

BRIEFING PAPER

LOWELL HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

May 11, 1984

TROLLEY *

The past few weeks have witnessed a flurry of activity in readying the new trolleys for their inaugural runs. Final adjustments and tests were made the week of May 7 with the participation of Lord/Mass. the electrical contractors; Ohio Brass, the substation manufacturer; Massachusetts Electric; and our consultants, Louis T. Klauder and Associates. The Boston and Maine is completing track modifications to accommodate the trolleys, and the National Park has almost finished building platforms and decking at the four stops.

Both cars have been checked out by Dan Cohen, our car consultant, and made their maiden voyages from the Boott Mills to the Visitor Center on May 11. This landmark event was recorded on film by Channel 4's Liz Walker for broadcast May 21 as a "Positively New England" segment on the evening news.

Nancy Woods and Sarah Peskin have done an heroic job coordinating this eleventh hour pre-opening frenzy. Everyone is looking forward to the May 25 evening party for the trolley family, where Nancy and Sarah will regale all with some of the many humorous tales connected with bringing trolleys back to Lowell.

FY 1985 DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

Congressman Shannon was well received on May 3 when he presented the \$2/3 million Commission-National Park development budget proposal to the House Appropriations Committee. The Committee mark-up is scheduled for the end of this month.

MOGAN CULTURAL CENTER CONSTRUCTION

The Construction Committee is scheduled to meet on May 14 at 4:30 p.m. to review construction progress and changes that are required to accommodate second phase plans. Changes would delete the link building roof, reduce the level of finish of the end walls, and add structural elements within the Boarding House. A description and justification of each change will be reviewed by the committee and a recommendation presented to the full Commission.

Construction remains behind schedule, with 52% of contract time remaining.

There has been no progress made in the dispute between Anchor Construction and the Greater Lowell Central Labor Council. It is now assumed that no

agreement to use union labor will be reached. Efforts are still being made to pursue ways to retain the labor exhibit at the Center.

CULTURAL CENTER DESIGN

Crissman and Solomon, architects for phase II of the Cultural Center, have submitted their preliminary plans and cost estimates. While they appear to have done an excellent job of accommodating all the prospective user groups and their needs, the cost estimates are considerably higher than anticipated. These figures will be examined in depth in the next few weeks, with various alternatives proposed to bring them back into line with available funds. This may require modifications to the project and further discussions with tenants to explore other sources of funds to complete the interior of the building.

A joint meeting of the Cultural and Planning Committees is being scheduled for prior to the June meeting to discuss these and other issues.

CENTRAL STREET/PAWTUCKET CANAL

The construction contractor, P.J. Gear and Sons, has been given a notice to proceed. The first area under construction will be the plaza at the Gemarde Jewelry Building where the drainage system will be installed. Excavation in the Lowell Sun garage for the walkway will begin around June 1st.

The Lowell Sun and the City of Lowell have approved provided easements to the Commission allowing construction to proceed.

The Commission staff has negotiated a contract modification with the project's architect and engineer, Childs, Bertman and Tseckares. The original cost proposal was for a ceiling of \$10,000 for review of construction submittals. Due to a mutual agreement on the complexity of the engineering required to guarantee public safety, the ceiling will have to be revised upwards to \$25,000. Billing will be by the hour.

BUILDING GRANT UPDATE

Meetings have been held with most of the grant and loan qualifiers to discuss contract conditions, the responsibility of owners and construction scopes.

The mini-grant recipients are now waiting to meet with the selected mini-grant architect.

Three architectural firms were rated most highly by the Technical Review Committee and will be interviewed next week.

The appeal to the Department of the Interior has been prepared in an attempt to win permission to provide grant funds to the Greek Hellenic Church and St. Patrick's Church. The appeal will be filed in Washington next week.

MARKET MILLS SIGNAGE

To date, the first phase of signage for the complex has included banners, plaques, lettering and tenant signboards. Second phase signage funding for directory kiosks and replacement banners was approved at the December, 1983 meeting. We will be requesting funds at the May meeting for the final phase of signage work necessary for Market Mills. Sketches and conceptual designs of the signs and graphics will be presented and will include exterior complex name signs, Market Street tenant signboards, two new banners and three projecting mechanical signs. The total cost of between \$30,000 and \$40,000 will include these twelve signs, exterior lighting, additional directory kiosks, and contingency funds. We will also be requesting assistance from the Park for a percentage of the signage costs. The installation of these signs and graphics will attract people and contribute to the commercial success of the complex.

MARKET MILLS

Leasing: A lease has been negotiated with Connolly Data Systems for an additional 1,200 square feet at Market Mills for an expanded computer retail operation. If this lease is approved, the company will occupy 3,000 square feet of space at \$7.00 per sq. ft. (year one) and \$8.00 per sq. ft. (year two).

The Budget Committee will also be discussing the possibility of leasing an additional 1,000 square feet of space in the retail area to a confectionary store.

Melting Pot: Discussions are continuing with a Mexican fast food operation for the Wok Of The Town space at the Melting Pot.

An Events Coordinator should be hired by the next Commission meeting to help develop regular events at the Market Mills.

HISTORIC BOARD ADMINISTRATOR

Robert Malavich, The City Planning Director, was offered the new Historic Board Administrator position. Malavich, however, has decided not to accept the post for personal reasons. The Board has yet to determine how it will now fill the position.

STATUE

A brochure has been prepared to assist with fundraising for the "Homage to Women" statue now being cast in Rhode Island. At the Commission meeting, members will be asked to appropriate \$6,000 to order the granite base. These funds will eventually be reimbursed by private donors.

EUROPEAN DELEGATION VISITS LOWELL

A high level delegation of 35 European officials travelled to Lowell on May 11 to view revitalization efforts.

The trip was co-sponsored by Partners for Livable Places, the Commission and the Governor's office. It brought officials from England, the Netherlands, France and Germany to the City and to Boston. In addition to viewing historic sites, the group participated in a panel discussion that featured Secretary of Administration and Finance, Frank Keefe and Joan Fabrics' Chief Executive Officer, Larry Ansin. They also toured the Wannalancit Mill and visited the Hilton Hotel site.

OPERATING BUDGET

Because of delays in receiving computer printouts from the National Park Service Regional Office, the monthly operating budget report has not been included in this package. It will be circulated at the next meeting.

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