



Real Property Reuse Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Present: Councilors Danberg (Chair), Markiewicz, Greenberg, Albright, Kelley, Downs and Bowman

Absent: Councilors Kalis and Laredo

City staff Present: Associate City Solicitor Andrew Lee, Director of Planning and Development Barney Heath, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Chief Planner Neil Cronin

#393-20 Reuse of former water tower site on Countryside Road

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT submitting on September 10, 2020 a letter recommending that the former water tower site, a 16,900 sq. ft. parcel of land on Countryside Road, Ward 8, Newton Centre, known as Property ID: 83036 0003A be made available for sale or lease pursuant to Ordinance Section 2-7.

Action: **Real Property Reuse Held 7-0**

Note: At the Real Property Reuse meeting on October 20, 2020, the Committee discussed reuse of the parcel (former water tower site) on Countryside Road. The Committee requested additional analysis of the site and possibilities for the site from the Planning Department. Chief Planner Neil Cronin presented details of the site as shown on the attached presentation. The 16,900 sq. ft. is located in a Public Use district. A water tower previously occupied the site and was removed in 2020 at a cost of approximately \$300,000. The parcel is landlocked by three abutters; a single-family residence at 197 Countryside Road (zoned SR1), the Charles River golf course at 483-655 Dedham Street (zoned SR1) and The Gables condominiums at 421 Dedham Street (zoned MR1). The subject property has no frontage on Countryside Road as there is a strip of land attached to 197 Countryside Road between the parcel and the street. Previously the City had an easement on this portion of the site to access the water tower.

In the SR1 district, the property is considered unbuildable due to the lack of frontage and the lot size (new lot requires 25,000 sq. ft.). In the MR1 district, the site is lacking frontage. To make the property buildable, variances would be required for the relevant zoning deficiencies. In October 2020, the Committee questioned whether the site is adequate for the location of wireless facilities. Mr. Cronin noted that although wireless facilities (monopoles) are permitted in the Public Use district, the use would require a 425' setback which is impracticable at the site. Based on a discussion with the Assessor's office, Mr. Cronin stated that the unbuildable lot is valued at \$4 - \$9 sq. ft. totaling approximately \$67,000 to \$169,000.

Associate City Solicitor Andrew Lee explained that the Committee can choose to make the property available for sale or lease. If the property is determined available for sale, the Council may set a

minimum sale price for the site. The Committee discussed possible uses for the site and questioned whether the Planning Department can provide additional analysis with respect to the possible uses.

Director of Planning and Development Barney Heath explained that without a proposed plan from interested parties, some analysis is difficult. He noted that some of the plans are subject to future zoning relief and/or arrangements between private entities. The Committee expressed concern relative to losing the property where there might be options for municipal use(s). Councilors questioned whether forming a JAPG to guide the process might be valuable. Committee members noted that a Request for Interest (RFI), may be one option in determining which private entities might be interested in the parcel. The Committee agreed that a public hearing may also be a helpful way to provide a sense of interest. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of holding a public hearing on March 24, 2021 with a motion from Councilor Kelley. Understanding that waiving the formation of a JAPG at this stage may not be the Council's preferred option without additional information, the Committee asked that the Planning Department review the process used to develop an RFI for Austin Street and see if the same process could be applied for the subject parcel. The Committee requested further discussion, analysis and next steps relative to development of the site for affordable housing and/or location of a monopole.

With that, the Committee voted 6-0 in favor of holding the item with a motion from Councilor Kelley. The Committee adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Danberg, Chair

Department of Planning and Development



REAL PROPERTY REUSE

83036 003A

BALDPATE WATER TOWER

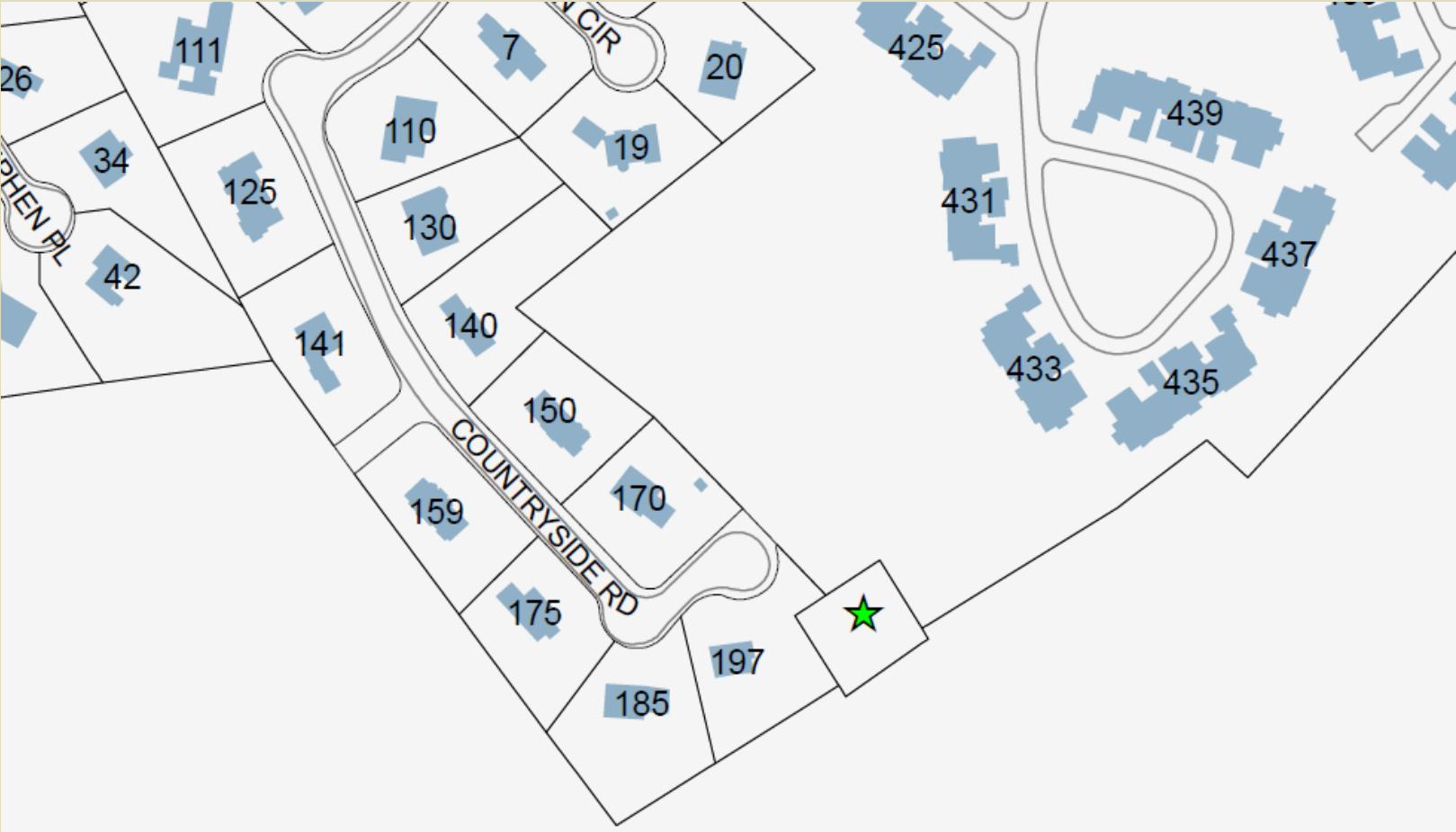
FEBRUARY 24, 2021



Aerial/GIS Map



Plan View



Zoning



- Single Residence 1:
 - Frontage
 - Lot size
- Multi Residence 1:
 - Frontage

Committee Questions



- Cost of demolition
- Wireless Facilities
- Existing Value