



TOWN OF DOUGLAS

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November 20, 2012

Mr. Scott Yacino, Chairman
Douglas School Committee
21 Davis Street
Douglas, MA 01516

Re: Potential Uses for the Old Grammar School

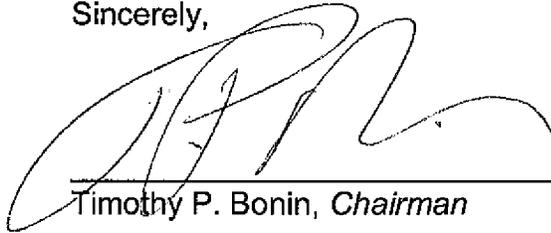
Dear School Committee Members:

Thank you for your letter of September 20th expressing your thoughts relative to potential reuse of the Grammar School. In recognition of safety and traffic concerns, the Board of Selectmen was prepared to appoint a Re-Use and Development Committee to work with our Board in drafting an RFP for the sale or lease of the Grammar School. At last week's Special Town Meeting, a majority vote supported the Selectmen's plan to fashion an acceptable RFP and move ahead with the sale or lease of the Grammar School. Our intention was to relieve the Town of maintenance expenses and generate badly needed revenue for the Town from new property taxes and any proceeds from the sale or lease of the Grammar School.

While Article 5, authorizing the Selectmen to dispose of the Grammar School, did receive the support of a majority of Town Meeting members, it failed to reach the required two-thirds vote. During the debate on the Article, some opponents stated they did not want to give the Selectmen a "blank check" (an unusual phrase considering that the purpose of the Article was to improve the financial position of the Town). Others voiced concerns about the safety of school children resulting from any increase in traffic generated by the reuse of the Grammar School. Still others wanted to insure that any reuse of the Grammar School must be in keeping with the history and character of the building. Given that all of these concerns revolve around school matters as opposed to the financial interests of the Town, the Board of Selectmen believes it makes sense for the School Committee to take the lead and organize and appoint a Re-Use and Development Committee. You might consider appointing the Chairman of the Finance Committee as a member as he was opposed to permitting the Selectmen to developing the RFP without a further vote of Town Meeting. We also suggest appointing Mitch Cohen, who has expressed concerns about the RFP. He has valuable experience as both a School Committee member and Selectman and has had many years to consider what the Town should do with the Grammar School.

Once the Re-Use and Development Committee has developed a draft RFP, and following the requested approval of a future Town Meeting, as the opponents of Article 5 requested, it would then be the task of the Selectmen to see if such an RFP can really attract any developer interest in the property. The Board of Selectmen and the Economic Development Commission have spent considerable time and effort on this subject. In order to achieve the required two-thirds support of Town Meeting, the School Committee needs to be involved in the process. Given the increasing strains on future school budgets, we are confident that your Committee will realize the necessity to move quickly by aiding the Town to potentially increase revenues by expeditiously establishing the Re-Use and Redevelopment Committee and assist the completion of its task to develop the RFP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Bonin', written over a horizontal line.

Timothy P. Bonin, *Chairman*

CC: Board of Selectmen
Finance Committee