

Consultant Interview for Marathon Museum in Hopkinton

By Michael Morton/Daily News staff

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HOPKINTON —

Presenting an annual financial review this week, the treasurer of a town athletic association said the group will interview consultants next month for advice on a potential marathon museum project.

"It will tell us whether there's a viable product there," said Dave Stoldt, the treasurer of the nonprofit Hopkinton Athletic Association, a group that supports the Boston Marathon and community programs. "Will this work? Can it be viable, and what will it do for the community?"

If built, the museum will pay tribute to all marathons, including the Boston Marathon, which starts every year at Hopkinton Common. While construction would still be several years away, the association is looking to use a vacant farmhouse on land slated for the Legacy Farms development, with the prospect of a later expansion.

The consultant will tell the athletic association whether the proposed site is likely to attract visitors and will present estimated costs for several project scenarios, including the price tags for construction and annual operations.

Stoldt said a consultant will likely charge between \$35,000 and \$60,000, with the money drawn from \$250,000 in state grants awarded to the association in 2007. Other grant money has gone toward a statue of Boston Marathon forefather George Brown and the development of a sister city relationship with Marathon, Greece.

Beyond state grants, the athletic association relies on four sources of funding: Tickets for events it holds, bus parking fees for club teams on Marathon day, sales of T-shirts and other race memorabilia, and donations raised each year by 15 Boston Marathon charity runners.

The other funding sources are more reliable, Stoldt said, as a \$50,000 tourism grant sought for the association by Sen. Karen Spilka, D-Ashland, was ultimately cut from this year's budget. Grants must also be used for specified projects.

Stoldt said the association continues to promote transparency in its finances, seeking to dispel critics' belief that the group is profiting from the Marathon and hoarding cash. He said all spending decisions are made by a 11-member volunteer board, with yearly funding of community programs.

In 2008, the association spent more than \$36,000 on programs, Stoldt said, including:

- \$10,000 for new bleachers at the high school, part of a 10-year commitment
- \$6,700 worth of Marathon clothing for the aid group World Vision; Marathon, Greece; and a Kenyan school
- \$5,900 to support the Run Around Hopkinton Relay benefiting Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
- \$5,000 for the Sharon Timlin Memorial 5K Race/Walk, dedicated to raising money for research on amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease

- \$4,000 to Hopkinton Special Olympics
- \$2,300 for the local East Coast Jumbos special needs youth hockey team
- \$755 for a Middle School wellness program treadmill
- \$500 for post-prom activities
- \$300 for the Girl Scouts' Woman of the Year event
- \$150 for the Hopkinton Education Foundation

Stoldt said the association wants to emphasize that it's involved with the community year-round, not just during Marathon events.

"It's just not really the case," he said of the Marathon-only perception.

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