



Zoning & Planning Committee Report

Part 1

City of Newton In City Council

Monday, November 8, 2021

Present: Councilors Crossley (Chair), Danberg, Albright, Leary, Ryan, Wright, Krintzman and Baker

Also Present: Councilors Bowman, Lipof, Downs, Kelley, Malakie, Humphrey, Oliver, Lucas, Kalis and Greenberg

City Staff: Deputy Director of Planning and Development Jen Caira, Director of Planning and Development Barney Heath, Assistant City Solicitor Andrew Lee, Director of Housing and Community Development Amanda Berman, Chief of Long Range Planning Zachery LeMel, Community Planner Engagement Specialist Nevena Pilipovic-Wengler, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo, Commissioner of Public Buildings Joshua Morse, CPA Program Manager Lara Kritzer and Housing Development Planner Eamon Bencivengo

Newton Housing Partnership, Lizbeth Heyer and Charles Eisenberg

Planning and Development Board: Chair Peter Doeringer, Barney Heath, Kelley Brown, Chris Steele, Kevin McCormick, Lee Breckenridge and Jennifer Molinsky

Newton Housing Partnership Charles Eisenberg

Others Present: NewTV

**#180-21 Requesting a review and possible amendments to Section 4.2.5(A)
COUNCILORS LAREDO, LUCAS, LIPOF AND MARKIEWICZ requesting review of and possible amendments to Section 4.2.5(A) of the City of Newton Zoning Ordinance to clarify language concerning shadows and blocked views in the Mixed Use 4 district.
Zoning & Planning Held 8-0 on 09/13/21
Zoning & Planning Held 8-0 on 10/14/21; Public Hearing Scheduled for November 8, 2021**

Action: Zoning & Planning Held 8-0; Public Hearing Closed

Note: This report will be available at a later date.

Referred to Zoning & Planning and Programs and Services

#392-21

Authorization to acquire property at 163-144 Hancock Street and 169 Grove Street

HER HONOR THE MAYOR requesting authorization to acquire whether by purchase or friendly eminent domain the real properties which are portions of 136-144 Hancock Street and 169 Grove Street, known as The Walker Center for Ecumenical Exchange.

Program & Services Approved 7-0 (Councilor Noel not voting) on 11/03/21**Action:****Zoning & Planning Approved 8-0**

Note: Director of Planning and Development Barney Heath, Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo and Commissioner of Public Buildings Joshua Morse joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Chief Operating Officer Yeo presented (PowerPoint attached) the city's interests in acquiring a portion of The Walker Center land. Mr. Yeo noted that this portion of The Walker Center in Auburndale is located on Grove Street next to the Williams School. The Walker Center is an historic campus comprising buildings from the 1800s, which is within a residential neighborhood next door to Lasell University. Over this past summer and fall the administration discussed with the owners the possibility of acquiring a portion of their properties for two purposes. The main purpose is to provide more flexibility for anticipated future renovations of the William School building, given the existing site is very constrained. The second is that the existing four historic houses can become permanently affordable housing. These residences contain approximately 7400 square feet of living space including fourteen bedrooms. Making these deed-restricted affordable homes would provide family size units next to an elementary school and playground and walking distance to mass transit.

The city is proposing to spend \$2.45 million in ARPA funding to purchase lots A and B, which are next to the school and playground, and so may t be helpful to both. The two lots total approximately 36,000 square feet, which is about .83 acres (about 40% of the total Walker Center property).

The city will work with the Real Property Reuse Committee in the future and potentially team up with a partner to renovate and manage the homes. The houses are in decent shape as they are but do need accessibility work. We may upgrade heating systems and go fossil fuel free in the future.

In summary, lots A and B have been appraised and the administration believes it is getting great value in the negotiated price.

Councilor Krintzman stated that Councilor Markiewicz submitted a written letter to the Programs and Services Committee in support of the acquisition. He then said that as you recall, when we approved the major Riverside development (now the Riverside office park) one of the concerns was the impact on the schools, number of units and the potential number of school-aged children who would attend the Williams School. A way to accommodate that in the future would be an expansion of the Williams School. This authorization provides the flexibility that the City will need to potentially accommodate those students. The Williams School recreational facilities are in terrible condition. It is my hope that through this acquisition, we can also improve those conditions at Williams School.

Without discussion, Councilor Krintzman made a motion to approve this item. Committee members agreed 8-0.

#438-20 Request for creation of Trust in Newton to support affordable housing development
COUNCILORS ALBRIGHT, CROSSLEY, HUMPHREY, DANBERG, MALAKIE, KELLEY, BOWMAN, KALIS, GREENBERG, DOWNS, WRIGHT, RYAN, NOEL, LEARY, LIPOF AND NORTON requesting the Planning Department analyze mechanisms already in use in other cities and towns, identify funding sources, and create a Housing Trust in Newton to facilitate and foster the development of affordable housing in Newton.

Zoning & Planning Held 11/09/20, 03/22/21, 07/26/21, 09/27/21

Action: Zoning & Planning Held 8-0

Note: This report will be available at a later date.

#88-20 Discussion and review relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING requesting review, discussion, and direction relative to the draft Zoning Ordinance.

Zoning & Planning Held on 01/27/20, 02/10/20, 02/24/20, 03/09/20, 03/23/20, 04/13/20, 04/27/20, 05/19/20, 06/01/20, 06/15/20, 06/29/20, 07/09/20, 07/16/20, 08/13/20, 09/14/20, 10/01/20, 10/15/20, 11/05/20, 11/09/20, 12/14/20, 02/22/21, 03/08/21, 05/24/21, 07/08/21, 09/13/21, 10/25/21

Action: Zoning & Planning

Note: This report will be available at a later date.

The Committee adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah J. Crossley, Chair

Walker Center Land Acquisition

Programs & Services Committee

November 3, 2021

CENTRAL NEWTON LOCATION

- 3-minute drive to I-90
- 4-minute drive to Route 30
- 3-minute drive to I-95 / Route 128
- 20-minute drive to Logan Airport
- 10-minute walk to Grove Street MBTA Station (Green Line)

LASELL UNIVERSITY

LASELL VILLAGE
SENIOR-HOUSINGWILLIAMS ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

JAMES L. ELCOCK
+1 617 538 0718
james.elcock@colliers.com

ROBERT CRONIN
+1 617 633 2141
bob.cronin@colliers.com

Colliers International | 160 Federal Street | Boston, MA 02110 | colliers.com

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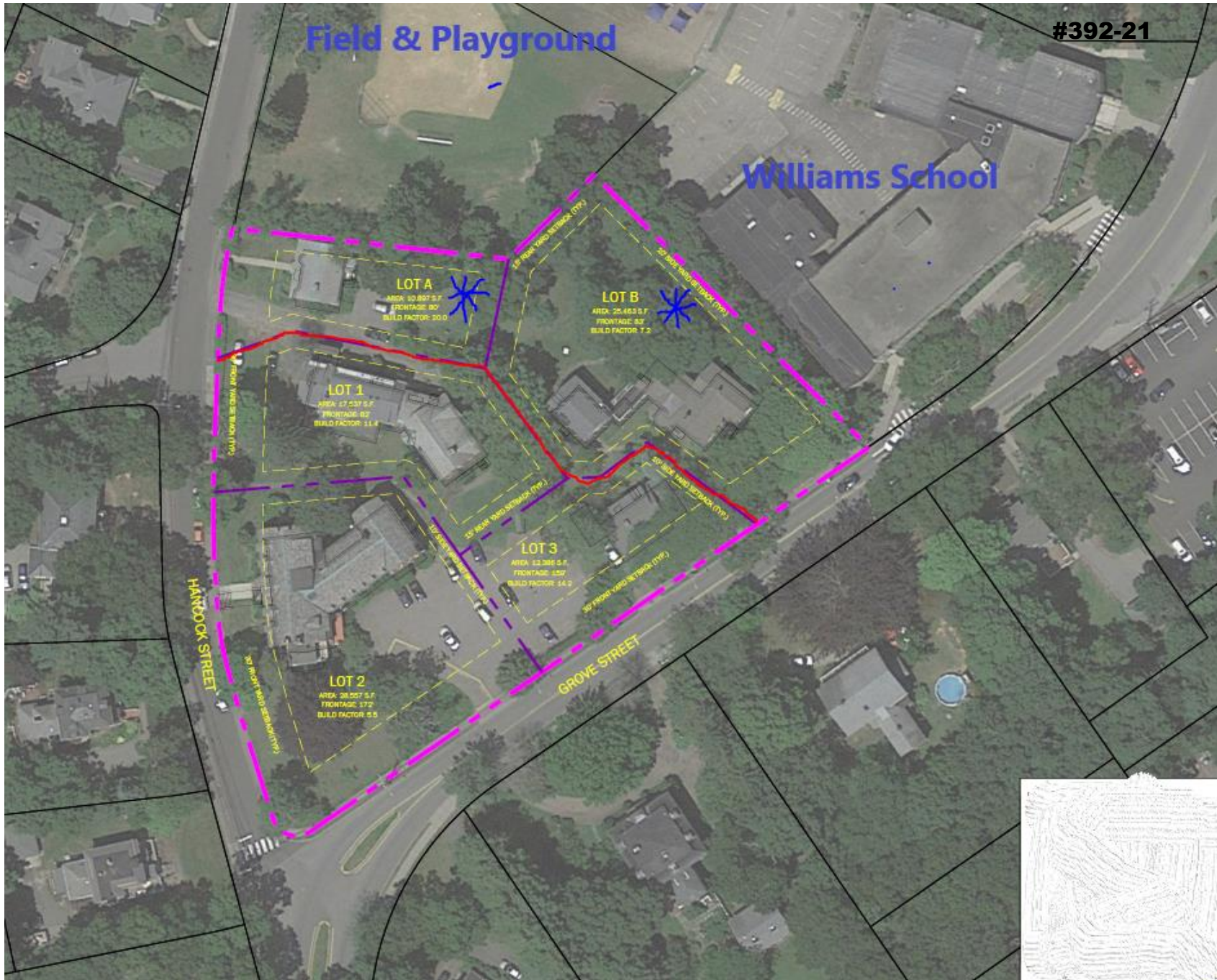


#392-21



Field & Playground

Williams School



Reasons for Acquisition of Portion of Walker Center Land

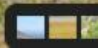
Flexibility for Future Williams School Building and Site Planning

- The Williams School and playground area sit on a constrained property making any future improvements difficult.
- Given the sale of this long-held Walker Center property, the City determined that increasing the amount of land (Lots "A" and "B") next to the school and playground will be helpful to both.
- The two lots total approximately 36,360 square feet (0.83 acres).
- Acquisition allows for future flexibility of Williams Elementary School building and site planning.

Addition of Permanently Affordable Housing

- The four houses (Howard, Hume, Harding West and Harding East) on these lots total about 7,400 square feet and currently have 14 bedrooms.
- The addition of affordable housing as a part of this acquisition is a significant benefit, especially given that the homes are family-sized units next to an elementary school and playground, in walking distance to three forms of mass transit, and are nestled into a residential neighborhood.
- City will work with Reuse Committee and team up with a partner to renovate/manage

#392-21





#392-21



#392-21



#392-21



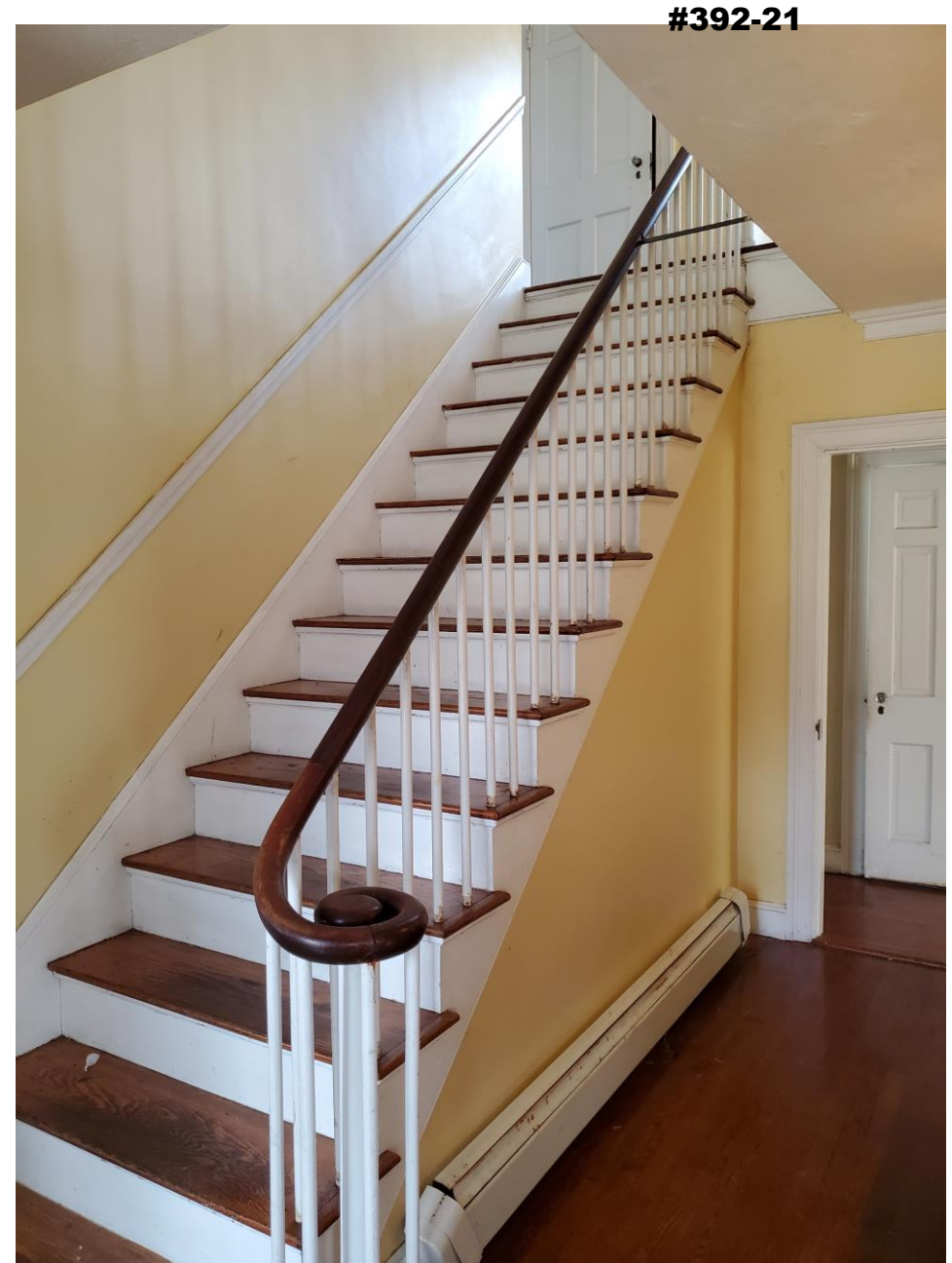
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Field & Playground

Williams School

