



City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

City of New Bedford
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P R E S S R E L E A S E

AG HEALEY, NEW BEDFORD MAYOR JON MITCHELL TOUR RENOVATED ABANDONED HOUSE IN NEW BEDFORD AND VISIT UPGRADED HARRINGTON PARK

Strategic Investments Improve Quality of Life in New Bedford Neighborhood

NEW BEDFORD, MA— Highlighting work recently completed by the City of New Bedford as part of its ongoing effort to stabilize neighborhoods in the wake of the national foreclosure crisis, today Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey and New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell toured a previously abandoned—now newly renovated—house. The single-family home at 36 Liberty Street is located directly across the street from Harrington Park, which has similarly undergone significant renovation work this year.

“These projects are clear examples of our commitment to making strategic investments in New Bedford’s neighborhoods to preserve and improve the quality of life available to our residents. Everyone wins when a neighborhood becomes a more inviting place to live and raise a family,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “I want to thank all of the partners who worked on these projects to make them successful, particularly Attorney General Maura Healey and her staff as well as the City of New Bedford Office of Housing and Community Development under the leadership of Patrick Sullivan,” the Mayor continued.

“Abandoned properties are public safety hazards, affect local property values and can hinder future residential and economic development,” said Attorney General Maura Healey. “Through this partnership between the City of New Bedford and our Abandoned Housing Initiative, this previously blighted property has been rehabilitated and can soon become a home. We thank Mayor Mitchell, the receiver, and our other partners for their efforts to revitalize this neighborhood. We will continue to work with communities across the state to address the detrimental effects of the foreclosure crisis by stabilizing neighborhoods through this initiative.”

The City received \$200,000 in grant funds through the “Our Common Backyards Program” from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and invested \$100,000 in Community Development Block (CDBG) funds to make substantial upgrades to Harrington Park. The park is located in New Bedford’s west end behind Hathaway School and is bordered by Court, Liberty, Tremont and Morgan Streets. Upgrades include the installation of two new basketball courts, a water play area featuring a new splash pad, as well as many site amenities, such as new walkways, benches, fencing, trees, security cameras and lighting.

The park design was created through several community meetings at Hathaway School this past fall coordinated by the Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Beaches. Residents provided important input for the park project including for the water play design and features. PA Landers completed the construction required at the park. The City Department of Public Infrastructure worked on infrastructure improvements to the water and drainage systems.

The single-family home at 36 Liberty Street, just across the street from Harrington Park, had been abandoned for several years when it was identified through the Receivership Program. The Receivership Program is a collaborative effort through which the City of New Bedford and the Attorney General's Office target vacant and abandoned properties and promote their restoration and return to productive reuse. Through the efforts of the Attorney General's Office, non-profit community development corporation, The Resource, for Community and Economic Development, Inc. (TRI) was named the "Receiver" of the property. The receivership process enabled TRI to rehabilitate the property utilizing funding from the Attorney General's Abandoned Housing Initiative Program, federal HOME funds from the City of New Bedford and a loan from Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation (MHIC).

As a result of these efforts, the Liberty Street house is now a home ownership opportunity for a first-time homebuyer, one of several that has been initiated by the City. The house contains approximately 1,300 square feet of living space with three (3) bedrooms and one and a half (1½) baths. Renovations include new roofing and siding, insulation, energy efficient windows, new kitchen and bathrooms with energy efficient appliances, fixtures, and a new energy efficient heating system. The property is being offered to income eligible first time homebuyers through a lottery at a purchase price of \$166,900.

Local lenders through the Fall River/ New Bedford Housing Partnership will pre-approve potential buyers during a 30-day lottery period beginning in August, through the MassHousing "Buy New Bedford" Program. All pre-approved applicants will be entered into a lottery drawing to be eligible to purchase the home. The buyers will be required to complete a homebuyer counseling class, a requirement of the City's First Time Home Buyers Program and MassHousing.

The City of New Bedford's Department of Planning, Housing & Community Development will contribute 5% of the purchase price to assist the buyers with a down payment and closing costs and will provide gap financing assistance through the "Neighborhoods First" Homebuyer Program.

For more information about these projects or available First Time Home Buyer programs, contact the City of New Bedford Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development at (508) 979-1500 or visit the City's website www.newbedford-ma.gov.

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