



Real Property Reuse Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

Present: Councilors Danberg (Chair), Cote, Albright, Downs and Kalis

Also present: Deputy Director of Planning Jennifer Caira, Assistant City Solicitor Jonah Temple, City Clerk David Olson

#295-19(2) Joint Advisory Planning Group for West Newton Armory

THE CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT submitting pursuant to §2-7(2)b) of the City of Newton Revised Ordinances, 2017 the following list of City Council appointees to serve on a Joint Advisory Planning Group (JAPG) to make recommendations on the future use of the West Newton National Guard Armory at 1135 Washington Street, which was declared available for sale or lease on September 17, 2019:

(E) Mitchell Fishman, 41 Brush Hill Road, Newton – **Real Property Approved 4-0**

(G) Lawrence Bauer, 42 Eliot Memorial Road, Newton – **Real Property Approved 4-0**

The Committee set an Initial Public Hearing Date of Thursday, January 23, 2020.

Note: The Chair of the Real Property Reuse Committee introduced the final two appointees to the JAPG for the West Newton Armory. She introduced Mitch Fischman and asked him why he was interested in joining the JAPG.

Mitch Fischman brought an updated resume for the committee. He noted that he had served on the Board of Aldermen for a number of years. One of his favorite committees to serve on was the Real Property Reuse Committee. He was involved in the Reuse of the Health Department in Newton Centre and is very familiar with the reuse process. His work experience spans 40 years and has been working on residential and reuse projects. He believes that serving on the JAPG for the West Newton Armory will be an interesting assignment.

It was noted that his experience makes him a great addition to the JAPG. It was stated that this group is shaping up to be a very powerful committee and it is hoped that the committee members will continue on in other capacities after this project is over.

A motion to approve Mitch Fischman was made and he was approved unanimously 4-0.

Larry Bauer stated that he is an architect who served on the Newton Historical Commission for almost 30 years. He was also chair of the Designer Selection Committee. He is interested in looking at buildings for storing things mostly museum collections and archives. He had his own firm for 40 years and has recently merge with another firm who is a specialist in libraries. They've

been doing lots of libraries and museum storage facilities. Early in his career he had a background in doing large housing projects. He has a good relationship with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and is interested in finding out which parts of the building are preferably preserved, and which parts can be altered. Using the Armory as housing, or as storage, will require substantial alteration and it will be interesting to see what can be done with the building. The building size is terrific and as the JAPG finds out more about the building, it will be interesting to see what it is truly suited for.

A motion was made to approve Mr. Bauer's appointment which was approved unanimously 4-0

The Chair noted that the Committee needed to set a date for the initial public hearing. She suggested that they meet either on Thursday, January 23, 2020 or Thursday February in 20, 2020. Since the February date is school vacation, the committee set the date for the Public Hearing for Thursday, January 23, 2020.

#349-19 Reuse of parcel of land on Brackett Road

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT submitting on September 13, 2019 a letter recommending that a 1200 sq. ft. parcel of land on Brackett Road, Ward 7, Newton Centre, known as Property ID: 73005 0002A be made available for sale or lease pursuant to Ordinance Section 2-7.

Public Hearing Opened and Closed.

Motion to sell property Approved 4-0 with the recommendation that it be sold to a person who resides in the neighborhood.

Motion to set the minimum financial consideration for the property to be at market rate, no less than \$5,000 Approved 4-0

Notes: Assistant Director of Planning Jennifer Caira presented information about the parcel. It is a 1,200 square foot parcel and is landlocked. It abuts three residential parcels as well as the Mount Alvernia High School property. The Planning Department looked at how much additional floor area could be gained by right for the residential abutters. It ranged from 280 to 396 square feet - not a significant increase in the by-right floor area that could be added to these homes. They also looked at information from the Assessor who assessed this property at \$10,900. The intent is to set a minimum sales price and the Director of Planning recommends somewhere around \$5,000.

Ms. Caira noted that the FAR will vary slightly based on each of the properties, and the City's Chief Zoning Official has gone over each of them. It was asked what the 282 square feet number represented. Ms. Caira stated that the difference between the abutter's current lot and the additional lot would allow them to have an additional 282 square feet. A 400 square foot addition would be roughly the size of a two-car garage.

It was asked how this land was being used now. It was noted that it is not being used now. The City has held the land for utilities for the Mt. Alvernia property since the 1950s, but it was never been used and is no longer needed.

It was asked if the property had to go to just one abutter, or could it be divided up. Mr. Temple of the Law Department stated that the City would be looking to sell it to just one person as it is a small parcel.

It was asked if the high school wanted this property. The Chair stated that Mt. Alvernia was notified of this hearing, but we have not heard from them.

It was asked if the City has done an evaluation of this property, and do we know what to ask for it. The Assessing Department has provided the assessed value of the property which you will find at the end of your packet. It's assessed value is \$10,900. You will need to set a minimum price and Mr. Temple noted that the Committee must set a minimum sale price, but the Committee could set that as "market rate".

It was asked if the mechanism for the sale was determined by the City Council or the Executive Office. Mr. Temple noted that the manner of sale is set by the Executive Office, and the minimum price is set by the City Council.

The Chair of the Committee opened the public hearing.

Norine Pollard, 25 Bruce Lane. She has been working with City Hall for the past three or four years trying to get this piece of property looked at. It is directly behind 113 Brackett Road which has been a rental property for more than 10 years. We know it's going to be a knockdown house and they have already had unrestricted access to this parcel. She would like to make sure that this property remains open space, and a buffer between the properties.

It was asked that if this property is added to 113 Brackett Road, will it make it a large enough for two units instead of one. Ms. Caira noted that the property is zoned for single residence 2 and they don't have enough lot area to do that. Could the lot be split? No, there is not enough frontage.

Deborah Levisohn, 125 Brackett Road. Ms. Levisohn stated that the 113 Brackett Road property has the potential to be knocked down and rebuilt much larger than it is now. This additional piece of property would make it more attractive to a developer. This street has also had two large residences built recently. She hoped that something could be done to prevent another one of those large houses to be put up.

The public hearing was closed.

It was asked if the Committee could make a recommendation that the property go to person who resides in the neighborhood. Mr. Temple noted that this is advisory language and that the Committee could do that.

A motion to sell the property with the request that it go to someone who resides in the neighborhood was made and approved unanimously 4-0.

The Committee noted that the property is in an SR2 district and that is how it must be used.

It was asked if this will be a bidding process for those interested in the property. Mr. Temple noted that it is up to the Mayor's Office, but that an RFP could be issued and that would make the most sense.

A motion to set the minimum price at a market rate of no less than \$5,000 was approved unanimously 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Danberg, Chair



Mitchell L. Fischman, Principal Mitchell L. Fischman Consulting LLC

Mr. Fischman has over 45-years of experience in planning, environmental consulting and real estate development in the public and private sectors. He supervises teams of planners, scientists, engineers and surveyors on various environmental, planning and permitting projects, particularly those requiring close coordination with local and state agencies, and community interest groups.

His past experience includes senior level planning and development positions at the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) from 1972 to 1987 including Deputy Director for Development and Urban Design, Director of Institutional Planning and Development, and Project Manager for Downtown and Back Bay Projects. During his 15-year tenure at the BRA, he was active in both real estate and institutional development projects throughout Boston. Between 1987-1996, he was a permitting/planning consultant for HMM Associates/Earth Tech. Between 1996-2008, he was Vice President of Daylor Consulting Group and a permitting/planning consultant. Currently he is the principal at Mitchell L. Fischman Consulting LLC as an independent planning and permitting consultant.

Mr. Fischman has directed permitting and planning efforts for numerous private sector and institutional clients throughout the city of Boston. He has also completed permitting assignments for major Boston colleges and universities, Boston teaching hospitals and new residential, office, retail, hotel and industrial projects. He has prepared environmental impact assessments for city, state and federal agencies, working closely with MEPA and Boston Redevelopment Authority/Boston Planning and Development Agency (BRA/BPDA) officials (under Article 80) to resolve challenging issues including permitting, transportation, infrastructure, urban design, historic resource and neighborhood concerns.

Mr. Fischman has also significant municipal and regional planning experience with municipal master and site planning projects which have led to construction of new public improvements or major revisions to existing regulatory frameworks. He has directed master planning efforts in several Massachusetts communities.

Current Consulting Role:

Permitting Manager for Major Projects in Boston on Behalf of Private and Institutional Developers

Education:

MBA, Finance and Real Estate, Northeastern University, 1981

MURP, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh, 1972

BA, Political Science, University of PA, 1964

Registrations/Certifications:

Certified Planner, AICP

Professional Affiliations:

American Institute of Certified Planners

American Planning Association

Massachusetts Association of Consulting Planners

Current Experience:

Mitchell L. Fischman Consulting (MLF Consulting) LLC (2010-Present)

Prior Experience:

**Newton Board of Aldermen
2001-2013
(Land Use, Real Property,
Programs and Services, and
Traffic and Parking
Committees)**

**Newton Economic
Development Commission
1987-1996**

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