



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON CITY PROPERTY
DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2026
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS SHAWN OLIVER, CHAIR; IAN ABREU;
NAOMI CARNEY; LEO CHOQUETTE; BRIAN GOMES;
JOSEPH LOPES; SCOTT PEMBERTON; RYAN
PEREIRA; JAMES ROY

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS DEREK BAPTISTE; SHANE BURGO

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

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WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Pemberton and Abreu, requesting, that Mr. Paul Brooks Jr., Director of Real Estate and Development for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Fall River, appear before the Committee on City Property, to discuss the feasibility of leasing the Diocese's 25,000 square foot parking lot on the corner of Ashley Boulevard and Earle Street to the City of New Bedford for municipal parking purposes. (To be Referred to the Committee on City Property, Roman Catholic Diocese of Fall River, Mitchell Administration, and Purchasing Department.) (Matter ID #0029) (Referred – January 08, 2026.)

On motion by Councillor Pemberton and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To recommend that the City Council take **"NO FURTHER ACTION"** on the WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Pemberton and Abreu, requesting, that Mr. Paul Brooks Jr., Director of Real Estate and Development for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Fall River, appear before the Committee on City Property, to discuss the feasibility of leasing the Diocese's 25,000 square foot parking lot on the corner of Ashley Boulevard and Earle Street to the City of New Bedford for municipal parking purposes.

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WRITTEN MOTION, Councillors Pemberton and Oliver, requesting, that the Committee on City Property meet to begin the process of disposition for the Phillips Avenue Elementary School, located at 249 Phillips Avenue. (Matter ID #0030) (Referred – January 08, 2026.)

The Chair recognized Joshua Amaral, Director of Housing & Community Development, who explained that the building has been on the City's housing plan radar for some time. There were attempts to sell the property for housing in the past but for various reasons, those sales did not go through. Because of past issues, the school was put aside and more attention was paid to the Kempton and Taylor schools. He went on to say that they do have an RFP ready to go on the property and if approved, it would only take a couple of weeks until they are able to send it to the City Council for consideration.

Councillor Abreu asked if there had been any interest in the building. Mr. Amaral answered there had not been any interest as of late. The last inquiry to his knowledge was approximately two years ago. He added that it would be a rather small project, with possibly fourteen units.

Councillor Oliver asked what the current condition was of the school. Mr. Amaral replied it had been a few years since he had been in the building but he believed that the outside condition was probably worse than the inside.

On motion by Councillor Pemberton and seconded by Councillor Pereira, the Committee VOTED: To notify department heads that the Committee is considering the sale of the Phillips Avenue Elementary School, located at 249 Phillips Avenue, and request that they notify the Committee if said property is needed for municipal purposes.

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COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting a REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (DRAFT), for the redevelopment of a portion of the municipally owned Whaling City Golf Course as an Advanced Manufacturing Campus (AMC). (Matter ID #0090) (Referred – January 23, 2025.) (February 20, 2025 – tabled) (March 19, 2025 – Remain in Committee)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS, (DRAFT), for the redevelopment of a portion of the municipally owned Whaling City Golf Course as an Advanced Manufacturing Campus (AMC). (Matter ID #0091) (Referred – January 23, 2025.) (February 20, 2025 – tabled) (March 19, 2025 – VOTE: To determine that the property is not needed for municipal purposes; VOTE That the City offer the property for lease; VOTE: That the Purchasing Dept. proceed with issuing the RFP; VOTE: That the City also offer the property for potential sale; Remain in Committee.)

COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, in conjunction with the REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (DRAFT), for the redevelopment of a portion of the municipally owned Whaling City Golf Course as an Advanced Manufacturing Campus (AMC), requesting that the Committee on City Property vote to authorize the Planning Department to conduct an appraisal of the property being contemplated for potential disposition and authorize the Planning Department to conduct a survey of all City departments to determine whether the property is needed for municipal purposes. (Matter ID #0092) (Referred – January 23, 2025.) (February 20, 2025 – VOTE: To authorize the Planning Department to conduct an appraisal of the property being contemplated for potential disposition; VOTE: That the Committee on City Property send a communication to all City departments to determine whether the property is needed for municipal purposes; tabled) (March 19, 2025 – VOTE: To determine that the property is not needed for municipal purposes; VOTE: That the City offer the property for lease; VOTE: That the Purchasing Dept. proceed with issuing the RFP; VOTE: That the City also offer the property for potential sale; Remain in Committee.)

PROPOSAL, Charter Development Company, LLC submitting a proposal in response to the City's RFP for the creation of an Advanced Manufacturing Campus (AMC) of a portion of the municipally owned Whaling City Golf Course. (February 5, 2026 – the office received proposal via the Purchasing Department and sent to all Councillors.)

On motion by Councillor Pereira and seconded by Councillor Abreu, the Committee VOTED: To receive and place on file the RFP packet provided by the Administration.

The Chair recognized Neil Mello, Chief of Staff for the Administration, who gave an overview of the project at the golf course, explaining that this project has been ten years in the making. He stated that they have chosen a developer for the property; they are asking the Committee to approve the RFP and allow the City to negotiate a purchase and sale agreement. Once the agreement is in place, they will come back to the Committee for approval.

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Pereira, the Committee VOTED: To move that the Committee enter into Executive Session for the specific and exclusive purpose of discussing value and pricing of the property that may need to be negotiated as part of this transaction in order to accommodate various contingencies that may need to be built into the contract for purchase consistent with the open meeting exemption under M.G.L. Chapter 30A sec. 21(a)6; and further, that the Committee will reconvene in open public session following said Executive Session. This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 9, Nays 0.

The Committee entered into executive session at 7:23 pm. The Committee came out of executive session at 7:51 pm, at which point a brief recess was taken. The Committee reconvened at 7:53 pm.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Gomes, the Committee VOTED: To receive and place on file a packet entitled "EXTRACTS FROM: Response to City of New Bedford Request for Proposals #25161047".

The Chair recognized Robert Delhome and Mason Sandwell of Charter Development who provided an overview of the proposed development of the property, which included a phased timeline for public benefits. For Phase 1, tax revenues are estimated to be \$1,350,000 a year; for Phase 2, tax revenues are estimated to be \$1,150,000 a year. The project would also create 800-1,000 permanent jobs and 650-800 construction jobs.

Councillor Pereria asked about the lead time in applying for and receiving a MassWorks grant. He was told that a lot of the permitting and grant work had already been done by the City and that grant requests would be submitted in the next application cycle.

Councillor Abreu asked about construction costs and contractors, and if local businesses and laborers would be utilized. He was told that Charter would adhere to the City's guidelines on hiring local contractors and that it would be a mix of contractors in general.

Councillor Lopes asked if they would make a commitment to using the City's hiring policy. He was told that they would.

Councillor Gomes asked how Charter projected their development costs. He was told the numbers were based on historical construction figures for other projects in the State and other public works examples.

Councillor Oliver asked if this will be Charter's biggest undertaking to date. He was told that it was but that this project fits well within the type of business that they do. He was told that Charter is very selective on the projects they decide to move forward on and this is a perfect fit. The Councillor asked if they would be using clean fill on the property. He was told that they would.

Councillor Gomes asked if they would be able to use some of the soil that is currently on the property. He was told they would use what they were able to.

The Chair recognized Andrew Julian of RND Consultants, the firm retained by the City to assist in the RFP process. Mr. Julian provided the Committee with an overview of the grading and scoring process which lead to Charter Development's RFP being chosen.

Molly Gilfeather-Rodrigues, Purchasing Director, was recognized and gave an overview of the RFP Selection Committee which included herself, Joshua Amaral, Housing & Community Development Director, Jennifer Carloni, Planning Director, Derek Santos, Executive Director for the Economic Development Council, Neil Mello, Chief of Staff for the Mayor's Office, and Ward 3 City Councillor Shawn Oliver. She stated that the Selection Committee unanimously approved the selection of Charter Development's proposal.

Robert McNeil of Northeast Golf Company, the proposed designer chosen to reconfigure the golf course, was recognized. He shared that during the development process, the golf course would go from an eighteen-hole course to a nine-hole course; however, once the development process was complete, it would return to an eighteen-hole course. He confirmed that the course would be able to stay open and operational during the reconfiguration process.

Councillor Pereira requested that the Administration provide the Committee with all of the funds spent to date on attorneys, consultants and appraisals pertaining to the golf course project and include information on how much of those costs have been covered by MassWorks and other types of grants. Mr. Mello stated that he would provide this information.

Councillor Pereira asked what happens to the proceeds if the property is sold, as proposed. He was told that proceeds from the sale of real estate could only legally be used in a limited number of ways according to State law, including capital investments and retiring existing debt. Robert Ekstrom, Chief Financial Officer, was recognized and added that a portion could be used toward general bond obligations.

Councillor Roy asked what the City's obligation would be for the bond. Mr. Ekstrom replied that it would be eight to ten million dollars, and it would be used for the relocation of three holes of the golf course as well as some modest renovations, including the club house.

The Chair recognized Shawn Syde, City Engineer for the Department of Public Infrastructure. He was asked what infrastructure would fall to the City or City workers. He explained that the construction would be subbed out. The City would be responsible for the review of the design, and they would engage the consultant and work with MassWorks toward securing the grants necessary to assist in moving the project forward. He added that once construction is complete, the City will need to accept the street.

Councillor Pereira asked Atty. David Gerwatowski, Legal Counsel, to give an overview of what motions would need to be made in order to move the project forward. Atty. Gerwatowski explained that there were two motions that would need to be made: awarding the RFP proposal and authorizing the City to enter into negotiations with the developer.

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Choquette, the Committee VOTED: To move that the proposal submitted by Charter Development LLC is hereby selected as the successful proposal submitted pursuant to an RFP for the property owned by the City, located on Hathaway Road, identified on the City of New Bedford Assessor's Map 121 as Lot 86. This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 9, Nays 0.

On motion by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Choquette, the Committee VOTED: To move that the City Property Committee authorize the Mayor and Solicitor to negotiate necessary contingencies with any corresponding amendments to pricing and other necessary issues in order to execute the sale of the property substantially pursuant to the attached proposal and that a final purchase and sale agreement and/or development agreement be submitted back to the Committee for review. This motion passed on a roll call vote of Yeas 9, Nays 0.

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

This meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence Jr.
Clerk of Committees