



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

STAFF REPORT

April 4, 2012

REQUEST: City Council Bill #13-0197/ Sale of Property – 2400 Harman Avenue

For the purpose of authorizing the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore to sell, at either public or private sale, all its interest in certain property known as 2400 Harman Avenue (Block 7471, Lot 023) and no longer needed for public use; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Kenneth Hranicky

PETITIONER: The Administration (Department of Housing and Community Development)

OWNER: Mayor and City Council

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The property 2400 Harman Avenue is located on a block bounded roughly by Waterview Ave to the north, Harman Avenue to the south, Huron Street to the west and Morgan Street to the east. The site is occupied by a parking lot and an elementary school building that was surplus by Baltimore City Schools. The parcel measures approximately 3.228 acres. 2400 Harman Avenue is zoned R-7. Proposed TransForm zoning is consistent with existing zoning.

General Area: The subject property is located in the Mt. Winans neighborhood. The area is predominantly residential with the Mount Auburn Cemetery to the east and Morrell Park to the west.

HISTORY

- Ordinance Number 69-422, approved April 21, 1969, established the Mount Winans Urban Renewal Plan.
- Amendment No. 3, dated January 7, 1980, approved by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore by Ordinance No. 80-026, dated March 17, 1980.
- Master Plan/ Westport, Mount Winans, Lakeland Communities, March 10, 2005.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The proposal to sell the subject property is consistent with the Baltimore City Comprehensive

Master Plan LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods; To bring about a general physical improvement in the area by coordinated private and public improvements. It is also consistent with the Mount Winans Urban Renewal Plan and the adopted Westport, Mt. Winans, Lakeland Small Area Master Plan (2005).

ANALYSIS

2400 Harman Avenue was home to elementary school, School No. 156. The school was built in 1952 and has been vacant and under the control of the Department of Housing and Community Development since 1997. The building includes a total of approximately 26,000 square feet; the site is comprised of approximately 3.2 acres. The building is predominately one story and includes no green area or recreational space. Over the past five years the Mt. Winans Community has repeatedly identified the school as an eyesore and unsafe structure. The large asphalt parking lot contributes to run-off and heat islands in an area that lacks open space. The building is adjacent to and surrounded by several blocks of owner-occupied properties that have historically had low values, and which are further depressed by this vacant structure. The building is subject to vandalism which both increases and exacerbates the economic depressing force it has on surrounding residential homes. The demolition would remove an environmentally unsound influence and create an opportunity to increase diversity of both the current income mix and housing products and attract new residents to the community.

The Sales Ordinance will allow for the disposition of 2400 Harman Avenue. It is staff's finding that the subject property is not needed for public purposes and can be sold. Planning is in support of City Council Bill #13-0197 that authorizes the sale and to allow the City to dispose of the lot for redevelopment purposes. The Department of Housing and Community Development will handle the sales process and there is no development plan at this time.

Staff has notified Gwynns Falls Trail Council, Mt. Winans Community Association, Mt. Winans/Westport/Lakeland Master Plan Task Force, and Southern District Police-Community Relations Council of this action.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director