

City of Taunton
Municipal Council
May 9, 2023

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CLERK'S OFFICE

2023 MAY 15 P 3: 55

The Committee on Finance and Salaries

TAUNTON, MA

The meeting was held at Taunton City Hall, 15 Summer Street, Taunton, MA 02780 in the Chester R. Martin Municipal Council Chambers. CLERK

Present were Councilor Phillip Duarte, Chairman and Councilors Pottier and McCaul. Also present were Patrick Dello Russo, CFO, and Ally Rodriguez, Director of Veterans Services.

The meeting was called to order at 5:36 PM.

1. Meet to review the weekly vouchers and payroll for City departments.

MOTION by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. McCaul to approve the payroll warrant in the amount of \$1,516,899.25. **So voted.**

MOTION by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. McCaul to approve the accounts payable warrant in the amount of \$5,526,610.60. **So voted.**

2. Meet to discuss the request to establish a gift account for the Veterans Department.

Mr. Dello Russo clarified that there are, in fact, two accounts requested. The first is to be used for the purchase of signs, poles, and costs associated with Purple Heart Community signs.

MOTION by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. McCaul to approve this request and establish a Purple Heart gift account that would go toward the signs, poles, and a day of celebration to honor the families and refer this to the agenda for an order. **So voted.**

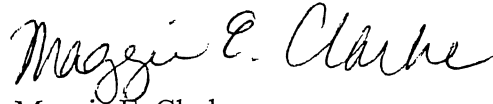
The second gift account is for the use of the Veterans office. Donations could be made in honor of someone and funds would be used for programming for veterans.

MOTION by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. McCaul to approve the request and to include as an order on the agenda with details to be provided to the Clerk of Committees. **So voted.**

MOTION by Mr. Pottier and seconded by Mr. McCaul to adjourn the meeting at 5:44 PM. **So voted.**

CITY OF TAUNTON
MAY 09 2023
IN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Respectfully submitted,



Maggie E. Clarke
Clerk of Council Committees

REPORTS ACCEPTED. RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED.



CITY CLERK

City of Taunton
Municipal Council
May 9, 2023

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
2023 MAY 15 P 3:56

The Committee on Public Property

TAUNTON, MA

The meeting was held at Taunton City Hall, 15 Summer Street, Taunton, MA 02780 in the Chester R. Martin Municipal Council Chambers. CITY CLERK

Present were Councilor Christopher Coute, Chairman and Councilors McCaul, Dooner, Quintal, and Borges. Also present were Kathryn Madden of Madden Planning Group, Amanda Gregoire of Mass Development, Jim Howland of OECD, and TJ Torres of OECD.

The meeting was called to order at 5:47 PM.

1. Meet with Madden Planning Group regarding the Taunton Nursing Home grant study.

Kathryn Madden gave a presentation on the study she has been conducting on the site of the former Taunton Nursing Home. She noted that goals of the grant application were to enhance economic development and/or jobs and to evaluate the highest and best use for the property. Ms. Madden noted the open space in the City and associated with the property. The site was in use as early as the 1820s and the original existing building was built in 1876. She mentioned that DREAM Collaborative also has been working on the study. The building is on the national register of historic places. She explained that during the public outreach meeting there were mixed emotions on the building. However, she stated that the building is well made, the structure is very sound, and it is a very permanent building. The location has City water and sewer. She indicated that it is hard to justify knocking it down since it's in sound condition. However, the inside would need to be gutted. Ms. Madden detailed the three different parcels that are at the site. Parcel A, the southernmost parcel of 35 acres, is where Taunton West Little League is located. Parcel B, the northwestern part of the land, contains the schools and softball fields. Parcel C is the location of the former Nursing Home which is about 6 acres. She suggested that wetlands could be an issue and need to be mapped. Ms. Madden spoke of walking paths that could connect better and provide access to the pond. Natural resources were highlighted including the pond, a stream, and the turtle sanctuary. The existing community garden was discussed and noted that everyone seems to agree that this is a good use. Next steps include a survey to identify the wetlands and sewer locations. From the community meetings she saw the importance of youth facilities and open space. Other comments suggested the need for housing for veterans and seniors as well as affordable housing.

Ms. Madden identified three scenarios all of which keep the existing buildings. Scenario 1 would add an additional building and slightly realign the access road. This would result in 60 units of senior housing with one parking space per unit. Scenario 2 squares off the property line and allows for the construction of new duplexes, quads, or townhouses for a total of 61 units.

She understands that the neighbors do not want it to look urban so these could look similar to other subdivisions. New utilities would be brought in. Scenario 3 is similar to scenario 2 but has a different roadway layout. This scenario has 63 units and sidewalks could make connections to other open space.

Ms. Madden noted that in Taunton, only 7% of housing is affordable which does not make the 10% threshold for 40B and not a lot of housing is being produced. She suggested an outer loop trail that goes to the conservation buffer that could be a 1.5 mile walking loop. Ms. Madden also showed how a Pop Warner field could be fit onto the property.

Next steps include a survey of wetlands and utilities. The City will also need to determine if the intent is to dispose of the building since the longer it sits, the more it will fall apart and cost more to renovate. She estimated the cost of demolition in the ballpark of \$2 Million. The area may need to be rezoned since it is currently zoned rural residential. The final report will capture all the information that they have gathered and could become the basis for an RFP.

Councilor Coute suggested that the renovation could cost \$20-30 Million based on the square footage and current construction costs. He noted that the area is zoned Rural Residential which requires about 1.5-2 acres per house. He does not think 60 units in a Rural Residential zone will work. He believes that this should stay open space and recreation but loves the idea of trails connecting everything.

Councilor Dooner also liked the idea of the walking trail and indicated that it is difficult to make any decisions without a survey. She would like to see the Pop Warner field.

Councilor Borges indicated that while she knows that there is a lack of housing this is a unique piece of property. She envisions a community center that the entire community could utilize. She finds this level of housing to be dense and still is thinking in terms of a community center sports complex. Councilor Coute agreed with Councilor Borges and would like to see a community center that focuses on outdoor recreation. He also stated that dense housing would not be popular with anyone in that area.

Councilor Quintal also agreed with Councilor Borges and, while he understands that there is a shortage of housing, he likes the idea of a community center.

Councilor McCaul stressed that they need to survey the wetlands and utilities. He believes that the City needs housing for veterans and seniors and it could be nice to have them interacting with the youth. He asked Ms. Madden about the structure of the nursing home and he noted that it is a beautiful building.

Ms. Borges stated that there have been other opportunities for housing that the Council has turned down. She mentioned that the Leonard School site and the School Street location could be potential locations for housing.

Ms. Madden suggested that it could be possible to just keep the existing building which would allow for 25 units of about 1100 square feet each.

Councilor McCaul asked Ms. Madden which scenario she thought was best and she indicated that, of the three, she thought scenario 3 was the best.

Councilor Postell was happy to hear the thought was for private development as he doesn't like the idea of the City maintaining housing. He stressed that the community garden is a hidden gem and he would like to see it better used. Mr. Postell was concerned with how a community garden on a private entity would function. He noted that there is no parking for the garden. Of the three scenarios, he likes scenario 3 but shares the concerns of the community and would support open space and recreation.

Councilor Sanders stated that he recognizes the need for housing, particularly affordable housing but also sees that communities benefit from open space. He believes that this property has a lot of potential. He asked Ms. Madden about what determines the 1 parking space for senior housing and she said it is by Ordinance. He asked about the Housing Production Plan that had been mentioned and Ms. Madden stated that this would demonstrate to the state that they are working to get to the 10% affordable housing threshold. This is an opportunity for the city to set a goal on housing and look at the best places for this to happen. Councilor Sanders indicated that he believes that planning for land use is important and that having a plan would help to get to at least the minimum threshold for affordable housing in the City.

*Councilor Coute suggested that the Committee look at all the properties such as Leonard School, Fraga Farm, the Nursing Home site, and the agricultural component of the Villa Fatima and determine where would be best for affordable housing, recreation, and so on. **Motion** by Ms. Borges and seconded by Ms. Dooner to that effect. **So voted.***

Councilor Duarte stated that the 2018 Comprehensive Master Plan included a draft Housing Production Plan but that it never actually made it to the City Council for approval. He believes there is no reason that can't be addressed. The plan is written but just needs to be updated. He is interested in the idea of 25 units to preserve the existing building and thinks that there is a way for everyone's needs to be met. He further suggested that this is not a particularly rural area.

Amanda Gregoire stated that this study was funded through the real estate technical assistance program so there is an economic lens on it. If there is additional work to be done, there may be additional grants available.

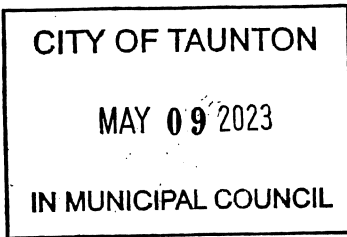
Councilor Quintal questioned the wetlands and Ms. Madden indicated that wetlands are defined by the vegetation and that it might be interesting to look at a larger restoration.

Councilor Sanders stated that if there are to be walking trails, he would like them to be ADA accessible.

Councilor Borges reiterated that the property is so unique since it is surrounded by recreation and schools.

Motion by Ms. Dooner and seconded by Mr. McCaul to take the presentation under advisement.
So voted.

Motion by Ms. Borges and seconded by Ms. Dooner to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 PM. So
voted.



Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maggie E. Clarke".

Maggie E. Clarke
Clerk of Council Committees

REPORTS ACCEPTED. RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer L. Regan".
CITY CLERK