

Committee of the Whole
Minutes of the Executive Session
Real Estate Matter – Crescent Suites Hotel
June 7, 2021

Executive Session convened at 8:30pm for the purpose of discussing a real estate matter (Crescent Suites Hotel). In attendance were Councillors Darcy, Dunn, Durkee, Harris, LeBlanc, Mackin, McLaughlin, O'Brien, Paz, Stanley, Vidal and McMenimen presiding. Also invited were the Mayor and Paul Centofanti, as Clerk of the Executive Session. Open Session would reconvene upon adjournment of the Executive Session.

Vice-President McMenimen asked if the Mayor would like to address the Council on the real estate matter.

The Mayor stated she had been approached by the owners of the hotel to see if the City had interest in acquiring the property for affordable housing purposes. The Mayor stated the property needed to be updated. The Mayor explained the City's process to the owners – Council approval, appraisal, title search and a 21E study. The owners initially stated the sales price was \$12M, but when the Mayor said no, they came back in a few weeks with a revised price of \$8M. The Mayor stated it would have to be financed as a structured deal and she would need to see if the City Council was interested.

Councillor Harris spoke of the preservation of the Southside neighborhoods, including Crescent Street. Councillor Harris expressed support for an opportunity to create affordable housing. Councillor Harris also stated it would be an easier conversion without the massive expense of a new development and would provide a continuous sense of community for the neighborhood.

Councillor Vidal asked the Mayor several questions about the price and the acquisition process. The Mayor stated the City would have the right of first refusal.

Councillor LeBlanc asked questions about the type of unit and how many units could be created. In response to Councillor LeBlanc's question, the Mayor stated either the Waltham Housing Authority or a private property manager would operate the property.

Councillor Mackin asked what updates to the property condition were needed and if any estimates were obtained. The Mayor stated an inspection would be conducted to ascertain the nature and need of the updates.

Councillor Dunn asked if it would be marketed as 100% affordable to which the Mayor responded in the affirmative.

Councillor Durkee asked what the market is for efficiency units. The Mayor stated it would not be for family housing, but for veteran or senior citizens. The Mayor also stated it would result in the loss of hotel tax revenue the City currently receives.

Councillor LeBlanc asked if the property could be converted to condominiums.

Councillor McLaughlin asked several questions about the financing aspects of acquiring the property. The Mayor restated the sales price would need to be structured; it could not be an upfront payment.

Vice-President McMenimen gave a brief history of the owner's (Mike Columba) presence in the City with respect to the development of several properties and their successes. Vice-President McMenimen confirmed the Mayor was seeking only input from the Council for interest in the property.

Councilor Mackin stated she would be voting no as the small size of the individual units were a concern.

Councillor Harris reiterated the importance and need for affordable and elderly housing on the Southside. The Mayor stated the need of an appraisal and inspection before coming back to the Council. The Mayor also stated the property would be for affordable housing and no other municipal use.

Councillor Harris moved to authorize the Mayor to obtain an appraisal for the purpose of affordable housing at the property. The motion was adopted on a roll call vote of 10 in favor (Darcy, Dunn, Durkee, Harris, LeBlanc, McLaughlin, O'Brien, Paz, Stanley, Vidal and McMenimen) and 1 opposed (Mackin).

A motion by Councillor Harris to adjourn Executive Session and reconvene Open Session was adopted on a roll call vote of 11 in favor (Darcy, Dunn, Durkee, Harris, LeBlanc, Mackin, McLaughlin, O'Brien, Paz, Stanley, Vidal) and McMenimen presiding. Vice-President McMenimen declared the Executive Session adjourned at 9:05pm and to reconvene Open Session.

Paul G. Centofanti, Clerk of the Executive Session