

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: 580 DIXWELL AVENUE, Land Disposition Agreement between the City of New Haven and Elm City College Preparatory, Inc. for Transfer of the former Martin Luther King School property (submitted by Livable City Initiative).
REPORT: 1470-18
ADVICE: Approval

Developer: Elm City College Preparatory, Inc.
Disposition Price: \$1,500,000.00
Project Cost: \$35 million
Address: 580 Dixwell Avenue
MBP: 324-0450-00100
Site Size: 6.066 acres (per June 2012 URS survey)
Zone: RM-2
Use: new 75,000 SF charter high school
Financing: 68.93% state grant (school Construction program), private fundraising
City Lead: Erik Johnson, Executive Director
Agency: Livable City Initiative
Phone: 203-946-7090

BACKGROUND

Before the Board of Aldermen is a petition from Erik Johnson, Executive Director, Livable City Initiative, to sell the City-owned property formerly known as the Martin Luther King School Jr. at 580 Dixwell Avenue to Elm City College Preparatory, Inc. (ECCP), a charter affiliate of Achievement First. The City-owned parcel was declared as surplus property by the Board of Education and has been offered in a negotiated sale to ECCP for development of a new charter High School for approximately 550 students.

The 6.066 acre parcel lies on the west side of Dixwell Avenue, east of Sherman Parkway, north of Ford Street and south of residential properties fronting on West Hazel Street. Beaver Pond Park and City-owned property lie to the west across Sherman Parkway. It is zoned high middle density residential (RM-2) and has been in school use since 1968 when the MLK school was constructed.

Elm City College Preparatory Inc. operates three other charter schools in New Haven (elementary school on James Street, middle school at 794-812 Dixwell Avenue and high school at 49 Prince and 22 Gold Streets) and is part of the Achievement First network of charter schools located in New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford, and New York City. ECCP has been working with the neighborhood and its Alders Brenda Foskey-Cyrus and Delphine Clyburn on a Community Benefits Agreement to address neighborhood concerns. The neighborhood will have the ability to use upon occasion school facilities such as the cafeteria, gym and multi-purpose field.

The existing 24,000 SF school was constructed in 1968 by the New Haven Board of Education designed by New Haven Architect Charles Brewer, and the building has recently been listed on the City's Historic Resources Inventory Part II as part of the Survey of Modern Architecture June 2011. Its demolition will be subject to the City's Ordinance which delays for 90 days demolition of historic resources.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The project involves demolition of the existing school and replacement with a new proposed 3-level building proposed to be situated in the eastern portion of the site with related parking and multi-purpose athletic field to the west. It is proposed that the new 75,000 SF building would have a gym, cafeteria, kitchen, related offices including college placement, media center, science and art rooms, and three levels of classrooms.

The property is to be sold for \$1.5 million, although the Commission has not considered the issue of price.

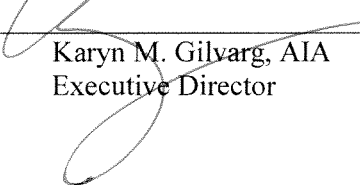
The project has a tight time line for the school with construction to begin in the spring of 2013 and to be complete by the beginning of the 2014-2015 academic year. The school is located in an RM-2 zone which permits a school use by right, subject to any yard & bulk zoning relief that may be necessary. A special exception for parking and a variance for height have been filed with the Board of Zoning Appeals. The project will also be subject to site plan review.

The Developer is proposing to use the property as originally intended – as a school. The Commission advises this is the best use of the property.

ADVICE

The project will help create and maintain additional educational choices for City residents and will help to building and stabilize the community within the surrounding neighborhood. The Commission finds the proposed reuse of the property suitable for the site in question, in the best interest of the City and recommends approval.

ADOPTED: October 17, 2012
Roy Smith, Jr.
Vice Chair

ATTEST: 
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA
Executive Director



City of New Haven, Connecticut
John DeStefano Jr., Mayor



580 Dixwell Av

Produced by the
Office of Information Technology
Geographic Data Viewer

- Waterway**
- Lake - Pond
 - River
 - Shoreline
 - Stream
 - Wetland
 - ▨ Parcel
 - City Boundary Line
- Schools**
- Administration
 - Food Service
 - Private School
 - Public School
 - ▲ Fire Station
 - Police Station
 - ▲ PD Headquarters
 - ▲ Substation
 - Health Centers
 - Hospital
 - Library

- Railroad**
- Railroad Track
 - Abandoned Railroad Track
 - Airport Runway
 - Parcel Line_2005
- Parks**
- Park
 - Triangle
 - Golf Course
 - Land Trust Preserves
 - Airport boundary
 - Shoreline

This map is intended for illustrative and Community-Based Planning processes. Every reasonable effort has been made to assure the accuracy of the map and data provided; nevertheless, some information may not be accurate. The City of New Haven assumes no responsibility arising from the use of this information.

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Scale: 1" = 247 ft

Created: October 17, 2012

