

## **Visioning for the Coffin School Reuse**

Forum 1 – December 7, 2021

### **Q&A**

The following questions were asked and answered live during the forum on. We have endeavored to answer the questions more fully in this document.

#### **How many people are on this call?**

There are about 90 people at the meeting right now.

#### **Why do you want this to be housing?**

The school building was vacated in October of 2021 and students were moved to the new Brown School. The building is no longer being used as a school and this site was identified for housing development as a part of Marblehead's Housing Production Plan (HPP). The HPP was a 10-month long planning process that included several opportunities for community input. It identified the need for new and diverse housing types in Marblehead that will retain aging households looking to downsize, attract young professionals and young families that support Marblehead's future, and serve low-income households who currently make up almost a third of all households in Marblehead. The Boston region, and Marblehead in particular, is in a crisis where the demand for housing far outstrips the supply. This contributes to incredibly high home prices and rents, making Marblehead inaccessible to all but the highest earners. In addition to the need for more deed-restricted Affordable Housing, there is also a need for new housing for a range of income levels in order to better meet demand and stabilize prices.

#### **Have other sites in town been considered for housing other than Coffin School and if so, can we get a list of those?**

Yes, there have been several potential sites identified in the HPP. Sites are identified on pages 57- 78. See a link to the HPP here:

[https://www.marblehead.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf4661/f/uploads/final\\_marblehead\\_hpp\\_for\\_dhcd\\_review\\_06.18.2020\\_1\\_0.pdf](https://www.marblehead.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf4661/f/uploads/final_marblehead_hpp_for_dhcd_review_06.18.2020_1_0.pdf)

#### **Why not develop the Eveleth School property as housing instead?**

The Town intends to also assess the Eveleth School for its housing potential as a part of a future project. This project is specifically assessing the future reuse of the Coffin School site.

**Is this the only option for the site?**

This is the first option being assessed for the site. The Town is exploring different housing development options at this time per recommendations of the Marblehead Housing Production Plan.

**Will this mean that the Town will sell this property?**

If the building is determined to have no municipal need, then that is what the Town is exploring through the RFP process. This process allows the Town to have a say in what might be built there. Tonight, we are thinking about a vision for the site.

**What is deed-restricted Affordable Housing?**

Deed-restricted Affordable Housing is required to cost no more than 30% of a household's income and is meant for low-income households earning less than 80% of the Greater Boston Area Median Income (AMI). For a single person, 80% of the AMI equals \$70,750. For a family of four, this equals \$101,050.

**Was the Coffin School ever considered for the library?**

Abbot Library has been granted use of the Coffin School during their renovation. A large override was passed at Town Meeting last year to renovate Abbot Library. Given its central location in Marblehead and direct access to public transit, the Town wishes to retain Abbot Library.

**What is the cost of demolition and rebuilding? It's greener to renovate, surely for whatever purpose?**

We will have a better idea of these costs later in the process once we have completed the RFI and RFP processes and conducted the market and development analysis that will be doing internally. This will help us figure out how the different options line up financially and understand what is feasible from a development perspective.

**If the site ends up being mixed housing, how does that help solve our affordable housing deficit? Won't that just create a bigger deficit?**

Adding to the stock of housing and affordable housing, even if modest, will help meet housing need in town since more housing is needed at all price points.

**What is the time frame for this site?**

This visioning effort will continue into March 2022 with the drafting of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to private and non-profit developers. However, there are many additional steps in the process. If the School Committee determines they no longer need the Coffin School for school purposes, they can vote to transfer it to the care, custody, management, and control of the Board of Selectmen. They would give notice to the Board of Selectmen that the school is no longer needed for school purposes, then the Board of Selectmen would vote to place an article on the Town

Meeting warrant to transfer the Coffin School building and grounds from the School Committee to the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen can make the vote for the purpose of selling the school (if that is what they want to do) or take another action (such as municipal reuse, lease, demolition, etc.). The transfer must be approved by Town Meeting. If the transfer is approved, the Town may authorize the Board of Selectmen to sell the school and execute any and all necessary documents for that purpose. If it is decided to sell the building, the process for Chapter 30B real property dispositions would be followed.

**Will the building be sold to the highest bidder no matter what we say?**

No, the developer selected through the RFP process will be chosen based on the best proposal offered that most closely meets the community's goals. Through this process, the criteria for the evaluation of proposals will be developed to determine what is most important to the Town.

**Who determines the criterion and what constitutes the "best" proposal?**

Based on what we hear throughout the public process, the Town will likely impose conditions on the property through the RFP. The Town can lay-out the parameters that are non-negotiable and then the developers will respond with what they can offer in terms of those parameters. The evaluation criteria will be developed through this process and there will be minimum criteria and then evaluation criteria.

**When is the next forum?**

The next forum will occur in late winter and will cover the redevelopment scenarios proposed for the Coffin School site.