



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON CITY PROPERTY
DATE: AUGUST 11, 2026
TIME: 7:03 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS SHAWN OLIVER, CHAIR; IAN ABREU; SHANE BURGO; NAOMI CARNEY; LEO CHOQUETTE; BRIAN GOMES; SCOTT PEMBERTON; JAMES ROY

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS DEREK BAPTISTE; JOSEPH LOPES; RYAN PERERIA

Councillor Oliver called the City Property Committee meeting to order, took attendance, and explained that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed. The Clerk read Communications into the record from Councillors Lopes and Pereira explaining their absence. The Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Choquette.

The following matters were taken up together, without objection:

REPORT, Committee on City Property, recommending to the City Council APPROVAL of the PROPOSAL submitted by South Coast Investments, Inc. for the development of Fire Station #3, located at 834 Kempton Street, and APPROVAL of the PROPOSAL submitted by Gwozdz Development for the development of Fire Station #11, located at 754 Brock Avenue. (Matter ID #1200) (Referred – July 16, 2026.)

AN ORDER, that the City Property Committee recommend approval of the sale of 834 Kempton Street, former Fire Station #3, and 754 Brock Avenue, former Fire Station #11, pursuant to the proposals selected by the Committee and hereto attached; and further, that the City Council authorize the Mayor and City Solicitor to execute the sale pursuant to the attached proposals. (Matter ID #1201) (Referred – July 16, 2026.)

PROPOSAL, submitted by South Coast Investments, Inc., for the development of Fire Station #3, located at 834 Kempton Street. (Received by the Committee on City Property – May 11, 2026.) (Matter ID #1202) (Referred – July 16, 2026.)

PROPOSAL, submitted by Gwozdz Development, for the development of Fire Station #11, located at 754 Brock Avenue. (Received by the Committee on City Property – May 11, 2026.) (Matter ID #1203) (Referred – July 16, 2026.)

PROPOSAL, submitted by Divine Contractors, Inc. / Freedom Realty Group, for the development of Fire Station #3, located at 834 Kempton Street. (Received – May 11, 2026.)

PROPOSAL, submitted by Divine Contractors, Inc. / Freedom Realty Group, for the development of Fire Station #11, located at 754 Brock Avenue. (Received – May 11, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Christian Gwozdz-Silveira from Gwozdz Development, LLC to speak on his proposal for the development of Fire Station #11, located at 754 Brock Avenue.

Mr. Gwozdz-Silveira stated that he would not reiterate all of the details of the proposal, as he has already presented the proposal to the Committee at previous meetings. He shared that his family has worked in the industry for over twenty years in this region, and that they are State certified and bonded. He explained that they are proposing six apartments, with a common garden and a storage area for the South Coast Business Alliance, and that their proposal was deemed 'highly advantageous'. He stated that the first proposal submitted to the original RFP had not been revised and the plans remain the same, and that they would secure funding from a local financial institution in order to complete construction. He spoke on the project contingencies, which would be receiving the building permit prior to beginning construction, as well as a financial contingency. He stated that although his company has never been denied funding on any of their projects, the banking market is complicated right now and if there was a financial issue, the City would be in the position to revisit his proposal.

Councillor Burgo asked Mr. Gwozdz-Silveira to clarify that the proposal before the Committee at this meeting remained the same from the original submission reviewed at a previous meeting. Mr. Gwozdz-Silveira confirmed. The Councillor asked where the twelve parking spaces proposed would be located. He was told that the parking space requirement had changed since the original proposal, but the parking spaces would be located to the left of the property. The Councillor asked Mr. Gwozdz-Silveira if he was confident he could secure financing for the project. He was told yes. The Councillor asked what the timeline was for construction. He was told the permitting would take approximately four to six months and from that point, once approved, it would take twelve months to finish and secure the occupancy permit.

The Chair recognized Gary Gagne from Divine Contractors Inc / Freedom Realty Group to speak on his proposal for the development of Fire Station #11, located at 754 Brock Avenue.

Mr. Gagne stated that his company had submitted the strongest offer on the RFP, which was \$25,000 higher than the other contractor. He added that they would not have any mortgage and/or permit contingency. Mr. Gagne went on to say the City assumes no risk with his project and added that two of the City reviewers rated their financial capacity and project timeline 'highly advantageous'.

Councillor Burgo asked Mr. Gagne if his funding is private. He was told yes. The Councillor asked if the eight apartments being proposed were feasible. He was told it was, but they would build what would be allowed. The Councillor asked what the timeline would be for this project. He was told six to eight months to start and the project would be completed within 18 to 24 months.

The Chair recognized David Silveira from South Coast Investments, Inc. to speak on his proposal for the development of Fire Station #3, located at 834 Kempton Street.

Mr. Silveira stated that their proposal had been previously approved twice by the Committee. He expressed concern that because the RFP process had to be reopened, other entities interested in submitting had the benefit of viewing the previously approved proposals. Mr. Silveira shared that he has worked with Josh Amaral from Housing and Community Development as well as the Mayor's Office to ensure that his project met the City's vision for development. He stated that this project is not a risk for the City, and added that it has been through three years of scrutiny and two RFP processes, and has remained the City's project of choice.

Councillor Burgo asked if this project had the same situation as the Gwozdz proposal in that the construction is contingent upon financing. He was told that it did. The Councillor stated he considered the parking proposal to be a little more realistic, with one space per unit.

The Chair recognized Gary Gagne from Divine Contractors Inc / Freedom Realty Group to speak on his proposal for the development of Fire Station #3, located at 834 Kempton Street.

Mr. Gagne reiterated that the same financing and permitting would apply to this project as well. Again, he stated that their proposal was \$25,000 higher than the other proposal submitted and that there would be no risk to the City if his proposal is approved.

The Chair recognized Atty. Ryan Pavao, Assistant City Solicitor, to speak on how the Committee should move forward in awarding the RFPs. Atty. Pavao explained that based on his review, the RFP language could be amended to convey how the Committee wished to award the RFPs or the Committee could issue a new motion to be reported out to the full City Council; he stated that either step would be appropriate.

Councillor Burgo asked Atty. Pavao what the appropriate motion would be if he wanted to change approval to the alternate proposal submission; should it be that the Committee move to select said proposal or should they instead amend the Order currently before them. Atty. Pavao replied that the Councillor could do either.

Councillor Burgo made a motion, which was seconded by Councillor Roy, to recommend approval of the proposal submitted by Divine Contractors, Inc. / Freedom Realty Group, for the development of Fire Station #3, located at 834 Kempton Street.

On the Question, Councillor Burgo stated that although both presenters were great, it comes down to the financials, and the City could certainly use the extra \$25,000. He added that because of the private financing, the project would move forward quicker, which would get the property back on the tax roll sooner.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Roy, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the PROPOSAL submitted by Divine Contractors, Inc. / Freedom Realty Group, for the development of Fire Station #3, located at 834 Kempton Street. This motion FAILED on a roll call vote of Yeas 2, Nays 6. (Councillors Burgo and Roy IN FAVOR.)

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Pemberton, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the PROPOSAL submitted by South Coast Investments, Inc. for the development of Fire Station #3, located at 834 Kempton Street. This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 6, Nays 2. (Councillors Burgo and Roy OPPOSED.)

Councillor Burgo made a motion, which was seconded by Councillor Roy, to recommend approval of the proposal submitted by Divine Contractors, Inc. / Freedom Realty Group, for the development of Fire Station #11, located at 754 Brock Avenue.

On the Question, Councillor Burgo stated that he felt this proposal was even more advantageous because the developer is offering eight apartments as opposed to six. Further, he said this would be an additional \$25,000 to the City for the property, and the timeline and private financing is a plus.

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Roy, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the PROPOSAL submitted by Divine Contractors, Inc. / Freedom Realty Group, for the development of Fire Station #11, located at 754 Brock Avenue. This motion FAILED on a roll call vote of Yeas 2, Nays 6. (Councillors Burgo and Roy IN FAVOR.)

On motion by Councillor Gomes and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the PROPOSAL submitted by Gwozdz Development for the development of Fire Station #11, located at 754 Brock Avenue. This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 6, Nays 2. (Councillors Burgo and Roy OPPOSED.)

On motion by Councillor Burgo and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council take “**NO FURTHER ACTION**” on the following matters:

COMMUNICATION, Council President Morad and Councillor Gomes, submitting a copy of letter from Bradford Bourque, New Bedford, MA regarding the Clark Cove Beach Nourishment Project. (To be Referred to the Committee on City Property, Conservation Commission and Conservation Agent Michele Paul.) (Matter ID #1994) (Referred – December 12, 2019.) (March 14, 2023 – tabled 90 days)

WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Gomes and Pereira, requesting, that the Committee on City Property meet with Director of Parks, Recreation and Beaches, Mary Rapoza, and a representative from the Administration to discuss the opening of the Ashley Park Warming House community room for a senior citizen day program; and further, to discuss other possible City services that can be located in said building and location. (Matter ID #2033) (Referred – November 26, 2024.) (May 12, 2025 – tabled)

Councillor Burgo made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Roy.

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence Jr.
Clerk of Committees