

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

REAL PROPERTY REUSE COMMITTEE AGENDA

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2013

**7:00 PM –Please note the time.**

Room 209

#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.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan S. Albright, Chairman




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Mayor

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Candace Havens  
Director

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 5, 2013  
**TO:** Real Property Reuse Committee of the Board of Aldermen  
**FROM:** Candace Havens, Director of Planning and Development  
Eve Tapper, Chief Planner for Current Planning   
**RE:** Disposition of 70 Crescent Street  
**MEETING DATE:** April 11, 2013  
**CC:** Josh Morse, Acting Commissioner of Public Buildings  
Bob DeRubeis, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation

In response to questions raised at the Real Property Reuse Committee public hearings held on February 26, 2013, the Planning Department is providing the following information for the upcoming working session. This information is supplemental to staff analysis previously provided at the public hearing.

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**PETITION #384-11(4)**

**70 Crescent Street**

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**Did the JAPG and the Planning Department look at the site holistically?** The City-owned property has two distinct uses on it – the buildings and facilities now and formerly used by the Parks and Recreation Department and a playground fenced off from the structures and accessible only via the private property of Myrtle Baptist Church. When the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation declared the site surplus, he only included the portion of the property where the buildings are located. The playground area was not included. Nevertheless, both the JAPG's and the Planning Department's reports include a recommendation that any new development on the site should improve access to playground which is a well-used neighborhood amenity. In addition, there were several questions and comments regarding the playground/open space at the Committee's public hearing and subsequent scoping session in February. The Planning Department believes that the playground portion of the site should be declared surplus as well to officially open up the entire site for potential reuse. This should only be done with a condition that a playground remain somewhere on the site and that it be publicly accessible at all times.

**Will the reuse proposed by the JAPG and the Planning Department be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood?** The role of the JAPG and the Real Property Reuse Committee at this stage in the process is to recommend whether to issue an RFP for the sale or lease of the site. While there is significant discussion in the JAPG's and Planning Department's reports about the number of housing units that might be appropriate on the site, these are only estimates of what would be

allowed by right or with a special permit if the property were to be rezoned to Multi Residence-1 or Multi Residence-2, which are the predominate existing zones in the surrounding area. If a by-right development is proposed then there are set dimensional standards that must be met for any construction and these are the same as those that must be met by other residences elsewhere in the neighborhood. If the site is developed with more density than is allowed by right, a special permit from the Board of Aldermen would be required and as with all special permit applications, the Board must find that the proposed development “will not adversely affect the neighborhood.” The Planning Department is comfortable that these safeguards will ensure that any proposed reuse of the site will fit in with the surrounding area.

**How did the JAPG determine what it considers the appropriate density for the site?** Attachment A is a compilation of the density studies prepared by JAPG members to aid the group in coming to their conclusions. The JAPG report itself details how these studies were used. In particular, the JAPG wants to ensure that any project is both beneficial to the City and economically feasible and attractive to a private developer.

**What will the traffic impacts of a new use on this site be on the surrounding neighborhood?** The Planning Department’s report includes a section on infrastructure. The report notes that based on Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual standards, which are used most often to project traffic generation for particular uses, a low-rise residential condominium development such as the use recommended by the JAPG memo will generate between 10-20 vehicle trips per day. In contrast, a single-tenant office building, similar to the former Parks and Recreation Department use, generates between 50-100 vehicle trips per day. One member of the Committee asked that the Planning Department confirm the actual number of trips generated by the Parks and Recreation Department. While we do not have a firm number, there were at least 20 employees on site. That figure alone translates to more than 40 trips per day (each employee roundtrip to work and home) if they stayed on site the entire day. This also does not include the truck traffic that was likely generated by the vehicle used to maintain the City’s parks system. As this was the Department headquarters, there were also “customers” who came to the site.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

If the Board would like to explore reuse of this site holistically, the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation must declare surplus the portion of the site currently used for the playground. This area was not included in the Commissioner’s original declaration.

The Planning Department recommends that the Committee approve this docket item and recommend to the Mayor that he issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the reuse of the entire site with the following conditions:

1. The Commissioner of Parks and Recreation declares the entire site surplus to allow flexibility in the design of a residential development and park area and to facilitate improvements to vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle access to the site and the amenities thereon.
2. If the location of the existing playground is moved, the new park area should be at least equal in size to the existing amenity.

3. The Site should be rezoned to MR-1 to keep the scale of any new development compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
4. A minimum of 25% of new housing units on the site should be “affordable.”

# Existing Condition



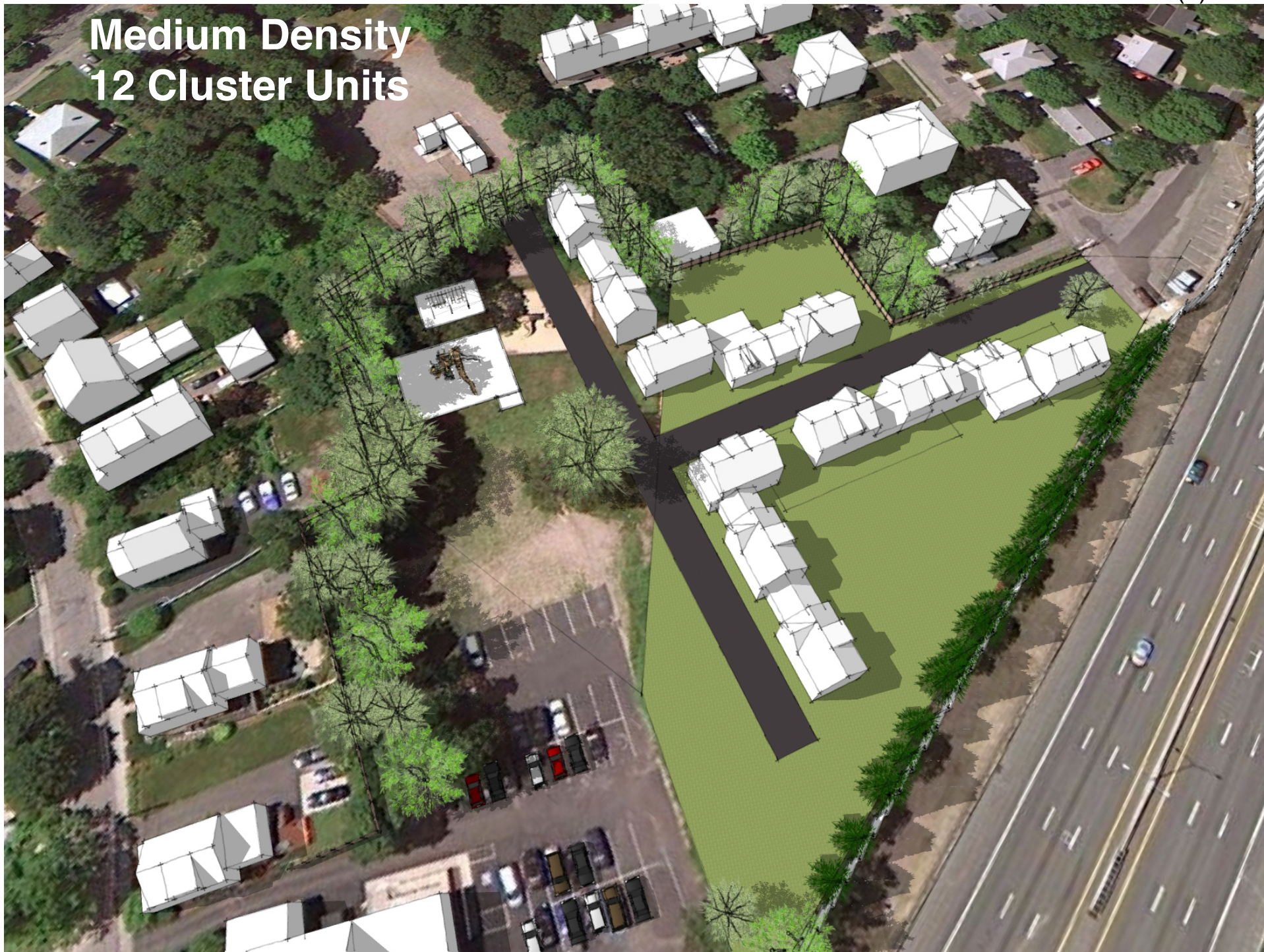
# Low Density 7 Single Family



# Medium Density 8 Cluster Units



# Medium Density 12 Cluster Units





# Medium Density 16 Cluster Units



# Medium Density 21 Townhouse Units

