

WLPA seeks town support with continued Amtrak negotiations

By ROCHELLE MOORE
Staff Writer

The Windsor Locks Preservation Association, in conjunction with the "Let's Save the Windsor Locks Train Station" committee, wants residents and town officials to help them gain momentum with Amtrak negotiations by picking up the phone and contacting Sen. Christopher Dodd, at (860) 334-5341, Congressman John Larson, at (860) 278-0259, and Sen. Joe Lieberman at (860) 549-2463.

According to committee chairman Barbara Schley, a call would help put their main objective back on the right track before it's too late.

"Anyone, including the town leadership is encouraged to contact the WLPA for information," said Schley. "If people in town are getting impatient with the negotiations, like we are, they should contact [U.S. Sen.] Christopher Dodd's office," she said.

Currently the committee and the state office are in the process of negotiating with the Pennsylvania-based train company Amtrak to buy the Windsor Locks train station found along Route 159.

"To date, with the help of Sen. Dodd's office, we have been able to obtain five approvals out of 11 needed," said Schley.

But, according to Amtrak spokesperson, Cliff Cole, there is still a long way to go before negotiations are finalized.

"The process is still in a very preliminary phase, with environmental impact studies being conducted at this time by the State. Amtrak is attending these informational meetings, but only as an interested observer at this time," said Cole.

The committee only started negotiations with Amtrak for the train station over a year ago, which is not considered a long time, by Amtrak standards.

In the meantime, the committee is pulling together all their resources so that when the time comes they will have the funding necessary to get the job done.

Schley said the station and about an acre of land was appraised at \$45,000, but the group's real concern will be renovating the station, estimating expenses at about \$550,000.

In 2006-2007, the town received a \$225,000 Small Town Economic Assis-



The Windsor Locks train station in 1906 in its heyday. The WLPA is currently in the preliminary phase of negotiations with Amtrak to buy the station so they can restore it. Photo courtesy of the WLPA.

tance Program [STEAP] grant, which according to Dave Styger, the facilitator of the funds at the Department of Environmental Protection, is money that is granted to the municipality and passed on to the preservation.

Additionally, the committee received a \$24,000 Historical Restoration Fund grant, and "we have \$38,000 on deposit in area banks of our own money that we fund-raised," Schley said.

First Selectman Steve Wawruck commended the group's efforts, saying, "they have gone through many hurdles to try to acquire the station."

And according to both Cole and Styger, the group will be going through many more. Styger said Amtrak is not the easiest system to do business with, "because they are a federally-funded entity," said Styger. "But it's a doable project."

If you want to help support the WLPA's Let's Save the Windsor Locks Train Station, join them at the 4th Annual Flea Market and Bake Sale on May 3 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Town Hall parking lot.

To volunteer, donate items, or rent a space for this year's market call Martha Jarvis at (860) 623-4234. For more information about how you can help the committee's efforts, contact Barbara Schley at (860) 798-5376 or go to the Web site www.windsorlockspreservation.com.