



egleston sq.
MAIN STREET

Board of Directors

Co-President

Juan Gonzalez
JPNDC

Co-President

Solomon Lemma
Egleston Liquors

Treasurer/Clerk

Ron Hafer
Resident

Carlos Espinoza-Toro
JPNET

Manuel Feliz
Boston Express MS

Rosana Javier
Latino Beauty Salon

Logan Keck
Christ the King Church

Galen Moore
Resident

Liana Poston
Resident

Timothy Reardon
Resident

Karen Sama
826Boston

Robert Torres
Urban Edge

July 15, 2015

Ryan Lundergan
City of Boston, Department of Neighborhood Development
26 Court Street,
Boston MA 02108-2501

Dear Mr. Lundergan,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the city's disposition of 50-52 Montebello. Egleston Square Main Street is pleased to see that this former "problem property" will soon be returned to a productive use.

ESMS has reviewed the two competing applications for the property and found both to be thoughtful and responsive proposals. However, there is a very dramatic distinction between the two: one proposal would use private financing to create six units of deeply affordable rental housing, while the other proposal requires \$600,000 of public subsidy to develop condominiums for households earning as much as \$70,000 per year.

After having considered the two proposals, it is our position that DND should award the property to 3190 Washington Street LLC, in partnership with JP Neighborhood Development Corporation and Urban Edge. We favor this proposal for the following reasons: first, Jamaica Plain has experienced a profound reduction in the number of rental housing units over the past 25 years—1,100 rental units lost to condo conversion since 1990*—so there is a tremendous **need to create more rental housing** in the community at a variety of income levels. Second, this proposal leverages **\$1.2 million of private resources**, a significant benefit in an era of limited public subsidies. Third, we feel that the **management stability and neighborhood experience** that will be brought by the two local nonprofit partners will ensure the long-term success of this project and will ensure that it does not slip into default and disrepair as happened with the prior condominium form of ownership. Finally, because the rehabilitation utilizes private funding, it can begin almost immediately and will be **ready for occupancy in 2016**, which is not possible for a proposal that must compete for city funding which will not be awarded until the spring of 2016, at the earliest.

While the 3190 Washington LLC proposal is clearly superior to the homeownership alternative, it can still be improved. Specifically, **we request that the designation be conditional on a "no-cost" conveyance of the property** to the receiving CDC (JPND or UE) at no cost (or a nominal fee) so that it could be rented at even lower incomes (50% AMI) without the need for public subsidy. Furthermore, **the applicant and/or the receiving CDCs must commit to seeking additional public subsidies**,

* Based on U.S. Census counts of renter households

in the form of two or more vouchers, which would enable at least some of the units to be offered to very low income households who do not have access to a mobile voucher.

We acknowledge that the 3190 Washington LLC proposal is contingent on city approval of a proposed mixed-use development on the adjacent parcels, and we reserve the right to continue pressing for changes to that proposal. However, the decision to be made by DND is much more specific: how to dispose of 50-52 Montebello in a manner that helps to accomplish the goals of the city's housing plan while making the most of limited public resources. In this regard, the choice is clear, and **we urge DND to act quickly to award the designation to 3190 Washington Street LLC.**

Sincerely,

Juan Gonzalez
Co-President

Solomon Lemma
Co-President

cc:

State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz

State Representative Elizabeth Malia

City Councilor Matt O'Malley

Julianne Doherty, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services

Sheila Dillon, Director of the Department of Neighborhood Development