



TOWN OF SHREWSBURY

Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building
100 Maple Avenue
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545-5338

March 10, 2022

Redevelopment of 1 - 7 Maple Avenue, Former Beal School

On Tuesday March 8, 2022, the Board of Selectmen unanimously voted to enter into an agreement with Civico Greenly for the redevelopment of 1 - 7 Maple Avenue, the former Beal Early Childhood Center (“the Site”). The development is intended to strengthen the Town Center and the project is the result of years of planning and public input. The project will bring a mix of market rate and affordable housing units and much needed new commercial space for residents to enjoy.

History

1 - 7 Maple Avenue is located within the Town Center of Shrewsbury and was home to the Beal School which served the community from 1922 to 2021. Like many New England Town Centers this historic area in Shrewsbury is ripe for redevelopment and revitalization as people look for vibrant places to live, shop and dine. Shrewsbury residents identified the need to “strengthen the Town Center” (page 5, 2016 Master Plan) and “support the Town Center as a destination” (Page 11-12, 2016 Master Plan). Knowing this, in November of 2017, the Board of Selectmen established a committee to “undertake a comprehensive analysis of potential reuses for the Beal Early Childhood Center property. The analyses should include future public uses as well as the potential benefits of disposing of the property....” (Formal charge, Beal Reuse Committee)

Concurrently, the Town commissioned a visioning and master planning study of the Town Center, with specific emphasis on the Site. Public engagement was the centerpiece of this initiative and included well-attended interactive in-person forums, where residents shared their desires for the Site and Town Center. A post-forum public survey was available to all residents to increase the opportunity for public input and to solidify the vision. The Site was a focal point of the visioning study and public engagement sessions. The majority of respondents felt that, “either the building needed to come down due to deficiencies or because removing the building might enable the most advantageous development project” (page 29-30, Town Center Study). In May of 2019, the [final visioning report](#) for the Town Center was produced and used to develop zoning articles specific to the Town Center that were presented to Town Meeting Members at the August 2020 Annual Town Meeting.

Town Meeting Actions

This visioning study led to two actions by members of the Town’s legislative body, Town Meeting. In August of 2020, Town Meeting authorized the Board of Selectmen to sell the Site for no less than \$1.00 by a 2/3 majority vote. Further, through a series of articles, all of which passed by at

least a 2/3rds majority, a Town Center zoning district was created. The new zoning would foster a traditional New England Town Center to match the vision created through community input and encourage a vibrant mix of civic, commercial, residential, and open space uses for an attractive, walkable neighborhood, where people can live, shop, eat, conduct business, and enjoy arts and culture.

The Project

In September 2020, the Town, under the direction of the Beal Reuse Committee, issued a Request for Proposals (RFP), for the redevelopment of the Site. 71 interested parties requested the RFP and one developer, Civico/Greenly submitted a redevelopment proposal that met the criteria in the RFP. The Beal Reuse Committee presented this proposal to the Board of Selectmen in May 2021. Since the submission the Board of Selectmen and Town staff have worked with the developer to shape the proposal to closely match the vision for the Site and the Town Center.

Consistent with the planning efforts detailed above, the redevelopment will provide a curated blend of multigenerational housing, local retail amenities, open space, and ample parking for residents, visitors, customers and the public in general. The Board of Selectmen were focused on strategically moving the Town Center toward the vision developed with resident input and through Town Meeting action. This led to a partnership with the developer that unlike a private land transaction, will yield different results for both parties. The Town will accept a lower sales price while requiring the developer to construct commercial space and extra public parking spaces, beyond what is required by zoning. Further, 0.7 acres of the parcel remain Town-owned and preserved as open space.

The Project by the Numbers

Number of Units	55
Market Units	48
Affordable Units	7
Commercial SF	7,000 (minimum)
Public Open Space	0.7 acres (Town owned)
Parking Spaces	136+/- Includes 20 public spaces for general use
Estimated Tax Revenue (Year 1)	\$167,274
Sales Price	\$250,000

Conclusion

Informed by years of public-engaged visioning and planning and enabled by local legislative action through Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen executed this redevelopment agreement to add vibrancy to the Town Center. It is well documented that public private partnerships are the best vehicle to meet the specific goals of a project like this. The Town alone could never cost effectively create such a vibrant space. Left to the free hand of the private market, there would be no commercial/business space built, no space left open for residents to enjoy and only the minimum amount of parking for residents and patrons of the Site.

For additional information please go to <https://shrewsburyma.gov/1073/Beal-Reuse-Project>.