

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

REAL PROPERTY REUSE COMMITTEE AGENDA

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2015

7:45 PM  
Room 211

- #384-11(6) ALD. COTE, SANGIOLO, HARNEY, BROUSAL-GLASER, NORTON requesting (1) that the Board of Aldermen reverse its decision of February 6, 2012 which, in accordance with the recommendation of the Real Property Reuse Committee, declared 70 Crescent Street with the exception of the piece designated as the Reverend Ford Playground unnecessary for all municipal use, and return the property at 70 Crescent Street to the Parks & Recreation Department (2) that His Honor the Mayor and the Parks & Recreation Department work with a *70 Crescent Street Committee* to establish a memorial park dedicated to those residents of Newton and the state as a whole who lost their property and their way of life to the construction of the Massachusetts Turnpike.
- #384-11(4) JOINT ADVISORY PLANNING GROUP and PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT filing their separate reports pursuant to Ordinance Sec. 2-7(2)b identifying alternatives for the future use of the former Parks & Recreation site at 70 Crescent Street, Auburndale, which was declared surplus by the Board of Aldermen on February 6, 2012.
- #287-11(4) JOINT ADVISORY PLANNING GROUP and PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT filing their separate reports pursuant to Ordinance Sec. 2-7(2)b identifying alternatives for the future use of the former Newton Centre Library/Health Department building at 1294 Centre Street, Newton Centre, which was declared surplus by the Board of Aldermen on March 6, 2012.

*Please note, backup related to the Crescent Street items, which includes all the previous reports from the Planning Department, Committee, and Joint Advisory Planning Group as well as information submitted by the docketors of #384-11(6), is posted online in the Friday packet under 70 Crescent Street.*

Respectfully submitted,

Susan S. Albright, Chairman



Setti D. Warren  
Mayor

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**James Freas**  
Acting Director

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 20, 2015

**TO:** Real Property Reuse Committee of the Board of Aldermen

**FROM:** James Freas, Acting Director of Planning and Development  
Alexandra Ananth, Chief Planner for Current Planning 

**SUBJECT:** Request for Interest for the Reuse of the Former Health Department Property

**MEETING DATE:** March 24, 2015

**CC:** Dori Zaleznik, Chief Administrative Officer

In response to questions raised at previous Real Property Reuse Committee meetings the Planning Department is providing the following information for the upcoming working session.

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PETITION #267-11(4)

1294 Centre Street

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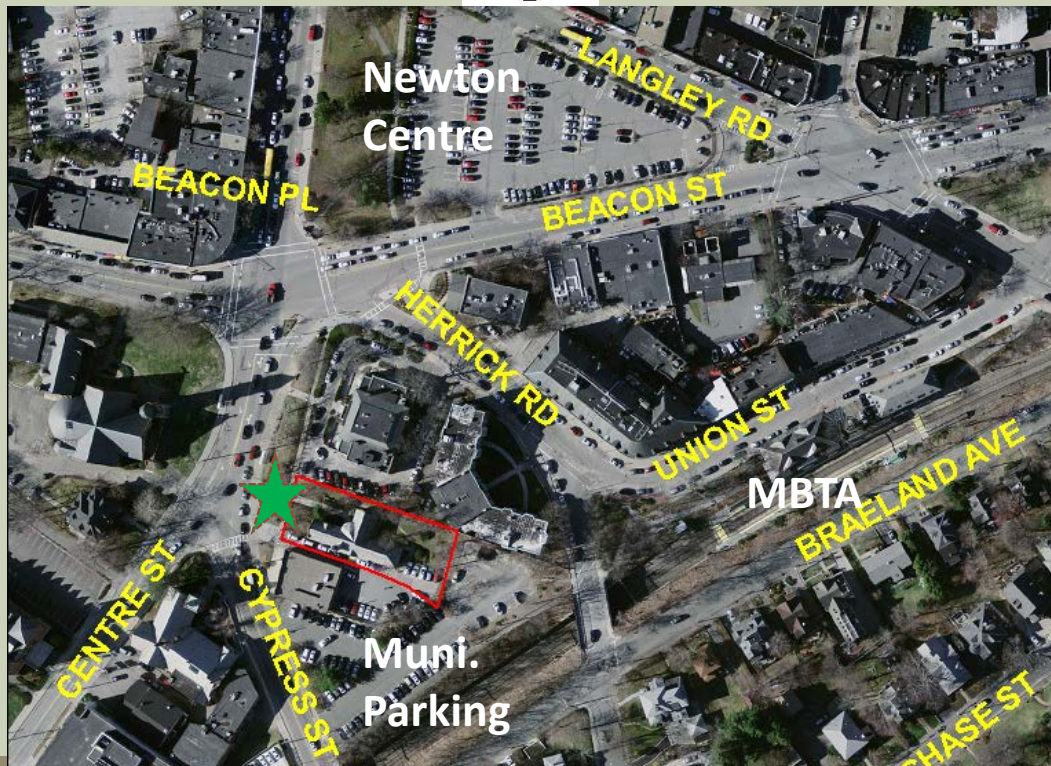
At the last Real Property Reuse Committee meeting the Committee requested that the Planning Department prepare a Request for Interest for this property. A proposed draft is attached. The Planning Department will be happy to take any suggestions or comments at the next meeting.



# Request for Interest

## 1294 Centre Street

### Newton, MA



# Request for Interest Summary

- The City of Newton, through the Real Property Reuse Committee of the Board of Aldermen, is seeking Requests of Interest for the reuse of 1294 Centre Street, a former branch library listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- The Committee will entertain proposals for long-term lease or sale of the building contingent upon restoration of the building and its use for some public purpose or a use that enhances community life in Newton Centre.
- The building is conveniently located at the southern entrance to Newton Centre's Commercial Business District, with proximate access to municipal parking and the Newton Centre Green Line MBTA Station. The site is also accessible by I-95/Route 128, Route 9 and I-90/Mass Pike.
- Surrounding neighborhood convenience, retail and dining options complement many future uses.

Unique  
Repositioning  
Opportunity

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Located in the  
Heart of Newton  
Centre

# Property Description

- 16,160 square foot lot.
- The 1-story masonry building was constructed in 1927 for use as a branch library in the Tudor Revival style. It includes a slate roof, copper gutters and downspouts and wood windows, all original to the building. An ornate main entry is located on the north front façade of the building with additional entrances on the south and rear facades.
- The building is set back along linear greenway.
- Access to the site is via a shared driveway with the abutter to the east, 1296-98 Centre Street. The site includes 5 off-street parking stalls.
- The site is zoned Public Use but the majority of the commercial village is zoned Business 1.
- The building is located on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Usable 1st floor area is 4,200 square feet with additional square footage in basement suitable for storage.



16,160 SF lot

5 parking stalls

4,200 SF +  
basement

# Building History

- The building was constructed in 1927 and is significant to the civic history of Newton in that it was constructed with donations from Newton citizens as one of four architecturally similar branches in Newton's then new public library system. While the building's use has changed (it was most recently occupied by the City's Health Department) and many interior spaces have been altered, most of the significant features remain intact and in decent condition. However, the building has suffered from deferred maintenance and significant investment is necessary to secure the integrity of the building, preserve historic features, and satisfy building code.

Constructed with public donations as a branch library

# Vicinity

- Newton is one of the most affluent communities in the State with an average household income in excess of \$154,000 and average housing value of over \$750,000.<sup>1</sup>
- Newton Centre is a village of Newton, Massachusetts. The main commercial center of Newton Centre is a triangular area surrounding the intersections of Beacon Street, Centre Street, and Langley Road. It is the largest downtown area among all the villages of Newton, and serves as a large upscale shopping and dining destination for the western suburbs of Boston.



Affluent City

Largest  
downtown area  
in Newton





# City of Newton, MA

Display the progress of ongoing dow

Start New S

Property Viewer

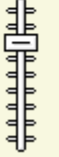
Aerial Photo

Assessing Districts

Parcel Abutters

Neighborhood Sales

GIS Mapping \*



Scale 1" = 61.10 ft

[Print Property Record Card](#) | [View Sketch](#)

**Property SBL** 61035 0003

**Address** 1294 CENTRE ST

**Owner** CITY OF NEWTON  
HEALTH DEPT

### Basic Information

**Property SBL** 61035 0003

**Address** 1294 CENTRE ST

**Tax Bill Number** 2504545

**Land Use \*** 935

**Land Use Description \*** MUNICIPAL IMPROVED  
PUBLIC SAFETY

**Lot Size** 16,160 sq ft

**Frontage** 0 ft

**Zoning \*\*** PUB

**Map ID** 090SW

**FY 2015** \$631,500

**\* The land use and description listed here are for Assessing Department purposes based on historical records in the Assessing Department. For an official ruling on the legal use of the property pursuant to the state building code and/or Newton Zoning Ordinances, contact the Inspectional Services Department.**

**\*\* For reference purposes only. Please check with Engineering Department for official zoning designation.**

### Ownership

**Current Owners** CITY OF NEWTON  
HEALTH DEPT

**Mailing Address** 1000 COMM AVE  
NEWTON, MA 02459

**Latest Sale Date**

Insert Floor Plan

# RFI Guidance

- Proposals should attempt to:
  - Minimize or eliminate any financial burden to the City
  - Keep all of the significant architectural characteristics of the main portion of the building, both inside and out. Any work affecting the historic fabric in the interior shall be performed according to the “Rehabilitation” level of treatment, as outlined in the U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties
  - Provide a place for public interaction in the tradition of the old library
  - Restore and increase connectivity with nearby open spaces
  - Enliven the site and block with uses that will provide activities during evening and weekend hours, increase pedestrian traffic, and offer attractive outdoor/indoor gathering spaces
  - Build momentum and contribute to Newton Center’s growth as a sustainable, green, vibrant, walking village

## RFI Guidance Cont.

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- Notwithstanding the above restoration requirements, responders may propose to alter the rear wing of the building to create more open space and to enhance pedestrian flow and views through the middle of the block.
- Responders are encourage to incorporate the entire site, including landscape design, into a comprehensive plan that opens the site on all sides to promote connectivity to the green space in Newton Centre.

# Anticipated Process

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- If the property is approved for redevelopment the Mayor will issue a Request for Proposals and a potential new owner/lessee will be selected.
- The owner/lessee will prepare plans and applications to the appropriate Boards/Committees. At a minimum the Board will need to rezone the site and it is likely that any future use would require a special permit from the Board to waive parking requirements and possibly also for the use. Any proposed demolition must be reviewed by the Newton Historical commission.
- It is expected that a Preservation Restriction will be placed on the property to ensure that the restored building is maintained.

# Zoning

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- The property is currently zoned Public Use
- Any development/reuse will require a re-zoning
- Business 1 is likely to be the most appropriate zoning classification for the property
- Allowed uses in the Business 1 zone include but are not limited to:
  - Office
  - Retail
  - Library or museum
  - Bank
  - Theatre
  - Hall or club
  - Service establishment
  - Restaurants with not more than 50 seats,
  - Dwelling units above the first floor
- Uses permitted by special permit include multi-family dwelling, restaurants with more than 50 seats, and open air businesses

# Responses

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- Responses are requested by 5PM on April 23, 2015.
- Responses should include a narrative description of your proposal and how it meets the City's vision for the site, concept drawings if changes to the site are necessary, your interest in the property for sale or for lease and proposed financial terms.
- 10 copies should be submitted to the Planning Department on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in Newton City Hall.
- Submissions will be reviewed by the Real Property Reuse Committee and some responders may be invited to present their vision for the property to the Committee.
- If the Committee and Executive Department decide to move forward an RFP is expected to be released later this spring.

# Studies Undertaken

- In 2012 local citizen experts appointed to a Joint Advisory Planning Group studied the site and made recommendations for the highest and best use of the property. Their report, as well as a report from the City's Planning and Development Department can be found here:
  - <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/current/devrev/hip/centre/japg.asp>
- A key finding is “the site is small but its location is a key-stone within the center and the right use could instill a new kind of energy in the village.”