. Mike stated the committee does not want to see this project hurt the integrity of Endicott Park. The committee wants to preserve the park as is today and use this grant award toward the best usage of a rehabilitated Hay Barn. He noted that once the committee's expectations were clearly defined, they were conveyed to SSV for their design phase.

Lynne Spencer, from SSV, introduced herself to the group. She noted that their firm specializes in the rehabilitation of historic structures, and that she had previous professional experience working to preserve both Glenn Magna & the Rebecca Nurse House, so she has come to know the town of Danvers over time and was thrilled to help the town realize their vision for this plan. She stated they want to respect all that happens at Endicott Park, which is part of the guiding principles for this project, including respect for the landscape and wetlands as well as the historic character of the Hay Barn. Lynne also told the group that Richard Trask, Town Archivist, has been involved and approves of the plan they have submitted. Lynne thanked the Hay Barn Committee for their work and noted that they delivered great feedback that allowed SSV to begin the design phase of project. She along with her co-worker, Curtis Perrin, then made a presentation of the proposed plan for restoration and rehabilitation of the Hay Barn to attendees. The presentation can be found on the Town's website: [www.danversma.gov](http://www.danversma.gov).

Curtis Perrin, Project Manager with SSV, introduced himself to the group. He stated he was working with Lynne and gave a brief history of the Hay Barn. He noted the historic preservation of the barn is a priority and the plan will preserve the historic features. He noted some of these features include entrance ramps, sliding barn doors, exposed beams, cupola, and wood siding. They worked and will continue to work within all regulations of both state and local requirements.

Lynne noted that from the outside this appears to be a large building but in fact is not as big as it appears. The plan is not luxurious, but rather a minimalistic plan that can provide what is required and what is needed to bring the town's vision for the Hay Barn to fruition.

The presentation closed with information regarding a proposed business plan for usage of the Hay Barn. Lynne referred to the slides that referenced the proposed fee structure and assumed operating expenses, and discussed what net revenue the Town could eventually expect.

In response to a question about the fee structure and cost assumptions, the Town Manager noted that the work SSV did was very solid, and that staff had reviewed the operating assumptions and felt they were realistic, but noted that some cost (like utilities) would be added to the budget and that others (like custodial) could be partially offset through scheduling and overtime. He also mentioned that the concept of an events coordinator position, supported in part by non-tax revenue, had been in discussion at the staff level to support many of the ongoing community engagement events in Danvers, and that the Hay Barn would naturally fit into the portfolio of a position like this. He mentioned that this conversation had started, briefly, and the October 15<sup>th</sup> BOS meeting.

Steve also spoke briefly to financial aspect of the project as it relates to the town's finances, noting that the assumed debt service would fit within the Town's existing debt service schedule, especially when considering that barn revenue could offset 50% or more of the capital costs. Some discussion then ensued on how to determine the appropriate balance between revenue generating events and the desire not to impact existing park programming.

It was asked if the State MassWorks Grant that was awarded could be used to update the space as is for storage usage. Steve B. said he did not believe so, as the program from which the grant was awarded is very specific on uses for the award, namely the creation of meeting space that will lead to spinoff economic benefits for local businesses. He noted the program is very competitive and the town was fortunate to receive the \$1.0 million award.

Another question arose regarding the number of events that would be required year-round to cover the debt services.

The question was asked if there were any additional grant opportunities available for this proposed project. Steve said this was unlikely.

A question was asked about the tax rate on federal park programs and if this would this apply here. Steve said he couldn't answer that as it related to federal funds, but he said that is something his staff could look into.

It was asked it taxes would support this facility. Steve said yes, both tax and non-tax revenue.

It was asked whether the Community Preservation Act would have funded projects like this. Steve said yes, projects like this fall into one or more of the categories.

Aaron Henry, Director of Land Use and Community Services, asked the group to break into round table discussions. Each group was asked to work to answer 4 prompts/questions regarding the Haybarn project. One person from each table will scribe and report back for overall discussion. The prompts and responses were:

1. What do you like best about the project?
  - a. Preservation of an historic building

- b. Ability for the community to use the building as event/gathering space
  - c. Facility fills a gap not currently available in Danvers
  - d. Design maintains the integrity of Endicott Park
  - e. Great reuse of a beautiful town asset
  - f. Adds to stability of the park
  - g. Beautiful design maintains integrity of the park
  - h. Great new meeting space option for town, school, and community organizations
  - i. Fits in with the image of the park.
2. What concerns do you have?
- a. Event traffic could conflict with surrounding roads.
  - b. Reconsider design of road access and parking (doesn't seem like enough)
  - c. Is it wise to get into the function business?
  - d. Noise level could be problematic if events spill outdoors.
  - e. Is this project our top priority?
  - f. Can we afford to take on the cost?
  - g. Could this use have a detrimental impact on the park and Glen Magna?
  - h. How will we staff events, market the site, manage the site?
  - i. Make sure the facility remains available to any group (not just big-ticket events)
  - j. Outline of the old dairy barn feels unnecessary.
  - k. Will likely attract weddings, but could also be great community center space
  - l. Pricing structure may be cost prohibitive to those events that are not weddings.
  - m. Potential conflict/competition to Glenn Magna.
  - n. May require professional staff to maximize potential (not just revenue)
  - o. Adequate lighting for nighttime events? Getting back to overflow parking?
  - p. Have we considered that the site may have archaeological significance?
  - q. Are we considering modern building materials that look historic but last much longer than traditional materials?

3. What types of events could you see held here?
  - a. Scouts and other Community Based Organization meetings
  - b. Weddings/Showers/Rehearsal Dinners
  - c. Parties (Anniversary, Graduation, Birthday, Reunions, Holiday)
  - d. Corporate Events/meetings
  - e. Fundraising Events
  - f. Farmers Market
  - g. Town/Government meetings
  - h. Small Concerts
  
4. What topics should the Hay Barn Committee revisit?
  - a. Staffing assumptions
  - b. Governance
  - c. Alcohol liability
  - d. Parking – is there enough, how is it managed now, access to overflow?
  - e. Look at professional management of space, marketing, and how to handle follow-up leads from interested groups/individuals.
  - f. Consider an archeological survey the site
  - g. Road design, security, and avoiding conflicts with other uses in the park, consider caps on the type and number of events per day/year.
  - h. Community use should be prioritized over revenue generation.
  - i. Consider operating and maintenance costs over time.
  - j. How do we ensure that event parking avoids the playground/animal barn loop?

After the group work and prior to the site tour, Lois McKenzie noted the ongoing issues concerning the water and sewer service at the park. Now, with this potential project it only adds to this concern and needs to be addressed. She noted that a lot in Endicott Park hinges on this, and updates to water and sewer or bringing in new water and sewer lines for the Hay barn could benefit the entire park. The park/town could potentially tap into these lines and it would benefit entire site/park. She also noted that regardless of this project, the condition of the hay barn would eventually need to be addressed, as it's in bad shape. Mr. Bartha noted that the upgrade of water and sewer service for existing park programming would likely be addressed through the annual budget process, outside of the project budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58am and many attendees participated in the optional site walk.