

Updates on the Islington Center Redevelopment Project

October 6, 2020 Update:

MCI Contracting completed its work on the Wentworth Hall foundation in mid-June 2020. Bids were then requested for the General Contractor portion of the work. Following approval by the Permanent Building Committee at its meeting on September 14, 2020, a contract was awarded to Tower Construction Corp. of Cranston, Rhode Island.

This final portion of the Wentworth Hall Construction Project is currently projected to take approximately 9 months. Wentworth Hall is expected to be ready for occupancy in July 2021.

January 8, 2020 Update:

Renovation of the former CVS space at 266-278 Washington Street is expected to continue throughout the winter and early spring. Substantial facade and interior improvements are expected to be completed in June 2020. Leasing arrangements for two new commercial tenants are progressing. Crown Cleaners will remain open during and after construction.

Architectural design for the Wentworth Hall relocation and expansion project is now complete. Architect Mike McKay worked closely with Town representatives from the Library, Youth & Family Services (Y&FS), Recreation, Planning, Facilities, Information Technology, and Procurement divisions, and with Steve Brown and Sean Sweeney of Arcadis, the Owner's Project Manager (OPM), to prepare a comprehensive design package for the development of the 8,000 SF municipal building. The first floor will house the Islington Library and Y&FS offices and the lower level will be fit out as a multi-use community space.

The Phase 2 real estate closing is scheduled for the week of January 13th. This closing will involve the transfer of land on the west side of Washington Street to the Town and the transfer of land on the east side of Washington Street to the developer, Petruzziello Properties, LLC. Following the Phase 2 closing, the Town will hold title to the new Wentworth Hall site (277-283 Washington Street) with adjacent 32-car parking lot and open space area, and Petruzziello Properties will be the new owner of the former Wentworth Hall parcel (280 Washington Street). The Phase 2 closing will involve a \$400,000 payment from Petruzziello Properties to the Town, less credit for expenses incurred by Petruzziello Properties for excavation work on the new Wentworth Hall site.

MCI Contracting, Inc. was awarded the contract for construction of the new Wentworth Hall foundation, and has begun work under that contract. The new foundation is expected to be complete by mid-February.

In November 2019, the Town released an Invitation for Bid (IFB) requesting proposals from qualified building movers interested in relocating Wentworth Hall to the new foundation. There were no bidders. The Town then divided the scope of work into two parts, with the first part covering preparation of the building for this move, and the second part covering the physical move of the structure. Two separate IFBs were issued with bid openings in late December.

MCI Contracting, Inc. was the low bidder for the Building Prep IFB and was awarded the contract to prepare Wentworth Hall for its move across the street. MCI plans to start this work before the end of January.

There was only one bid for the Building Move IFB, and that bid was more than three times the estimated cost of the work. Other potential bidders cited the procedures and costs associated with public bidding requirements as the reason they were uninterested in bidding on the project.

Due to the lack of a competitive bidding environment, the architect and OPM went back to the drawing board and revised plans to provide an alternate means of moving Wentworth Hall. Rather than move the full structure across the street on rollers, and then disassemble the rear wall to permit the building expansion, the revised plans now prescribe a panelized move of Wentworth Hall, whereby the front and side walls will be disassembled, carried across the street on a lull, and reassembled at the new site by the project's General Contractor. This will allow for the preservation and reconstruction of Wentworth Hall on the new foundation by the project's General Contractor, thus alleviating the need for a separate building mover. In addition, these plan revisions will have the benefit of allowing the use of a single integrated floor system throughout the entire structure.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for General Contractor services is scheduled for release on January 22nd with bids due on February 20th. The current Project Schedule calls for the selected General Contractor to begin work in March with the goal of completing the building relocation, renovation and expansion before the end of December.

Phase 3 of the Islington Center Redevelopment Project will involve the sale of the Islington Community Center property (288 Washington Street) to Petruzzello Properties, and the redevelopment of the 280 and 288 Washington Street parcels with a new mixed-use building including 14,000 SF of first floor commercial space and two floors of upper story housing, with a total of 18 two-bedroom condominiums. The date of the Phase 3 closing has not yet been established, but this closing is expected to occur in the second half of the year.

October 30, 2019 Update:

After 37 years in business, Mother's Morning Out Inc. (MMO) recently announced its plans to close its pre-school at the end of the current school year in June 2020. This decision is an unfortunate departure from the long-planned relocation of MMO to newly renovated space in the former CVS building at 278 Washington Street.

The following letter has been provided to correct the stream of misinformation that has been spread in recent days:

Dear Westwood Residents and MMO families:

From the earliest stages of the Islington Center Redevelopment Project, the Town, the Mothers Morning Out (MMO) Board of Directors, and Petruzziello Properties (PP) have worked together with a single goal in mind. That goal was to design and develop a new home where the MMO could continue to serve local families for years to come. Sadly, we now know that we will not reach this goal.

As many of you know, both the layout and phasing of the Islington Center Redevelopment Project were created with MMO in mind. The three parties met on numerous occasions to discuss the macro and micro aspects of the proposed undertaking. The principal concern raised by MMO Leadership was their desire to continue to rent space at far less than could be expected with commercial lease terms. In response to the Town's desire that MMO remain in Islington Center, PP offered to create a new preschool facility in the former CVS building, and offered to lease that space to MMO at a below-market rate.

Another issue that was addressed at the early stages of the project design process was parking. MMO never had any of its own parking spaces – neither when it operated as an affiliate of the Islington Community Church, nor after the Town acquired the former church building and leased space in the ICC to the MMO. Then and now, parents and staff were allowed to share the parking spaces on the town-owned Library property. These 29 parking spaces were necessarily shared with Library staff and patrons, and since 2005, with Y&FS and Recreation Department staff and patrons, as well. This was never ideal, and the Town worked closely with PP to ensure that the redevelopment project would create enough parking spaces to serve the needs of MMO, the Library, Y&FS, and all future tenants of the new and renovated buildings.

As clearly detailed in presentations to the Islington Center Task Force, the Planning Board, the Select Board, the Finance & Warrant Commission, and Town Meeting voters, the Islington Center Redevelopment Project was thoughtfully designed to add 78 new parking spaces in Islington Center. While the pre-project conditions had a shortage of 14 parking spaces to serve users on the east side of Washington Street, the completed project will provide 2 more parking spaces than needed to meet MMO's parking demand and all parking demand related to the future stores, restaurants and condominiums planned for the site. There is absolutely no doubt that the Islington Center Redevelopment Project will significantly improve the availability of parking for all over the current condition.

MMO's concerns and the Town's and PP's well-planned solutions were thoroughly considered by MMO Leadership in early 2018. In April 2018, MMO Board Chairman stood before the Planning Board to recommend approval of the Special Permit for the Islington Center Redevelopment Project, and encouraged residents to vote in favor of the Town Meeting articles which would set the table for this overwhelmingly beneficial redevelopment project.

Lease negotiations began in mid-2018 and continued sporadically throughout 2019, with MMO leadership frequently changing their minds about whether they wanted a 5-year lease or a 1-year lease, what items (water, electric, janitorial services, etc.) would be included in the lease, and whether they even wanted to go forward with the move or would prefer to close the business. PP offered various lease terms in response to MMO's changing requests, all of which were far below commercially viable terms. By August 2019, when MMO had still not committed to the new space and was leaning more toward closing the preschool, PP offered to broker a deal with a private entity who seemed willing to take over the MMO operations and move the business to the new facility. This was seen by the Town as a way of keeping the childcare service, employment opportunities, and customer base intact, but allowing the Board of Directors to step out of their roles and relinquish their responsibilities. A brief meeting was held to discuss the transition process, however, after a review of the ongoing program and discussions with the MMO leadership, the interested individual foresaw difficulties and decided not to go forward.

Lease negotiations limped on for another two months, with MMO leadership still fluctuating between a 5-year lease, a 1-year lease, and the eventual decision to close. Finally, in mid-October, the MMO Chairman called the Town Administrator to say that the MMO Board had decided that it was simply not interested in moving forward. Rather, after much deliberation, the MMO Board of Directors had decided, once and for all, to cease operation at the end of the current school year. The Chairman explained that the Board of Directors were simply no longer interested in spending their time and energy keeping MMO in operation.

The three parties met one last time on October 23rd to prepare a joint message to the community about MMO's decision to wind down its operation. We all agreed that we had done our very best to achieve our joint goal, and we all shared concern that this news would be met with great disappointment by the many families that have trusted MMO's current families who will now have to make decisions about where their children will attend school next year. PP offered to reassess its plans for the space that had been reserved for MMO and to search for a new preschool that might fill the void left by MMO's closure. It was hoped that a new preschool tenant might provide jobs for many of the 15 former MMO teachers and offer spots to those families who wished to keep their children in Islington Center.

During this meeting, the issue of parking for MMO staff was raised for the first time as the main reason for the preschool's closing. MMO Director stated that she had become increasingly concerned, especially during the current construction phase, that there would not be enough parking to meet MMO's needs in the new preschool space. Her position came as a complete surprise to the other parties at the table, as the sufficiency of parking had been clearly established 18 months ago. PP reminded her that the

future parking conditions would be significantly better than experienced today, and that MMO parents and staff would have unlimited access to all 53 surface parking spaces on the east side of Washington Street.

The Town Administrator responded that the 29 parking spaces that had for years been provided on the Library parcel remained available today, during the construction phase, and that this number of parking spaces will remain for as long as the Town owns the ICC building. He explained that this would be the case even after PP takes ownership of the Library parcel, at which time that will be some temporary shuffling of parking space locations, but there will be no reduction in the total number of parking spaces available on the east side of Washington Street for users of the ICC.

This final meeting concluded with an agreement to distribute a joint letter to the community in early November, following MMO's announcement to its staff on November 1st and MMO's letter to its parents the week of November 4th. All parties agreed that the joint letter would neither attribute MMO's closure to unfounded parking argument, nor to the MMO's unwillingness to accept the terms of a long negotiated lease offer, but would simply acknowledge that our efforts to relocate MMO to a new facility in the former CVS building did not prove fruitful.

In summation, the Town provided a most favorable lease terms to MMO for 15 years, keeping the preschool in business long beyond the Board of Directors' expectations when the building was sold to the Town in 2004. Although PP is a private business looking to make a reasonable profit, it understood that preserving the MMO was an important goal for the Town, and it worked diligently to offer uncommonly generous lease terms. Unfortunately, the MMO leadership were not willing to accept those lease terms. Further, the MMO chose to announce the school's closing ahead of schedule and to attribute that closing to an unsubstantiated claim over lack of parking. We recognize and accept that this is MMO's choice, which may be the best outcome for all concerned.

The Town will continue to provide milestone updates on the Islington Center Redevelopment Project for anyone who is interested. The latest update can be found here:

http://www.townhall.westwood.ma.us/community/projects/active_projects/islington_center_redevelopment_project/default.htm.

Regretfully yours,

Michael Jaillet
Westwood Town Administrator

Giorgio Petruzzello
Petruzzello Properties, Inc.

October 16, 2019 Update:

Following the relocation of CVS to its new facility at the corner of Washington Street and School Street, Petruzziello Properties turned its attention to the renovation of the former CVS space at 266-278 Washington Street. The building renovations include the creation of a new first floor commercial space along Washington Street, a new state of the art pre-school facility with access from the rear parking lot, and substantial facade improvements to reflect surrounding village architecture. Construction will continue into 2020. Crown Cleaners will remain open during construction and plans to serve its customers at this location for years to come.

Meanwhile, site preparation for the relocation and expansion of Wentworth Hall has begun. Petruzziello Properties and its subcontractors are scheduled to begin digging and blasting operations this week. Site work is expected to continue throughout the month of October. Once excavation is complete, the town will engage MCI Contracting, Inc. to install a new foundation for Wentworth Hall. This work is expected to take place between October 31st and November 30th. Relocation of the Wentworth Hall building is planned for late December, with extensive renovations to the old Branch Library and construction of a new addition in 2020.

The 14-space Municipal Parking lot, adjacent to the new CVS parking lot and behind the currently fenced off construction area, will remain open for public use throughout the period of construction. Once the Wentworth Hall project is complete, a total of 32 spaces will be available in the Municipal Parking Lot.

A question was raised at a recent Finance & Warrant Commission meeting about signalization changes at the Washington Street/East Street/School Street intersection. A detailed answer was not immediately available, but was provided to the Finance & Warrant Commission soon after that meeting. That detailed answer is as follows:

Condition #3 of the Special Permit decision for the Islington Center Redevelopment Project requires Petruzziello Properties to fund signalization changes at the Washington Street/East Street/School Street intersection:

The Applicant shall work with BETA Group, the Town Engineer, Town Planner, Board of Selectmen, and Public Safety Officer to design and facilitate signal timing adjustments to realize operational improvements at the intersection without geometric or physical modifications to the Washington/East/School Street intersection. Retiming of the signals summarized in the submitted Tables 2 and 3 from Bayside Engineering, with and without southbound lag phase for Washington Street, shall be implemented on a trial basis prior to final implementation. All costs associated with new signals shall be the responsibility of the Applicant. Applicant shall retrofit all traffic signals with the reflective signal backplates wherever possible at the Applicant's expense.

The options for signalization changes were discussed at length during the Planning Board's public hearing for this application. Numerous residents favored adding a left turn arrow from southbound Washington Street onto East Street. However, traffic engineers advised against having two independent left turn phases due to a concern about drivers continuing through the intersection after their light turned red, thus endangering drivers turning left with a new green arrow, because these drivers with

the new green arrow would not expect oncoming traffic. The engineers described this as a “lag effect”. They also recommended against simultaneous left turn arrows, because this would require through traffic to stop in all four directions, while the left turning phase was operational, thus causing substantial back-ups during peak travel times.

Next they discussed eliminating the northbound left turn signal onto School Street, in favor of a new southbound left turn signal onto East Street. Most residents in attendance at the hearing seemed to favor this proposal, as did at least some Planning Board members. After much discussion, the applicant’s project engineer and the Planning Board’s peer review engineer disagreed on the effectiveness of this proposed signal change. The Planning Board then wrote Condition #3 to require further study and testing of traffic patterns. The Select Board, acting as Road Commissioners, will have the final say on how the signalization will be set.

Condition #3 makes it clear that the cost for the testing and final implementation of new signalization rests with the applicant. Although this condition is silent on the timing of signalization changes, the testing and implementation are expected to be made prior to the issuance of the first Certificate of Occupancy for the Phase III condo units.

September 13, 2019 Update:

Construction of the new CVS building began in March and was completed in late August. A Certificate of Occupancy for this building was issued on September 5th and the store opened for business on September 8th. Final landscaping work will be completed in accordance with recommendations for fall season planting.

Architectural design work and bid preparation is underway for the relocation and expansion of Wentworth Hall – currently home to the Islington Branch Library. The relocated and expanded building will accommodate the Islington Branch Library, the town's Youth & Family Services Office, and a multi-functional community space suitable for recreational programs, public meetings and private functions. Excavation and site work will begin in late September and continue through October. This will be followed by the construction of a new foundation and the relocation of the historic Wentworth Hall building before the end of the year. Extensive renovation of the building and construction of the new addition is expected to proceed throughout 2020.

The Islington Branch Library will close on October 17th to allow for the packaging and storage of books, media and supplies prior to the building relocation. A limited temporary location for Branch Library services and programs will be established in the Islington Community Center Building at 288 Washington Street. A schedule of hours and activities at this temporary location will be posted on the Library's webpage.

If you have any questions about the "pop-up" library, please contact Branch Librarian Claire Connors by email at cconnors@minlib.net or by phone at 781-326-5914.

March 18, 2019 Update:

The Blue Hart Tavern had been stored at 9 School Street for the past 2-1/2 years while efforts were made to identify a new location and new use for the structure. As part of the Islington Center Rehabilitation Project, a small parcel of land was reserved on Washington Street with the hope of providing a new location for this building. The Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) for the Project was drafted to allow the ownership of that parcel to remain with Petruzziello Properties LLC if the developer committed to relocate, renovate and reuse the Blue Hart Tavern building. If such was not the case, the LDA provided for this small parcel of land to revert to the Town.

After several months of study and the creation of detailed architectural plans for the historic rehabilitation of the Blue Hart Tavern for retail or restaurant use on the first floor and an apartment above, the developer contacted the historic building mover who brought the structure to School Street from its former location on Washington Street. The building mover, Richard Geddes, expressed concern about the structural stability of the Blue Hart Tavern, and required a report from a structural engineer. Petruzziello Properties hired Professional Engineer Brent Goldstein to undertake a structural review. Mr. Goldstein found that the Blue Hart Tavern was in danger of collapse and could not withstand relocation in its current condition. He reported this finding to the developer and the developer relayed this report to the Town.

Town Administrator Mike Jaillet requested a second opinion from Peter Paravalos, the former Chairman of the Westwood Historical Commission and a professional engineer with extensive experience in the relocation of historic structures. Mr. Paravalos agreed that the Blue Hart Tavern could not be moved in its current condition. He stated that the structure would need to be stabilized prior to relocation, which would require the complete removal and replacement of flooring and wall systems, leaving little, if any, of the building's historic fabric visible in the relocated structure.

Petruzziello Properties considered various options, including the complete deconstruction and partial reconstruction of the building, reusing of one or more of the original walls in what would essentially be a replica of the Blue Hart Tavern. The cost of each option was found to be prohibitive, even with the potential for a grant of \$75,000 in state funding. In addition, because the significance of the Blue Hart Tavern is related to its historic use, as opposed to its architectural style, the creation of a Blue Hart Tavern replica was not found to be desirable.

The developer then informed Mr. Jaillet that he would reluctantly abandon his plans for the relocation and reuse of the Blue Hart Tavern. Mr. Jaillet reached out to another party who had previously expressed interest in the Blue Hart Tavern and confirmed that this individual was not willing to take on the cost of relocating and restoring the structure. Therefore, in accordance with the terms of the LDA, and with the 2016 special permit for the 301-321 Washington Street project which allowed for disposal of the Blue Hart Tavern in November 2017, Petruzziello Properties LLC will be permitted to demolish the Blue Hart Tavern. An effort will be made to remove and preserve a few historic interior architectural elements prior to demolition. The land that had been reserved for this structure will be added to the parcel for the Wentworth Hall Library and Community Center, providing additional opportunity for greenspace around that building.

December 18, 2018 Update:

In accordance with state requirements, Petruzziello Properties filed an Asbestos Abatement Plan with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. The former Westwood Tailor Shop and Café Diva buildings were then prepared for demolition in accordance with that plan. Protective fencing was installed and utility connections were removed. The Town of Westwood Building Division issued Demolition Permits for both buildings in late November. (The Café Diva building was previously reviewed by the Westwood Historical Commission pursuant to the requirements of the Historic Structures Demolition Bylaw, and a Demolition Authorization was granted allowing the structure to be demolished on or after July 26th.) The former Westwood Tailor Shop building was demolished on December 6th. The former Café Diva building was demolished on December 11th.

The LDA set forth various conditions to be fulfilled prior to the First Closing. One of these conditions required Petruzziello Properties to restrict a third apartment unit at 321 Washington Street as a Local Action Unit (LAU), and for the town to obtain approval from the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) for listing of all twelve apartments in that building on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). On November 28th DHCD informed the town that all 12 units at 321 Washington Street had been added to the SHI. The First Closing for the Islington Center Redevelopment Project took place on November 28th. On that same date, Petruzziello Properties acquired the former residential property at 277A Washington Street. The developer now controls all properties on the west side of Washington Street that are involved in the Islington Center Redevelopment Project.

The Islington Clock was removed from the site and sent to Electric Time for refurbishment. The clock will be reinstalled in an appropriate location at the conclusion of construction.

Petruzziello Properties is now preparing an application to the Building Division for a Building Permit to construct a new CVS building on the corner of Washington and School Streets. Site work is expected to occur throughout the winter with the construction of the new commercial building in spring and summer 2019.

Petruzziello Properties is also preparing to relocate and restore the Blue Hart Tavern, and has requested consideration for the relocation of an existing transformer which appears to be in conflict with the proposed new location. Potential new locations for the transformer will be considered in the design of the Wentworth Hall relocation portion of the redevelopment project.

September 24, 2018 Update:

Three warrant articles related to the Islington Center Redevelopment Project (Articles 11, 12 and 13) were favorably acted upon by 2/3 vote at Westwood's Annual Town Meeting on May 30th.

Article 11 authorized the Board of Selectmen to take various actions in conjunction with the acquisition and disposition of land for the Islington Center Redevelopment Project, including the execution of a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) for the project. The Board endorsed the LDA on June 11th and signed the first Amendment to the LDA on July 23rd.

Article 13 amended the Official Zoning Map to change the zoning district of two parcels known as Assessor's Plat 23, Lots 161 and 165, from Single Residence A (SRA) District to Local Business B (LBB) District, and to expand the FMUOD6/Washington Street Business District to include these two parcels. Zoning amendment articles require review by the Attorney General's Office (AGO) in accordance with MGL Chapter 40, Section 32. Documentation required for such review was provided to the AGO on June 20th. On September 14th, Town Clerk Dottie Powers received a letter from the AGO expressing unconditional approval of Article 13. On September 18th, Ms. Powers caused the posting of the AGO's approval and associated documents in five locations throughout town. Upon such posting, the zoning map amendments became effective, retroactive to the date of passage, May 30, 2018.

Petruzzello Properties reached final lease terms with CVS for the proposed new drug store at the corner of Washington Street and School Street. Town staff have been informed that the lease agreement is now in final form and is expected to be signed by October 5th.

Petruzzello Properties is now preparing an application to the Building Division for a Demolition Permit to remove the former Westwood Tailor Shop and Café Diva buildings. (The Café Diva building was previously reviewed by the Westwood Historical Commission pursuant to the requirements of the Historic Structures Demolition Bylaw, and a Demolition Authorization was granted allowing the structure to be demolished on or after July 26th.) Demolition is expected to occur in early October, with pre-demolition activity, including the installation of protective fencing and removal of utility connections over the course of the next two weeks.

Petruzzello Properties has informed town staff of its intention to relocate and restore the Blue Hart Tavern, and has requested consideration for the relocation of an existing transformer which appears to be in conflict with the proposed new location. Potential new locations for the transformer will be considered in the design of the Wentworth Hall relocation portion of the redevelopment project.

The LDA sets forth various conditions which must be fulfilled prior to the First Closing, involving the transfer of town-owned land on the west side of Washington Street (the Municipal Parking Lot). One of these conditions requires Petruzzello Properties to restrict a third apartment unit at 321 Washington Street as a Local Action Unit (LAU) and to obtain approval from the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) for listing of all twelve apartments in that building on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). The LAU application is nearing completion and will be submitted for review by the town's Housing Agent, Sarah Bouchard. Sarah is expecting receipt of the Fair Housing Marketing plan before the end of the month. She is hopeful that DHCD will grant approval of the LAU application within

30 days of submission. The First Closing date will be scheduled as soon as possible following receipt of this approval.

Town staff will continue to meet with members of the development team on a periodic basis.