

FROM

NAME &
TITLE

AGENCY
NAME &
ADDRESS

SUBJECT

THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR

*Ghale/for T.J.S.*DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
8TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREETCITY COUNCIL BILL #11-0779 /SALE OF CITY PROPERTY-
3323 EASTERN AVENUECITY of
BALTIMORE**MEMO**

TO

DATE:

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400
100 North Holliday Street

October 7, 2011

At its regular meeting of October 6, 2011, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #11-0779, for the purpose of authorizing the Mayor and City Council to sell, at either public or private sale, all its interest in certain property located at 3323 Eastern Avenue (Ward 26, Section 11, Block 6423, Lot 012) and no longer needed for public use; and providing for a special effective date.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report which recommended approval of City Council Bill #11-0779 and adopted the following resolution; nine members being present (nine in favor).

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #11-0779 be passed by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Wolde Ararsa, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-4488.

TJS/WA

Attachment

cc: Ms. Kaliope Parthemos, Deputy Mayor
Mr. Peter O'Malley, Chief of Staff
Ms. Angela Gibson, Mayor's Office
The Honorable Bill Henry, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
Mr. David Tanner, BMZA
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
Ms. Nikol Nabors-Jackson, DHCD
Ms. Barbara Zektick, DOT
Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.
Ms. Karen Randle, Council Services
Ms. Marcia Collins, DPW
Mr. Paul Barnes, DGS
Mr. M. J. Brodie, Baltimore Development Corporation
Mr. Walter Horton, Real Estate



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

STAFF REPORT

October 6, 2011

REQUEST: City Council Bill 11-0779/ Sale of Property – 3323 Eastern 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 3323 Eastern Avenue (Ward 26, Section 11, Block 6423, Lot 012) and no longer needed for public use; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Martin French

PETITIONER(S): The Administration (Baltimore Development Corporation)

OWNER: Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: This property, located on the southwest corner of the intersection with Highland Avenue, measures approximately 50' by 69' and is currently improved with a three-story building covering the entire lot. This 7,224 square feet building, which is currently vacant, served as the original Highlandtown Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, and is often referred to as the "Old Highlandtown Library". This site is zoned B-2-2 and is located within the Highlandtown Business Area Urban Renewal Plan area and on the northern boundary of the Canton National Register Historic District.

General Area: The property is located in the commercial heart of the Highlandtown neighborhood, a predominantly residential neighborhood that is over 125 years old. While most of Highlandtown is defined by rows of two-story housing, the immediate area around this property is a mixture of three-story houses converted to commercial use and two- to four-story commercial buildings. The Enoch Pratt Free Library now serving Highlandtown, known as the Southeast Anchor Library, is located two blocks east of this property at 3601 Eastern Avenue.

HISTORY

There is no previous legislative history concerning this property. The existing building, a former Montgomery-Ward Catalogue Outlet store, was converted in January 1975 into the "Highlandtown Center" branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library and functioned as such until April 2007, after which the building remained vacant.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The proposed action is consistent with the City of Baltimore's Comprehensive Master Plan, LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, Live Goal 1, Objective 2: Strategically redevelop vacant properties throughout the City; and with the objectives of the Highlandtown Business Area Urban Renewal Plan, specifically: Establishing a positive and identifiable image for the Highlandtown Business Area, and Promoting new retail business activity in the area. The Baltimore Development Corporation, on behalf of the City of Baltimore, is negotiating terms for a disposition agreement that would allow a purchaser to redevelop the property as a mixed-use property with a restaurant on the first floor and offices on the upper two floors of the building.

ANALYSIS

Both sides of Eastern Avenue from Highland Avenue westward to the western boundary of the Urban Renewal Area are designated as Neighborhood Business land use areas by the Highlandtown Business Area Urban Renewal Plan. Eastward from Highland Avenue both sides of Eastern Avenue are designated as Community Business land use areas. As a result, this property's use can form an important link between two commercial sections along Eastern Avenue, which is also the principal shopping street in the Highlandtown area. The current vacant status of the property is not contributing to the ongoing revitalization of the Highlandtown business area, while the proposed restaurant with upper-floor office space would be a positive contribution.

There is a restriction on size of new businesses locating in the Neighborhood Business district shown on the Urban Renewal Plan's Land Use map, a restriction that the sponsor of this bill should be prepared to seek a waiver from under the terms of the Plan if the proposed restaurant would use more than 1,000 square feet of the premises at 3323-37 Eastern Avenue.

In order for the City of Baltimore to sell the subject property, its disposition must be authorized by a sales ordinance. City Council Bill 11-0779 is the required legislation that if passed would allow the City to sell the property. It is Planning staff's finding that the subject property is no longer used or needed for public purposes, is considered surplus, and may be sold.

Staff notified the Highlandtown Merchants Association, Southeast Community Development Corporation, the Highlandtown Community Association, Baltimore Development Corporation, and Councilman James Kraft, City Council, 1st District, of this action.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director