

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

REAL PROPERTY REUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2004

Present: Ald. Lipof (Chairman), Ald. Albright, Danberg, Gerst, Salvucci, and Schnipper

Absent: Ald. Harney (Ald. Samuelson was in the building attending Zoning Board of Appeals.)

City officials: Mike Rourke, Chief Administrative Officer; Linda Plaut, Director of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs; Linda Finucane, Chief Committee Clerk

#408-04 HIS HONOR THE MAYOR requesting the transfer of the former Carr School at 225 Nevada Street to the Parks and Recreation Department and Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs.

ACTION: APPROVED 6-0

NOTE: Mr. Rourke said the city has been informed by its insurer that it will not reinsure the former Carr School at the same level of coverage because of the vandalism that has occurred over the past year it has been empty. Recently, a number of groups including the Suzuki School, Newton Country Players, Newton Philharmonic, and the New Rep Theatre approached the city about their need for leasing space on a short-term basis. The transfer to the Parks and Recreation Department and the Office of Cultural Affairs will allow a core group of tenants to occupy the first floor, approximately 10,000 sf, for \$8 per square foot of area, the minimum price set by the Board in 2002 when the building was leased to the Jewish Community Day School. The Law Department advised the Mayor that a license approach (instead of leasing) essentially creates a tenant-at-will situation that allows the city to revoke a tenancy with a 30-day notice. Depending on the School Department's decision about the future of Horace-Mann School, short-term occupancy will not interfere with reclamation of Carr for a school. In the meantime, having the building occupied will reduce the insurance risk and support groups within the community. Licensing the space will also recoup for the city at least a modest amount of money because even though the facilities are adequate for short-term use, the building will require extensive work such as boiler replacement, new windows and roof, elevator, air ventilation system, and toilet upgrades to house a school.

Initially the city considered moving the Parks and Recreation Department from its location on Crescent Street to Carr, but the costs involved were too prohibitive for what would be a temporary rearrangement; however, Linda Plaut and an assistant will relocate to Carr to provide on-site staff, thereby alleviating some of the overcrowding at Crescent Street. Three to four groups have committed to a January 1, 2005 occupancy date. The Suzuki School will be the anchor tenant, using space for perhaps 5 hours a day, while others, like New Philharmonic might use it only one day a week. Rent will be

proportionate, with swing space used for other programs, some of which will be run by the city. Seventy parking spaces provide ample parking. In response to a question about liability insurance, Mr. Rourke said the city doesn't accept liability for use of a city-owned building and that liability is capped by law anyway. He is more concerned about the building remaining vacant.

The committee expressed to Mr. Rourke its pleasure that this transfer will support civic groups in the city, while reserving the building for future school use. Ald. Salvucci made a motion to approve the item, which carried 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard A. Lipof, Chairman