



Committee on City Property

August 16, 2016 – 7:01 PM - **Minutes**
City Hall, 133 William Street, City Council Chamber, Room 214

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON CITY PROPERTY

DATE: AUGUST 16, 2016

TIME: 7:01 P.M.

PLACE: COUNCILLOR WILLIAM SALTZMAN ANTECHAMBER, ROOM 213, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS JAMES OLIVEIRA, CHAIRMAN; NAOMI CARNEY, VICE-CHAIRPERSON; HENRY BOUSQUET; JOSEPH LOPES AND LINDA MORAD

ABSENT: NO ONE

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Councillor Oliveira called the City Property Committee Meeting to order and took attendance, everyone was present.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Communication, Hunt Real Estate Services, Inc. submitting to the City of New Bedford, a Proposal for the redevelopment of the Phillips Avenue School at 249 Phillips Avenue, New Bedford, MA. Intent is to redevelop the former school into a freestanding Family Dollar retail store and a Communication, U.S. Bedding submitting to the City of New Bedford, a Proposal for the redevelopment of the Phillips Avenue School at 249 Phillips Avenue, New Bedford, MA. Intent is to redevelop the former school into a cut and sow division for U.S. Bedding, resulting in light manufacturing work and generating twenty to fifty new jobs were received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney. (1 & 2)

A Communication from Mayor Mitchell expressing his opposition to the RFP submissions for the land use at the old Phillips Avenue School was read into the record. A motion was made to receive and place it on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Bousquet, which passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 4, Nays 1, with Councillor Morad opposed.

A Communication from Councillor Steven Martins expressing his opposition to the RFP submission for the land use at the old Phillips Avenue School and requesting that the neighbors be invited to a future meeting, when the use of the land is being considered, was read into the record. A motion was made to receive and place it on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Bousquet, which passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 5, Nays 0.

Councillor Oliveira explained the parameters that were placed on the RFP and asked Derek Santos of EDC to provide his opinion on the proposed use submission. Mr. Santos summarized the following:

1. It is a good thing that the city is looking to move and sell its surplus property inventory.
2. That this property in question has not attracted a high interest in use,
3. He does not feel that either project is right for this particular neighborhood.
4. There are other avenues that can be put in place to attract other types of businesses.
5. He felt both of the submissions were light on specifics.

6. The Bedding Company would use the building that is there. Family Dollar would more than likely look to demolish the building.

7. None of the proposals in his estimation were fantastic.

Councillor Lopes expressed his concern about a bedding company. They are currently in Fall River and feels the new job creation cited in the proposal would just be moving employees from the Fall River facility to the Phillips Avenue building.

It was discussed that from a planning perspective, it should be a retail operation, but it should be one that has knowledge of the streets that surround the property. It is difficult to negotiate the area now, specifically as it related to Ashley Boulevard.

Councillor Carney made reference that a retail store could cater to the foot traffic in the neighborhood. It was understood that a retail store would contribute to a dramatic influx of traffic.

CFO Sky offered that the city is doing the right thing by looking to sell its surplus property; it will generate a one-time revenue and future tax revenue as well; but that the Committee should consider carefully if selling the property for a few pieces of silver is the right thing to do with the proposals before them.

Patrick Sullivan of Planning & Community Development sent a text which was read by Mr. Sky, it stated that the Planning Board has significant issues with the proposals and he suggested the RFP be reposted.

Shannon Shreve of the Solicitor's Office stated there would be no issue with not accepting the proposals and moving to repost the RFP's. There are no legal ramifications in doing this.

Councillor Morad asked Ken Blanchard of the DFFM if the building was sound. She was told it is, it will eventually need a new roof, but right now it is easy to maintain. They keep the heat on low to preserve the fire prevention systems. The boiler works, the windows are old but aluminum, not the windows original to the building.

CFO Sky did point out one of the issues on the way the RFP was issued was that it requested historically preserving the building. This would make it harder for the city to sell. There were four (4) entities that pulled RFP's only the two submitted them.

A discussion ensued about the size of the lot. Councillors expressed an interest in demolishing the building and selling the land. The lot is .88 acres. There are benefits to selling the slate roof, 100 year old timber inside, bricks, etc. This would reduce the cost in demolishing. They cited a similar process now being executed at the old Hannigan School. CFO Sky said it would be a possibility, but that the cost to demolish would still be significant.

Councillor Lopes offered that he believes the Committee has to look at a different way to sell the property/lot. Both he and Councillor Morad expressed an interest in removing the historical preservation section and include demolish language in a new RFP. That the RFP be issued without restrictions.

A discussion as it related to the above took place with all in attendance.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Morad, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council to take No Further Action on both RFP's from Hunt Real Estate Services, Inc. and U. S. Bedding for the Phillips Avenue School at 249 Phillips Avenue, New Bedford, MA; and further, that the Purchasing Department reissue the RFP without restrictions currently in place and allow for redevelopment and/or demolition of the parcel for non-residential use. This motion passed on a voice vote.

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Notice, City Clerk of reference of a Communication/Email, from Kenneth Blanchard, Director DFFM to City Property Committee, requesting the City Property's approval for the City to transfer a 36 Foot Coast Guard Motor

Lifeboat to the Hull Lifesaving Museum. The Hull Lifesaving Museum has agreed to erect a plaque to acknowledge New Bedford's gift in the area of the boat. (3)

Councillor Morad asked how this Communication made it into the Committee, when it should have been sent to the full City Council prior to, and then be referred to the Committee.

Councillor Oliveira apologized and stated he sent the Communication to the Clerk's Office and asked that it be placed on the agenda.

It was decided this was not the proper procedure and that Ken Blanchard would resubmit as a late file for the City Council Meeting on Thursday, August 18, 2016. The Clerk of Committee's Office will remove the current communication from its pending list.

Councillor Bousquet made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Lopes.

This meeting adjourned @ 7:36 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees