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Barney S. Heath
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PUBLIC HEARING MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 24, 2016

TO: Councilor Ted Hess-Mahan, Chairman
Members of the Zoning and Planning Committee

FROM: Barney S. Heath, Director of Planning and Development
James Freas, Deputy Director of Planning and Development
Michael Gleba, Senior Planner

RE: #184-16 - TERRENCE P. MORRIS, petitioning to rezone land known as Section 24, Block 11, Lots 03 and 04, located at 369 and 377 Walnut Street from SINGLE RESIDENCE 2 to MULTI RESIDENCE 1.

MEETING DATE: June 27, 2016

CC: City Council
Planning and Development Board
Donnalyn Kahn, City Solicitor

The petition is seeking to rezone two lots located at 369 and 377 Walnut Street from Single Residence 2 (SR2) to Multi Residence 1 (MR1).

Background and Context

The two lots proposed for rezoning are on the west side of Walnut Street, just north of its intersection with Otis Street. The subject property at 369 Walnut Street is a 9,000 square foot lot currently zoned SR2. It is improved with a two and a half story structure that includes a non-resident medical office pursuant to Variance #48-78 issued in 1978. The subject property at 377 Walnut Street is a 24,100 square foot lot also currently zoned SR2. It is improved with a single family dwelling built in 1900 and a garage.

The neighborhood has a mix of zoning designations, and the subject parcels can reasonably be seen as being located at the meeting point of several zoning districts. The areas to the west, south and southeast of the subject parcels are generally zoned SR2, with an exception being 391 Walnut St. a

large, MR2 zoned condominium property located directly across Otis Street. Those areas to the north and northeast are predominantly zoned MR1, with exceptions being the large MR3 zoned condominium property across Walnut St. at 86 Washington Place and the Public Use (PU) zoned parcel at 345 Walnut St, which is the Newton Senior Center. (**Attachments A and B**)

Slightly further afield, a Business 1 (BU1) district encompassing Newtonville's village center is approximately 300 feet to the north on Walnut Street, and the PU zoned Newton North High School is a similar distance to the south.

Discussion

Significantly, the proposed rezoning would render the subject parcels consistent with the Multi Residence zoning of the properties to the north and east on Walnut Street, as well as that found directly to the south across Otis Street. It would therefore make the zoning in the immediate area on both sides of Walnut Street north of Otis Street consistent; it would also allow for a more uniform transition on Walnut Street from the BU1 zoning to the north to the SR2 zoning to the south.

As for the allowed uses pursuant to the proposed rezoning from SR2 to MR1, the main change would be to allow two-family detached dwellings by right and to allow boarding houses and non-profit institutions by special permit (these uses are not allowed in an SR1 district).

Both lots appear to be pre-1953 "old lots;" as such, if approved the proposed rezonings would change dimensional requirements from a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet and 15,000 square feet per unit to 7,000 square feet and 3,500 square feet, respectively. As such, were the proposed rezonings be approved, additional units could be created by right on both of the existing lots and a second unit could likely be added to both properties. The possibility would also exist for perhaps two "new lots" to be created out of the existing property at 377 Walnut Street, each possibly containing a two-family dwelling. The proposed rezoning would also create the possibility of attached single-family dwellings being created at 377 Walnut Street by special permit, with the number of units subject to possible configurations and unit sizes and related dimensional regulations (i.e., setbacks, lot coverage, open space requirements, etc.). The relatively large size of that property could also permit a multifamily dwelling or garden apartment by special permit. All of these proposed uses appear to be consistent with the uses, scale, and density of similarly situated parcels generally found along this part of Walnut Street in close proximity to the village center of Newtonville.

Broadly, patterns of development in Newton, typically reinforced by zoning, demonstrate highest intensity uses in Newton's village centers and along commercial corridors with a gradual step-down in intensity as one moves further away from the centers. That pattern is clearly evident along the Walnut Street frontage heading south from Newtonville towards the high school. However, that pattern is interrupted by the two subject parcels incongruently zoned for single family while they are nearly completely surrounded by MR1 zoning and multi-family uses. The development pattern suggests rezoning these properties would appropriately reinforce the multi-family uses permitted by the City Council on this section of Walnut Street while transitioning to medium to high-density single family along Otis Street moving away from Walnut as the primary road. The small scale, two-family or multi-family uses that would be allowed on these parcels would reinforce the development pattern while also creating options for diversifying Newton's housing in a location offering walkability and transit choices.

Recommendation

Given the location adjacent to a village center with excellent access to transit and its consistency with the development pattern of the area, the Planning Department believes that the MR1 zoning designation would be appropriate for these two parcels.











Attachments:

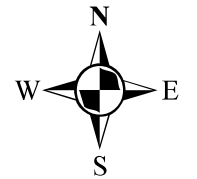
Attachment A: Existing Zoning Map
Attachment B: Existing Land Use Map

Zoning Map

369-377 Walnut St. ATTACHMENT A City of Newton, Massachusetts

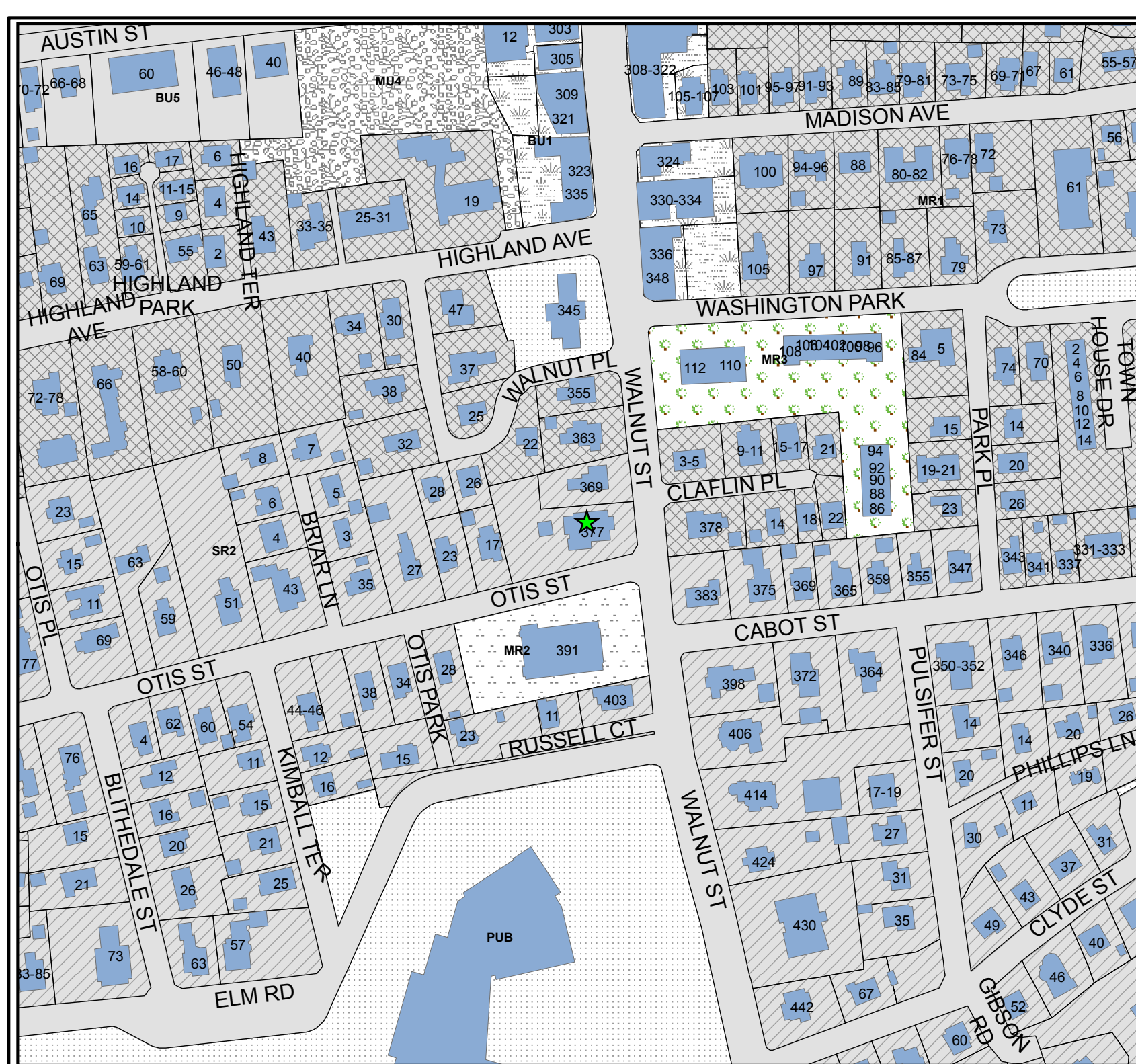
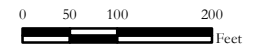
Legend

-  Single Residence 2
-  Multi-Residence 1
-  Multi-Residence 2
-  Multi-Residence 3
-  Business 1
-  Mixed Use 4
-  Public Use
-  Building Outlines
-  Surface Water
-  Property Boundaries



The information on this map is from the Newton Geographic Information System (GIS). The City of Newton cannot guarantee the accuracy of this information. Each user of this map is responsible for determining its suitability for his or her intended purpose. City departments will not necessarily approve applications based solely on GIS data.

CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS
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GIS Administrator - Douglas Greenfield



#184-16
Land-Use Map
369-377 Walnut St.
ATTACHMENT B
City of Newton,
Massachusetts



Legend

Land Use

- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Open Space
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Building Outlines
- Surface Water
- Property Boundaries



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