

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

REAL PROPERTY REUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2011

Present: Ald. Danberg (Chairman), Ald. Merrill, Linsky, Crossley, Gentile, and Baker; absent: Ald. Fischman and Salvucci; also present: Ald. Lennon

City staff: Robert DeRubeis (Commissioner of Parks & Recreation), Linda Finucane (Assistant Clerk of the Board of Aldermen), Candace Havens (Director of Planning & Development), Josh Morse (Facilities & Operations Supervisor), Robert Rooney (Chief Administrative Officer)

#33-11 COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC WORKS declaring surplus for sale or lease to the owners of 145-147 Chapel Street a city-owned right-of-way located at 145-147 Chapel Street, Nonantum.

ACTION: APPROVED SALE 4-0 (Gentile and Baker not voting)

NOTE: On March 29, the Committee held a public hearing, after which it discussed this item and held it.

In 1957 the city acquired a parcel adjacent to 145-147 Chapel Street for a municipal parking lot and also purchased a 15'x55' (825 square feet) right-of-way located on 145-147 Chapel Street. It may have been the city's intention to use the right-of-way as an access to the parking lot, but it appears it was never used as such since at some point the city erected a stone wall on a portion of the right-of-way.

In 2007 a building permit was issued to demolish an existing dwelling and construct by right two attached units at 145-147 Chapel Street. The survey plans submitted for the building permit show the right-of-way with a note "to be removed." The new two-family condominium dwelling is one foot into the right-of-way. Approximately a year ago the City was contacted by an attorney for the owners of the condominiums who wish to clear the property title.

At the March 29 meeting several committee members asked whether the City actually owns this strip of land. Subsequent to the meeting, the Law Department reaffirmed that the underlying land at 145-147 Chapel Street is owned by Deborah Miller and A. Cobden, et al., but the city owns the right-of-way/easement over the subject property which entitles the city to travel over the land. The 15'x55' strip constitutes a "portion thereof" under ordinance section 2-7, which governs the sale or lease of any city-owned real property.

Section 2-7 authorizes the Board of Aldermen to set the *minimum* sale price, leaving final negotiation of the price and sale to the Mayor. A prior \$4.00 per square-foot figure from the Assessing Department was for fee-simple purchase of raw land in Nonantum, suggested as an absolute maximum. In an ensuing discussion with the Planning Department, the Assessing Department suggested that a reduction to \$1.00 per square foot would more closely represent the property's value as an easement for a total value of \$825 as a minimum sale price.

Alderman Merrill moved approval of the sale of the property to the owners of 145-147 Chapel Street, with a minimum sale price of \$1.00 per square foot.

Alderman Merrill's motion carried 4-0, with Alderman Gentile not voting.

#90-11 BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES declaring the former Boys & Girls Library and attendant land located at 126 Vernon Street, Newton Corner, surplus, and recommending that the building and land be transferred to the Parks & Recreation Department.

ACTION: APPROVED 4-1-1 (Gentile opposed; Linsky abstaining)

NOTE: This item was discussed and held on March 29. Since this is a transfer of a surplus property to another city agency, it is not subject to the provisions of Section 2-7, only to G.L. c. 40, §15A, which requires a two-thirds vote.

The Committee held the item on March 29 pending receipt of an analysis/comparison for operating costs and a parking plan showing proposed accommodation for staff and the public. Subsequent to that meeting, the city received and the Board of Aldermen approved expenditure of \$120,000 in FEMA reimbursement funds, a portion of which will be used to make necessary repairs to the library building. Repairs that are necessary regardless of what the permanent use is.

A recap of the March 29 meeting:

- In 1930, the city purchased what was a private home for \$22,600. From the early 1940's until the new main library was built in the 1980's it was the Boys & Girls Library, then it became the Newton Corner branch library. There are no deed restrictions on the building/property.
- The Parks & Recreation Department has been at 70 Crescent Street for 41 years. The building is very cramped, not handicapped accessible, needs a new boiler, and has very high utility costs (\$44,000 a year). The intention is to house administrative and program staff in the library building.
- For the time being maintenance and forestry would remain at Crescent Street. The staff would occupy the basement level. The main level would function as transient space, i.e., clocking in, dispatch, work slips, etc. Eventually, maintenance operations may be moved to Crafts Street or Elliot Street.
- The library building at 6,138 square feet is almost double the size of the office space at Crescent Street. It is handicapped accessible. It is more energy efficient with a new boiler and roof. It needs new windows, but is eligible for CPA funding because of its historic status.
- The city and community are concerned about the building remaining vacant. It has been vandalized and copper pipes have been stolen. The gazebo to the rear of the building has been damaged twice. The community feels a presence in the building would deter vandalism and neighbors have asked the Aldermen from the Ward to get the building occupied.

- The city considered relocating either the Police Department Community Services or the Health Department, but the library building is too big for either department. Exploration of a long-term lease with the YMCA fell through.
- The Parks & Recreation Department would like to move this fall after the summer programs wind down but before winter because the heating system at Crescent Street is probably not going to last another winter.
- Although the Department of Public Works has different locations for its administrative and maintenance operations, several Aldermen expressed some concern about the splitting the operations.
- There are usually 15-20 cars at Crescent Street. The library lot is not striped, but it can accommodate 6 cars. There was concern about providing enough parking for staff and citizens.

Parking:

The committee reviewed a map (attached) showing parking and the various restrictions on the streets immediately surrounding the library. Parks & Recreation needs 16-17 spaces. The Planning Department has suggested that the parking be evaluated after the building is occupied for a while. If a study indicates a problem with parking, permit sticker parking for staff is a possible solution. Although there are several churches in the neighborhood they are unable to provide off-site parking because of their own daycare programs and activities. The Planning Department noted that Underwood and Bigelow Schools are closed for the summer, which balances the need for spaces when Parks & Recreation may have more visitors. Ms. Havens said that Traffic Council can look at potential solutions if the need arises. Although it is possible to create three more parking spaces on the site, it would mean removing two large trees.

Utilities/Costs:

Mr. Morse provided cost comparisons for buildings and utilities (attached) at Crescent Street and the library. He said that he, Budget & Project Specialist Arthur Cabral, and Building Commissioner Stephanie Gilman arrived at these figures independently. He pointed out the 2.5% escalation rate is a conservative estimate because of the price of oil.

Alderman Gentile opined this proposed transfer was not in the city's best interest. In these times of budgetary constraint, the city should be consolidating space. Crescent Street has plenty of parking and could be revamped. He, Aldermen Baker and Linsky expressed concern about the splitting of functions. Mr. DeRubeis said it is doable with good communication and coordination.

Mr. Rooney said the city does not want to invest any money in Crescent Street until a determination is made as to where the maintenance function will go and what will be done with the building. The electric upgrade alone is estimated at \$75,000. He sees this as a phased process. He reiterated that all the proposed work on the library is work that would be necessary regardless of its ultimate use.

The committee agreed to allow Maryann Amaral, 64 Park Street, Newton Corner, to comment. Ms. Amaral asked what would happen to the interior of the library, e.g., the fireplaces, bookcases, and books. Mr. Morse stated that nothing physical that is original to the building would be touched. The books were surplus by the Library Board of Trustees. Space will be available for community organizations such as the Newton Corner Neighborhood Association to meet during operating hours. Ms. Amaral said this is a misuse of a government program. This will not be the same as a community building.

Alderman Lennon stressed that an empty building is attractive to vandals and that the community for the most part is supportive and wants the building occupied. Alderman Gentile concurred with the importance of having a presence in the building, but he is not convinced this particular proposal is the best use and in the best interest of the city. He would like to see an analysis relative to the sale or lease of the library on the open market. Alderman Linsky has reserved feelings about the Parks & Recreation Department being the recipient, but also agrees the building needs to be occupied.

Alderman Crossley moved approval to transfer the former Boys & Girls Library to the Parks & Recreation Department, which motion carried 4-1-1, with Alderman Gentile opposed and Alderman Linsky abstaining.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Danberg, Chairman

Attachments:

#33-11 draft Board Order

#90-11

05-20-11 letter from Robert Rooney w/# of parking spaces mapped out

Map of streets w/parking and various restrictions

Comparison of costs for Building/Utilities Parks&Recreation/NewtonCorner

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

June 6, 2011

That, pursuant to Section 2-7 of the City of Newton Revised Ordinances of 2007, as amended, after a public hearing on March 29, 2011 and upon the recommendation of the Real Property Reuse Committee through its Chairman Alderman Victoria Danberg, it is hereby:

ORDERED:

That His Honor the Mayor be and is hereby authorized to sell to the owners of 145-147 Chapel Street a city-owned right of way located at 145-147 Chapel Street, containing approximate 825 square feet of land, as shown on a plan entitled "Plan of Land in Newton Mass, #1091, dated April 25, 1951, recorded in the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds on July 3, 1951, prepared by Everett M. Brooks Co., Civil Engineers, Newtonville, Massachusetts."

TERMS:

1. The minimum sales price shall be \$1.00 per square foot.



**City of Newton, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor**

Telephone
(617) 796-1100

Telefax
(617) 796-1113

TDD
(617) 796-1089

E-mail
swarren@newtonma.gov

SETTI D. WARREN
MAYOR

May 20, 2011

Honorable Board of Aldermen
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

11 MAY 20 P 2:12
 CITY CLERK
 NEWTON, MA. 02159

Re: Newton Corner Library Re-Use Utility Costs and Parking Plan

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

This letter is in response to the Re-Use Committee's questions pertaining the utility costs and parking plan for the potential relocation of the Parks and Recreation Department HQs.

1. Utility Costs

(Gas, Electric, Water)	<u>Cost/Ft²</u>	<u>Ave Annual Costs</u>	<u>Projected Annual Costs</u>
N. Corner Library (6138 ft ²)	\$2.2/sf	\$ 5,000	\$14,000*
Crescent St. HQs (3208 ft ²)	\$7.2/sf	\$23,000	\$ 2,000
Crescent St Garage (4600 ft ²)	\$4.8/sf	\$22,000	\$22,000

*Based on estimates assuming full building utilization and investments in energy efficiencies (insulation), the net annual savings is expected to be on the order of \$12,000.

2. Parking Plan

There is a need for 15 vehicles for staff members on a daily basis plus 2 visitor parking spaces at any one time. Of the 15 staff spaces, 5 are expected to park for the day (administrative support personnel) and 10 would visit the HQs several times per day (program managers). The parking options include on-site and off-site (as illustrated on the attached map):

<u>Location</u>	<u># spaces</u>	<u>Required change to regulations?</u>
On-site parking	6	No
Vernon St.	20	Yes, has 1 to 3 hr limit
Church St.	49	Yes, for about half (other half are unrestricted)
Centre St.	6	Yes, has 1-hr limit
Richardson St lot	<u>59*</u>	Yes, metered spaces

Total: 140

*19 spaces are to be released from the permit purchase program June 30, 2011.

As such, it is recommended that Parks and Recreation Department staff be directed to areas where they are most likely to find parking (see map). In the event that employees are having difficulties with parking, the procedure for resolution involves the submission of a request to the Traffic Council to resolve specific parking issues that are within their jurisdiction (such as changing the street parking restrictions). After discussion with planning and engineering staff some potential solutions could include:

- Alternative restrictions on underutilized 1-hour parking spaces on Centre Street.
- Reconsideration of restrictions on Church Street.
- An employee permit program in specific time-restricted locations or possibly underutilized metered spaces at Richardson lot.
- In the event of short term, temporary parking needs, the use of empty spaces at Fire Station #8 could also be considered.

In summary, there are tangible benefits to the Parks and Recreation HQs relocating to the Newton Corner Library. Cost savings at Crescent Street in terms of facility maintenance and utility costs are apparent. Parking for departmental staff and visitors at the Parks and Recreation HQs will be less consolidated than currently experienced however there appears to be adequate spaces, although in a more "fluid" parking environment. It should be noted that upon investigation on three different days/times, anywhere between 20-40% of the available parking within easy walking distance were available.

Should you have any further questions about the intended operational plan for this site, please do not hesitate to contact me.

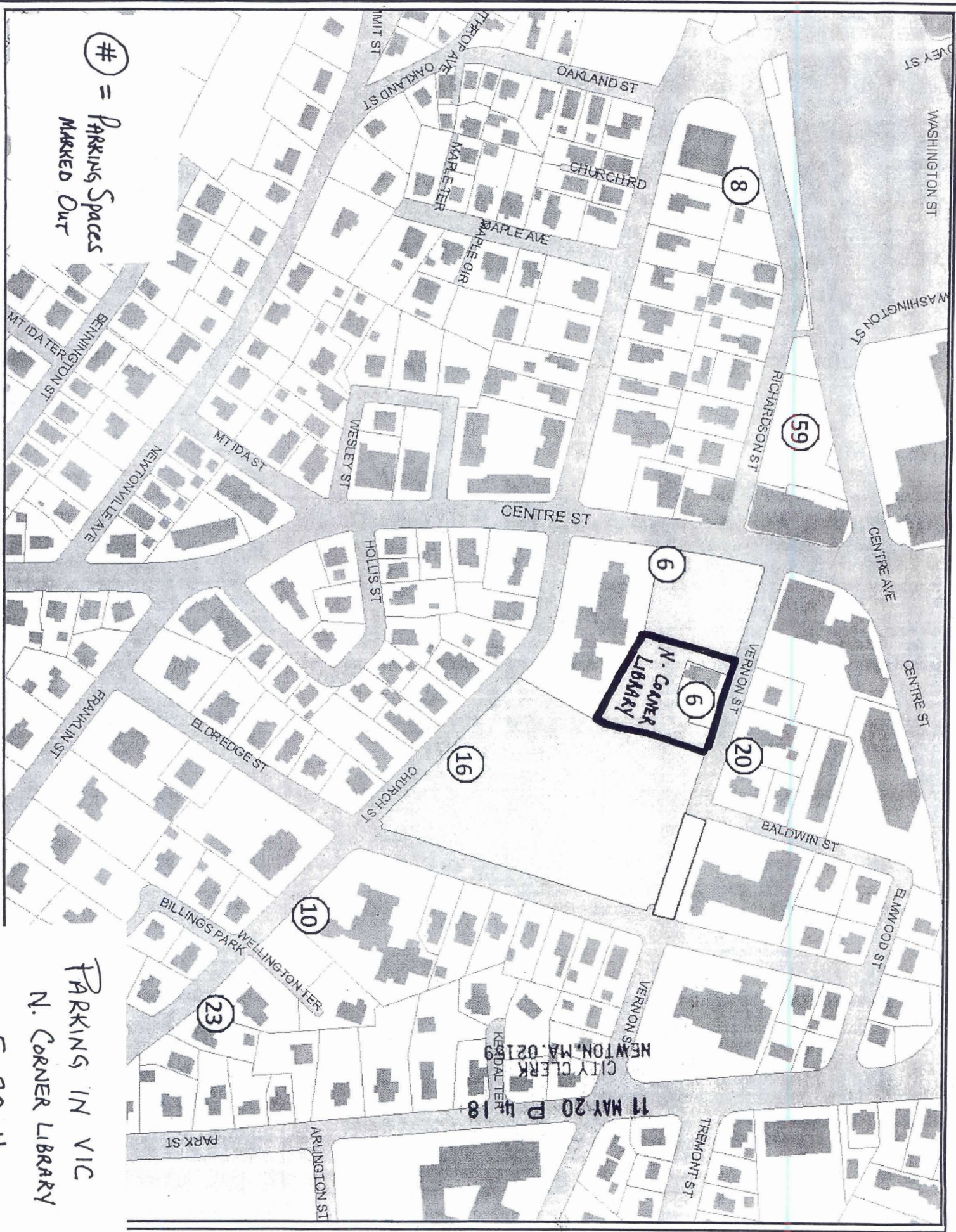
Sincerely,



Robert R. Rooney
Chief Operating Officer

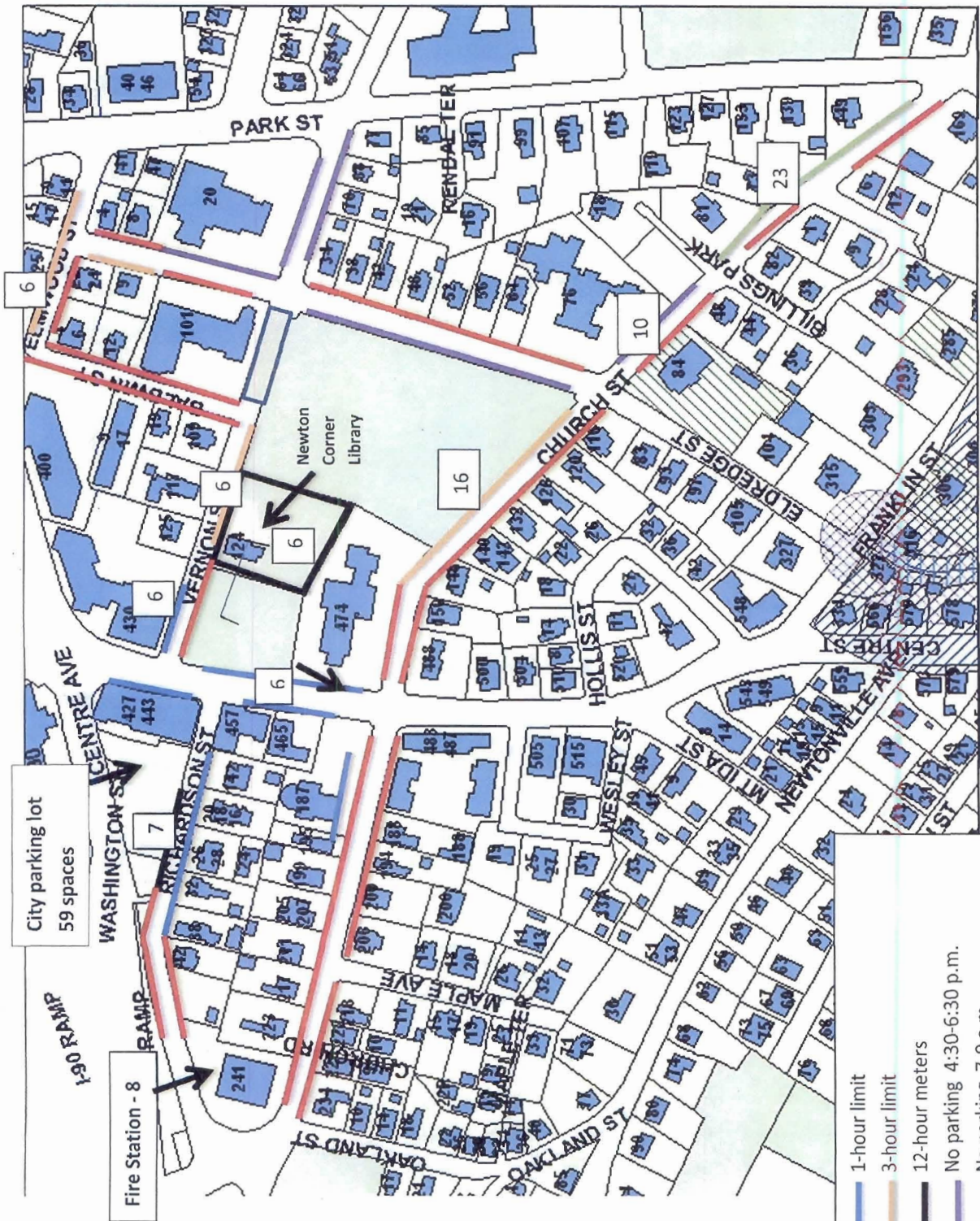
Cf: Candace Havens, Director of Planning and Development
Bob DeRubeis, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation Department
Stephanie Gilman, Commissioner of Public Buildings Department
Josh Morse, Director of Facilities Management
Dave Turocy, Interim Commissioner of Public Works

= Parking Spaces
Marked Out



PARKING IN VIC
N. CORNER LIBRARY

5-20-11

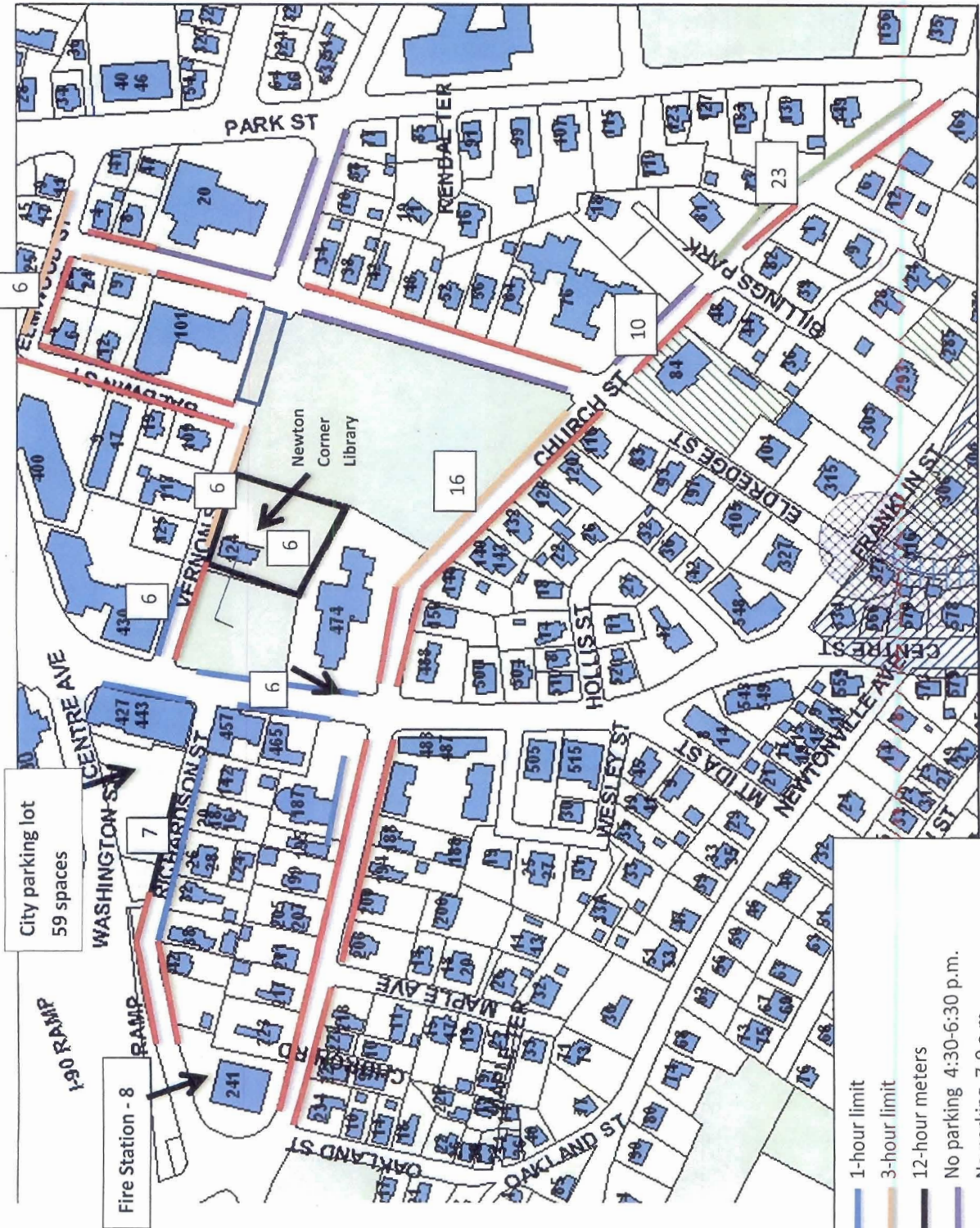


- 1-hour limit
- 3-hour limit
- 12-hour meters
- No parking 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- No parking 7-9 a.m.
- No parking weekdays
- Unrestricted

City parking lot
59 spaces

Fire Station - 8

Newton
Corner
Library



Building	Parks and Rec	Newton Corner
Sq Ft	3,208	6,138
Masonry	\$40,000.00	N/A
Windows*	\$150,000.00	\$100,000.00
Roof	\$25,000.00	N/A
Flooring	\$30,000.00	N/A
HVAC	\$50,000.00	N/A
Interior	\$25,000.00	\$70,000.00
Electric	\$75,000.00	\$15,000.00
Site	\$50,000.00	N/A
Elevator	N/A	N/A
Total Construction	\$445,000.00	\$185,000.00
Design 10%	\$44,500.00	\$10,000.00
Contingency 5%	\$22,250.00	\$5,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$511,750.00	\$200,000.00
Annual Utility Cost	\$44,429.32	\$14,000.00
10yr Utility Cost **	\$466,102.59	\$156,845.00
Total 10yr Cost	\$977,852.59	\$356,845.00

*Window replacement would be eligible for CPA funds.

** Projections for tax revenue and utility costs are based on a 2.5% escalation rate.