



TOWN OF NEEDHAM

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TOWN MANAGER

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October 21, 2024 Special Town Meeting Article 3 – Appropriate for Stephen Palmer Planning

What is the Stephen Palmer Building?

The Stephen Palmer building is a former elementary school constructed in 1914 that currently houses 28 apartments. The November 12, 1975 Town Meeting voted to authorize the sale of the Stephen Palmer School and ground lease of the land - this vote was amended at the February 2, 1977 Special Town Meeting. The Town sold the building, facilities, fixtures, equipment and other structures to Crowninshield/Stephen Palmer Associates for consideration of "less than \$100." By vote of the Town, the property was intended to be used for apartments for individuals who are fifty-five years of age or older. Upon expiration of the lease, the property and any and all improvements revert to the Town. The expiration of the lease is May 2, 2027.

What will the funds be used for?

The proposed funding will support two separate initiatives – a relocation framework and a development planning framework. Relocation planning services are estimated at \$50,000 and development services at \$100,000.

What will the relocation services entail?

The relocation framework consultant will:

- Serve as a liaison between the Town and the property owner.
- Review all pertinent documents relating to the project including leases and other agreements between the Town and tenants, etc.
- Determine the Town's potential legal responsibilities relative to the tenants.
- Prepare draft letters and notices for the client to send to the lessee and tenants, including, but not limited to:
 - Required notices;
 - General informational letters; and
 - Other correspondence that may be necessary.
- Coordinate site access with the tenants.
- Prepare for and conduct general informational meetings with tenants.
- Conduct individual on-site meetings with approximately 28 tenants to provide information regarding the project and their status.
- Collect salient information regarding their housing needs.
- Obtain other data such as income, preferences or needs for replacement housing, general demographic information, and other related issues or concerns that would need to be addressed.

- Prepare a relocation assessment report, which will describe issues relating to the potential relocation of the tenants, including budgets, timing, potential obligations of the Town under G.L. 79A and potentially the federal Uniform Relocation Act, re-housing needs and options, and other related matters. The report will include conclusions and recommendations.

What will the development planning consultant services entail?

The development planning consultant will:

- Perform an existing conditions assessment (structural and architectural analysis, code analysis, legal issues, etc.) and the implications of razing or renovating the building (relative costs, limitations on uses, etc.).
- Perform land use planning, such as:
 - Developing land use concepts,
 - Generating land use scenarios,
 - Identifying opportunities, constraints, and costs of different scenarios,
 - Engaging community and all relevant stakeholders, and
 - Developing proposed land use parameters.

Why is the Town seeking to conduct both projects at the same time?

The relocation framework will allow the Town to plan for and engage a relocation service provider who will prepare a Relocation Plan and potentially handle the actual tenant relocation process (under a further contract). Funding is needed now in order to complete the relocation process prior to the expiration of the lease. Commencing the development planning process at the same time will provide the time necessary to determine next steps to be in place when the building reverts to the Town, and potentially inform the relocation process. Having a building of this size, age, condition and potential sit empty for any period of time is inadvisable.