

West Newton Armory Project Summary

In 2019, the State approached the City with the opportunity to purchase the West Newton Armory for use as either 100% affordable housing or a municipal use. The purchase conditions, which are outlined in Special Legislation signed by the Governor, allow the City to purchase the Armory for one dollar if used for 100% affordable housing or a percentage of the Armory's full market value if used for a municipal use. To assist the City in deciding which purchase option to pursue, a Joint Advisory Planning Group (JAPG), comprised of a group of nine citizens appointed by the Mayor and the City Council President, was formed in December 2019. After a year of investigation and study, the JAPG voted unanimously in November 2020 to recommend the City move forward with the agreed upon purchase price of one dollar to use the Armory for 100% affordable housing.

The JAPG was assisted in its examination of the financial feasibility and conversion of the Armory into affordable housing by the City's housing consultant, Affirmative Investments (AI). The City was able to hire AI after receiving a \$200,000 grant award from the State for the purposes of conducting a feasibility analysis. AI found that development of the Armory into affordable housing was financially feasible. At its January 2021 meeting, the Council's Real Property Reuse Committee voted to recommend to that the Mayor purchase the Armory for \$1 for affordable housing. The full Council voted in favor of this recommendation on February 1, 2021.

The City will now begin the process of closing on the property with the State. In addition, the City will continue working with AI to draft a RFP to solicit proposals from qualified affordable housing developers to develop the Armory into 100% affordable housing. The Planning Department expects the closing to occur and the RFP to be released by early summer 2021.