

# Newburyport Brown School

## Request for Information (RFI) Draft Outline

### From 4/3/2023 General Government Committee Meeting

#### I. Objective

a. What is the opportunity?

The City of Newburyport is preparing to offer the former ~~Brown School~~<sup>[AP1]</sup> at 40 Milk Street for adaptive reuse for the production of affordable housing. To ensure a successful RFP process, the City is seeking scenarios for highest and best use(s) of the property, ~~based upon the redevelopment goals outlined in Section III below,~~ which may not necessarily be the highest dollar value paid upon sale or disposition<sup>[SZ2]</sup>.

That portion of the property protected by Article 97 restrictions (see related Council Order) must be maintained and is not part of the RFI solicitation.

The City is open to reviewing concepts based on ~~a fee interest sale of surplus property.~~

The property has a FY2023 total assessed value of \$6,262,200.

b. Who is the Review Authority?

~~The Review authority is the City Council.~~

~~To be determined.~~<sup>[SZ3]</sup> ~~[Note from City Code Section 2-32: "The committee on general government shall be concerned with supervision of city properties whose custody has not been assigned to a specific municipal department."]~~<sup>[SZ4]</sup>

c. What is the solicitation?

- To ensure a successful ~~potential~~ RFP process, the City is seeking preliminary concepts and qualifications of development teams to assess feasibility of redevelopment scenarios and inform a future RFP.
- The City is using this solicitation to gather information on potential redevelopment scenarios. Since the City is not disposing of its interest in the property by way of this solicitation, it is therefore not subject to Uniform Procurement Act (Ch. 30B).

d. What is the solicitation process?

- The City is inviting responses from development teams that can demonstrate their ability to successfully preserve and reuse former school buildings for the production of affordable housing.
- After reviewing responses, the City will summarize and publicize the proposals to the Newburyport community and/or its City Council.
- The City may choose to invite all respondents for informational interviews in a fair and transparent manner.
- The City may or may not move forward with issuance of an RFP for Brown School at the conclusion of this solicitation.

#### II. Background

- a. Location of property, neighborhood context
- b. Brief history of Brown School: previous and current uses
- c. Site and building conditions: reference past studies and plans (i.e., feasibility studies, housing production plan)

- d. Regulatory conditions: existing zoning and other restrictions (i.e., park use, demolition of school building prohibited, requirement for a preservation restriction on the original/main school building, prevailing neighborhood conditions)

### III. Redevelopment Goals

Include a summary of community feedback collected in past public outreach. Based on ad-hoc committee feedback:

- A <sup>[AP5]</sup>- Production of affordable housing with a **preference for older adults aged 62 and above**. All affordable units must meet the requirements for inclusion in the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) **at no less than 60% AMI**.
- ~~Regardless of elevators service it is preferred that any accessible housing units be located on the ground floor.~~
- ~~Highest and best uses of the grounds and existing structures~~
- B - **Preservation of the existing gym** <sup>[SZ6]</sup> as a community space, if at all possible <sup>[SZ7]</sup>, <sup>[AP8]</sup>
- ~~Potential preservation of the first floor for municipal office space.~~
- C - A financially feasible project that allows the City to remain fiscally solvent <sup>[SZ9]</sup> ~~and that allows a~~ where the non-profit or developer ~~to~~ can demonstrate that the ~~a project~~ adaptive reuse program ~~that can be well cared for and maintained~~ can go in moving forward in a self-sufficient manner, and without continued financial assistance from the City. <sup>[AP10]</sup> ~~(Needs wordsmithing from Director Port)~~
- D - A project that comports with the character of the neighborhood, respecting the narrow streets and constrained access.
- A development approach that includes a robust community engagement process <sup>[AP11]</sup>

### IV. Submission requirements

#### a. Qualifications

- Development team members: ~~Provide resumes for each member to demonstrate~~ Demonstrate that the team has qualified professionals to accomplish the project successfully.
- Development team experience: Provide a narrative illustrating the team/organization's mission and areas of expertise. Describe the team's experience in similar projects within the past 5 years. Include information on team's relevant experience on permitting and financial capacity to successfully complete the project.

#### b. Development concept <sup>[SZ12]</sup>

##### i. - **Required: Adaptive Reuse Concepts under Existing Zoning** <sup>[AP13]</sup>

Prepare one or more development concepts for the property and building, based on the highest and best uses <sup>[SZ14]</sup> Redevelopment Goals outlined in Section III above of <sup>[AP15]</sup> the property and buildings. Each such concept shall be based on existing zoning and must be accompanied by a narrative including assumptions relative to zoning and permitting required for the project (i.e., what zoning changes, if any, are expected <sup>[SZ16]</sup> and anticipated permits, etc.), and the proposed timelines to secure necessary permits such approvals. **(INSERT EARLIER LANGUAGE THAT REQUIRED ONE PROPOSAL BE CONSISTENT WITH THE ZONING)** <sup>[AP17]</sup>

##### ii. - **Optional: Adaptive Reuse Concepts Requiring Alternative Zoning:**

<sup>[AP18]</sup> Prepare one or more alternative concepts for the property and building, based on the Redevelopment Goals outlined in Section III above. Each such concept shall be accompanied by a narrative including assumptions relative to permits and/or zoning changes which may be required to support the applicable adaptive reuse concept <sup>[AP19]</sup>, and

the proposed timelines to secure such approvals. Where an adaptive reuse concept cannot adhere to, or be permitted under, the existing Brown School Overlay District (BSOD) zoning or does not involve preservation of the existing gym space<sup>[AP20]</sup>, respondents shall provide a written explanation as to why modification of the BSOD zoning, or removal of the gym,<sup>[AP21]</sup> would be necessary to facilitate the proposed project, for the purposes of financing or as otherwise required for overall feasibility.

- ~~“All responses should be responsive to the redevelopment goals outlined in Sec. III to the greatest extent feasible, recognizing that there may be variation in the mixture of uses proposed by each respondent, the type, percentage and depth of affordable housing units proposed, etc. Where an adaptive reuse concept cannot adhere to, or be permitted under, the existing Brown School Overlay District (BSOD) zoning or does not involve preservation of the existing gym space, respondents shall provide a written explanation as to why modification of the BSOD zoning or removal of the gym~~<sup>[SZ22]</sup> ~~would be necessary to facilitate the proposed project, for the purposes of financing or as otherwise required for overall feasibility.”~~

iii. – All adaptive reuse concepts shall be accompanied by a summary of the following:

- A. The number of market rate units proposed
- B. The number of affordable units proposed, the proposed level or depth of affordability for such units.
- C. The number of bedrooms associated with both affordable and market rate units.<sup>[AP23]</sup>

c. Project financing

- Provide a preliminary pro forma, including sources and uses of funds for the foregoing adaptive reuse concepts.
- Provide a brief narrative on how the development team plans to utilize proposed financing sources, including permanent loans, DHCD subsidies, tax credits, local funding sources, and other grant programs.
- An estimated timeline for any such project

d. Transparency

- If invited verbally or in writing to submit by any City staff, elected official, or appointed member of a board or commission to disclose the nature of the invite.<sup>[AP24]</sup>

V. **Review**

The City will review responses based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- a. Completeness of proposal and inclusion of all submission requirements

- b. Responsiveness to redevelopment goals as outlined in Sec. III
- c. Demonstration of ability to successfully execute similar projects
- d. Qualifications of development team

VI. **Important dates**

- a. RFI available date
- b. Site tour
- c. Questions deadline
- d. Proposals due