



City of New Bedford
Office of the Mayor
Contact: Holly Huntoon
(508) 989-4407

Holly.Huntoon@newbedford-ma.gov

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

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PRESS RELEASE

City Acquires New Bedford Armory

Historic Building Preserved Thanks to City and State Collaboration

New Bedford, MA – In an effort to preserve one of New Bedford's most historically significant buildings, the City of New Bedford has acquired the New Bedford Armory from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Armory, located at 5 Sycamore Street, was built in 1904 for the Massachusetts Army National Guard and is the centerpiece of one of New Bedford's National Register Historic Districts. Consisting of a Headhouse, Drill Hall, garage, and operations maintenance shop which was constructed in 1935, for decades the Armory served as a training, meeting, and storage facility for the Guard.

Following its closure as a military facility in 2004, the Armory was under the care and control of the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), which handles capital planning, public building construction, facilities management, and real estate services for the Commonwealth. The facility remained vacant and boarded up for over a decade and was damaged by a fire in March 2009. In an effort to return the building to productive use, DCAMM sought private development through a Request for Proposals (RFP), which did not yield viable options for the facility. The Mitchell Administration approached DCAMM in 2016 to explore an arrangement in which the City could take ownership of the building. The City and DCAMM ultimately negotiated a Purchase and Sale Agreement in which the state would complete necessary structural repairs to the building before transferring it to the City for a purchase price of \$10. In April 2022, the City Council unanimously approved the Purchase and Sale Agreement.

Ahead of transferring the Armory to the City, the Commonwealth recently completed repairs to the facility including roof repair and structural stabilization, for \$3.8 million.

In February of 2022, Mayor Mitchell submitted a purchase and sale agreement between the City and the Commonwealth to the City Council, concluding the only realistic chance to save this historic treasure was to get it in the hands of a responsible private developer with the wherewithal to devise a viable rehabilitation and reuse plan. But before that strategy was viable, the building's physical condition needed to be returned to a base suitable for potential redevelopment, hence the repairs undertaken by the Commonwealth.

Mayor Mitchell noted the City's Armory building is one of the most significant and endangered historic buildings in New Bedford, having suffered decades of decay since it was declared surplus property in 2004. "Its significance derives not only from its architectural interest but also from its role in supporting reserve units comprised of New Bedford residents who served – and in some cases died – in every American War since World War I."

The Mayor praised DCAMM's departing Commissioner, Carol Gladstone, for her advocacy on behalf of this historic building, and for DCAMM's commitment to completing necessary repairs. "I'm proud that we have been able to save it," said Mayor Mitchell.

"DCAMM is pleased to partner with the City in this collaboration to preserve and restore this significant community landmark," said DCAMM Commissioner Adam Baacke. "We are proud when we have the opportunity to facilitate the adaptive reuse of historic resources across the Commonwealth and look forward to a successful redevelopment project in a core Gateway City."

"It's always great news when we can save and protect a historical building. As we all know, the New Bedford Armory is such a building, and I'm happy to hear that the City of New Bedford was able to purchase it from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for \$10," said Ward 2 City Councilor Maria Giesta. "As Chair of the City Property Committee, I will be working closely with Mayor Mitchell, his staff, and my colleagues on the Committee to solicit proposals from developers to redevelop the area of the Armory."

In the coming months, Mayor Mitchell, working with the City Council Property Committee, will solicit proposals to redevelop the site.