



MEMORANDUM

Diane Nichols Tradd
Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*
FROM: Diane N. Tradd, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director
DATE: October 13, 2020

Craig Thomas
Deputy Director

SUBJECT: COUNCIL MOTION OF 7/14/20 BY COUNCILOR NUON
REQUEST CITY MANAGER WORK WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT TO PUT TOGETHER A COMPREHENSIVE ASSET MANAGEMENT
STRATEGY FOR CITY-OWNED PROPERTY

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) is responsible for the management of all City owned assets such as tax title foreclosed properties and City owned land and buildings. This management includes the care and maintenance, but more importantly, the ultimate disposition and determination of the final end-use and disposition strategy that will reclaim the properties to the tax rolls and maximize our revenue and reuse potential. The City must comply with state disposition laws applicable to public held real estate assets. Since 1999 the City has sold \$11,723,961.00 and collected \$817,054.00 in rents and fees for leased and licensed property.

The City of Lowell utilizes a number of reviews for disposition of properties. The City disposes of property utilizing the MGL 30b Request for Proposals procedure, an Auction, Yard sale, or direct sale under an Urban Renewal Plan, as in the Acre Revitalization Plan, Hamilton Canal Innovation Plan, etc. Prior to the disposition of any property, we undertake a comprehensive needs assessment. The needs assessment provides input from department heads for all property dispositions to ensure there is not a potential municipal use prior to sale. In addition, the City is required to notify all property owners abutting a City owned property be notified of the potential sale and procedures to be used for sale. The City Council must approve all surplus and sales of City owned property prior to final disposition and at this time. The City retains properties in all neighborhoods for various current or future municipal uses as well as retaining properties that may have environmental impact, as in contaminants, flood plains, or bridge and roadway access. The City provides licenses and leases to provide local staging areas for projects, construction of community gardens, or as a revenue source to fund the general Maintenance Account. This aspect of our land based asset management plays a critical role in our strategic planning reviews and implementation.

Asset management is both a financial management as well as an urban physical planning function and it is important to integrate the contributions of different relevant departments to help achieve the objectives of the City's planning documents. There is a new and heightened interest in the strategic role that asset management can have for municipal governments and their residents. Open and effective management and reporting of public property resources is an important aspect of public trust. The DPD proposes to initiate an internal working group comprised of staff from DPD, Development Services, Finance, and the Law Department to review the tax lien list prior to sale through the tax lien bundles. This would provide us the opportunity to identify potential properties that may have a specific municipal use or if there is an opportunity for the construction of affordable housing or advancing business development.

PL/CM/ns

cc: Christine McCall, Director of Economic Development
Patti Lucken, Asset Manager