

MEMORANDUM

OCTOBER 12, 2023

TO: **BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**
D/B/A BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (BPDA)
AND JAMES ARTHUR JEMISON II, DIRECTOR

FROM: REBECCA HANSEN, DIRECTOR OF REAL ESTATE
JONATHAN SHORT, SENIOR REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

SUBJECT: REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE AND ISSUE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT AND SALE OF 628 WARREN STREET IN ROXBURY

SUMMARY: This Memorandum requests that the Secretary be authorized, on behalf of the Boston Redevelopment Authority Boston d/b/a Boston Planning & Development Agency ("BPDA"), to advertise and issue a Request for Proposals from qualified developers to redevelop 628 Warren Street in the Roxbury neighborhood

DETAILS OF THE PROPERTY

The Boston Redevelopment Authority ("BRA") d/b/a Boston Planning & Development Agency ("BPDA") requests authorization to advertise and issue a Request for Proposals ("RFP") for the redevelopment and sale of 628 Warren Street,, Parcel ID 12-02617-000, (the "Property"). The BPDA acquired the land from the City of Boston after a tax foreclosure. Per the consensus of the surrounding community members established through a community process, the RFP will seek proposals for one of two types of development which include either (1) a residential development including affordable rental and/or homeownership, or (2) a mixed-use development with a commercial first floor and affordable rental and homeownership units above.

The Property consists of approximately 5,013 square feet of vacant land located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Warren Street and Sunderland Street in the Boulevard Planning District, Multifamily Residential Sub-District, abutting the

Grove Hall Neighborhood Shopping Sub-District District in Roxbury. The Property consist of flat green space surrounded by mature trees along the northwest edge of the parcel facing Warren Street and Sunderland Street. The eastern and southern edges of the parcel abut privately owned vacant parcels.

ZONING CONTEXT

For zoning purposes, the Property is part of the Roxbury District as shown on Map 6A-6C of the Boston Zoning Maps, and therefore is principally governed by the provisions of Article 50 of the Boston Zoning Code. The Property is located in a Multi-Family Residential Sub-District.

COMMUNITY PROCESS

BPDA staff held the initial community meeting on December 08, 2022. The community discussed a number of uses including a gathering place for residents to sit and have conversations, a sit-down restaurant, and homeownership residential units.

It was determined by BPDA Staff that a mixed-use development including a restaurant or retail use could only be achieved through the assemblage of the two, abutting, privately owned parcels; however, those are not included in this RFP offering. The community remained interested in the redevelopment of all three parcels, and an interested proponent with site control over those parcels may submit a development plan for the combined site.

The BPDA Staff held an additional three meetings to discuss the possibly of development on just the BPDA's parcel as well as development on all three. This led to the creation of an RFP that provides guidelines for either possibility to ensure that the community's interests were met. BPDA held a final meeting on September 27, 2023 outlining two sets of development guidelines. The community showed support for the plan because it creates a guaranteed pathway for affordable housing regardless of whether or not the adjacent parcels are incorporated in a proposal.

DEVELOPMENT, DESIGN, AND OPERATIONS GUIDELINES

The BPDA seeks creative and innovative proposals for two types of development. The guidelines listed below are solely for low-density residential development that meet the following objectives:

- **Consistency with Area Planning History:** The Property falls within the catchment area of the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan. Proposal should capture and address the current needs of the community for affordable housing, community development, and wealth creation through homeownership.
- **Affordable Housing Development:** The development of affordable homeownership and/or rental housing.
- **Off-Street Parking:** Any new development must provide a 1:1 parking ratio between the units created and off-street parking spaces.
- **Protection of the environment by maintaining the mature trees on the land**
- **Development without Displacement:** Proposals must describe measures they will take to avoid displacement of existing residents of the Roxbury neighborhood.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Plan:** Respondents must submit a Diversity and Inclusion Plan which reflects the extent to which they plan to include significant and impactful economic participation, employment, and management roles by people of color, women, and certified M/WBEs to participate in the development of the Property.

If a proponent has control over one or both of the abutter parcels they may include the following objectives:

- **Ground Floor Activation:** Proposals should prioritize ground floor commercial space used for neighborhood services, retail, restaurants, and community spaces within the ground floor of any development.
- **Roof-Top Planting Opportunities:** In order to create usable and productive open spaces and capitalize on all sun-exposed rooftop spaces, the project

should include urban farming or community gardening strategies in these areas and for the building residents.

Among other design guidelines, proposals should:

- Enhance and complement the architectural characteristics of the neighborhood
- Maintaining the continuity of the frontage design and building wall while contributing to the streetscape design and public realm
- Architectural detailing should be attractive and compatible with existing houses and/or residential buildings
- The selection of building materials should consider the highest quality
- Building mechanical equipment, utility meters, and ventilation openings, screen and caps should not be visible from the public's view
- Building construction, materials and MEP systems must be of good quality and take advantage of sustainable building principles

PRICE OFFER

Offered price is one of the many factors used in determining the most highly advantageous proposal for redevelopment of the Property. A March 2022 appraisal of the Property found the value of the property to be \$535,000 when restricted to three-family sub district with the maximum number of dwelling units allowed in a single Building, in a Town House Building, or in a Row House Building. The BPDA is willing to accept a low offer price to support the public benefits and the development of affordable residential units. The minimum price the BPDA will accept for the sale of the parcel will be \$100.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Secretary be authorized to advertise and issue a Request for Proposals from qualified developers, for the redevelopment and sale of 628 Warren Street in the Roxbury neighborhood.

An appropriate vote follows:

VOTED: That the Secretary be, and is hereby authorized, on behalf of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (the "BRA"), to advertise and issue a Request for Proposals from qualified developers, for the sale of the 628 Warren Street in the Roxbury neighborhood, on the terms and

BOARD APPROVED

conditions substantially consistent with the Board Memorandum submitted at the meeting held on October 12, 2023.