

Public Restrooms Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2015

The first meeting of the Public Restrooms Committee was held in the conference room of the Town Hall Annex at 10 AM on October 27, 2015 with the following persons in attendance: Linda Murray, Kathy Barnard, Ethan Hipple, Adam Tasker, Robert Tougher, Mary DeVries, Rob Houseman (joined the meeting in progress), and David Owen. The first order of business was to select a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary for the group. Linda Murray moved to nominate Kathy Barnard as Chairman, with Bob Tougher seconding the motion, upon which it was unanimously approved. Kathy Barnard then nominated Linda Murray as Vice-Chairman, which was seconded by Mary DeVries and approved unanimously. As there were no volunteers to serve as the group's Secretary, Dave Owen agreed to do it today, with the understanding that the responsibility would be shared among the group's members.

Discussion began with members trying to understand the scope of the Committee, which was charged with developing a Downtown Restroom Plan. Kathy Barnard offered that the definition of Downtown should coincide with the Central Business District of the Town, as established by zoning. This includes Foss Field and the proposed Foss Field pavilion facility. Kathy Barnard stated that we need an inventory of public restroom facilities downtown to start with. Ethan Hipple provided a list of porta-pottie locations that are provided through the Parks & Recreation Department. Adam Tasker stated that the Dockside facility has two public restrooms, one ADA-accessible and one not ADA-accessible, and that these two restrooms are open seasonally, May through Columbus Day. In addition, the Railroad Station has a Men's and Women's restrooms that are open year-round from 5:30 AM-9:00 PM in the summer, and from 6:00 AM-8:00 PM the rest of the year. He stated that these restrooms are cleaned twice a day during the summer and daily the rest of the year.

Dave Owen offered that Newburyport, MA has only one set of men and women's public restrooms near its waterfront, which is much more extensive than Wolfeboro's, and this is to serve a city of 17,000 population with lots of tourists and a weeklong festival every summer. So in comparison to that, Wolfeboro does not seem underserved in terms of public restroom availability. Linda Murray said that other issues, like lighting, ADA access, and vandalism, need to be taken into consideration.

Bob Tougher suggested that we need to look at the guidelines for providing public restrooms in marinas, downtowns, and for events and the year-round population. Rob Houseman reminded members that he sent out such guidelines from the American Restroom Association to members.

Ethan Hipple offered that Parks & Recreation spends \$6,000/year to provide porta-potties at a number of locations around town, including some downtown and at Foss Field. Adam Tasker advised that the Department of Public Works spends \$15,000/year maintaining the restrooms at the Railroad Station, plus another \$4,700 for water and sewer. Also, the DPW spends \$9,000/year to maintain and clean the public bathrooms at Dockside, plus another \$1,930 for water and sewer.

Kathy Barnard suggests that we look at several other communities, such as Meredith and Alton, to see what level of public bathroom services they provide. Rob suggested broadening our view, to include communities like Camden and Bethel, Maine, and Bob Tougher suggested Sag Harbor on Long Island, NY, where he said that to his knowledge the only public restrooms are in the Town Hall. He also commented that according to the guidelines distance is an important factor, and suggested that Dockside

may be the best location for additional restrooms. Dave Owen brought up the status of the Town's lease for the Dockside restaurant facility, which is in somewhat of a state of flux, and that now might be a good time to consider other uses for the Dockside facility.

Bob Tougher said that he had developed his thoughts on the options for providing more public restrooms downtown, and that those options include expanding the public restrooms at the Railroad Station and/or expanding the public restrooms at Dockside. He provided a written narrative of his views in these regards. Mary DeVries noted that some businesses provide their bathroom facilities for use by the public as a way of attracting business. Rob Houseman noted that it is actually against the law for businesses to refuse to let the public use their restroom facilities.

Rob Houseman agreed to research what the other communities that the Committee is interested in using as comparables are doing in terms of provided public restroom facilities. Relative to the structure of a public restroom plan, Rob suggested beginning with a map of current restroom facilities, with notations about whether they are permanent or temporary, year-round or seasonal, etc.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee will be on November 17th at 10 AM in the Annex Conference Room. The meeting adjourned at 11:03 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

David Owen, Town Manager