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City of Warwick issues Request for Proposals - by Frank Picozzi

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Frank Picozzi

Several years ago, the Warwick school committee consolidated some schools, and, as required by city charter, returned their care and custody back to the city. The city has begun issuing Requests for Proposals (RFP) for these properties. In May, the city council approved the sale of the former John Wickes Elementary School, a 10.38 acre property, for \$2.1 million to Warwick-based Link Commercial Properties, LLC. The former school building will be razed to make way for new residential development.

On June 22, the purchasing agent issued an RFP for the Buttonwoods Municipal Annex and Community Center at 3027 West Shore Rd. (Plat 347, Lots 251 through 256). The building, constructed in 1915, was initially a schoolhouse and eventually became a senior center until the facility was closed in 2017. After renovations, the building reopened in mid-2019 and has been used for offices for a number of municipal departments, which will be relocating this summer to leased space in a renovated mill building in Apponaug Village.

The property, consisting of 1.36 acres, is located at the corner of West Shore Rd. and Buttonwoods Ave., the former of which is one of Warwick's most heavily-traveled thoroughfares. The surrounding area is a mix of residential and commercial uses. The site is presently a split zone consisting of multiple lots that potentially may be merged or re-subdivided in accordance with subdivision regulations. The city's intention is to sell the property for development in order to generate tax revenue in addition to providing land use amenities consistent with the uses allowed in either the General Business (GB) or A-7 residential zone districts. The city will consider by-right uses allowed in either district, even if that requires an expansion of either zone to cover all lots referenced in the RFP. Deed for conveyance must be recorded prior to the submission of any land development or subdivision application. The site is serviced by municipal water, sewer and gas service.

The city engaged the services of GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. to provide an estimate for materials abatement, universal waste removal, and building demolition. GZA estimated those costs at roughly \$171,000. This estimate, along with an asbestos, lead and hazardous building materials survey also authored by GZA, is included with the RFP.

The purchasing department, in coordination with the planning department, will hold a non-mandatory on-site tour on Tuesday, July 12 at 10 a.m. Sealed bids will be accepted until 4 p.m. on Monday, August 15. Bids will then be opened that day at the public properties committee meeting in city council chambers, 3275 Post Rd. A deposit of \$50,000 must be included with the sealed bid and will be applied to the purchase price of the property. All other respondents' deposits will be deposited by the city and repaid upon the city council's formal acceptance of the highest bidder. This is an "as is" fee simple sale to the highest, sealed bidder. Should the highest bidder withdraw at any point in the process prior to closing, the second highest bidder will be pursued by the city.

Future RFPs are anticipated to include:

- Nelson Aldrich Junior High School building and grounds, 789 Post Rd.

- Randall Holden Elementary School, 61 Hoxsie Ave.
- Warwick schools administration building, 34 Warwick Lake Ave.

The complete RFP for the Buttonwoods Municipal Annex and Community Center, including other terms, conditions, and requirements, can be found online at: <https://www.warwickri.gov/purchasing-division/bids/sale-former-city-hall-annex-building-property-plat-347-lot-0251-0256>. Prospective bidders with questions are asked to contact planning director Tom Kravitz at (401) 921-9683.

If you would like to be added to the bid/vendor list in order to receive the future RFPs directly, please email your name and contact information to: bids@warwickri.com. A listing of all current municipal bid/RFP opportunities is available at <https://www.warwickri.gov/bids>.

Frank Picozzi is the mayor of the city of Warwick, R.I.

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