



**CITY OF PAWTUCKET**  
RHODE ISLAND

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND REDEVELOPMENT**

**SANDRA C. CANO**  
COMMERCE DIRECTOR

**BIANCA M. POLICASTRO**  
PLANNING DIRECTOR

**DONALD R. GREBIEN**  
MAYOR

September 7, 2022

Honorable Members  
Of the Pawtucket City Council  
137 Roosevelt Avenue  
Pawtucket, RI 02860

RECEIVED  
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE  
2022 SEP - 7 P 4:30

Dear Honorable Members of the City Council:

I am writing in response to your request for further information in identifying potential green space in District 5 in response to my August 19th letter attached. The Planning Department's goal is always to focus on providing the best amenities for our residents, including green space and job opportunities.

The plan for the overall development calls for transforming blighted buildings that have become an eyesore, and been vandalized into a distribution facility that would create 450 new jobs. Pawtucket is a community where many have difficulty traveling as they do not have vehicles. In addition, the proposed development is on the R-Line, the most utilized bus route in the city, and recent legislation has made this route free to all riders. Essentially, these new jobs would be accessible to our residents.

JK Equities, the developer, has begun demolition, and we have been working collaboratively with them and others, including the City Council, since 2021 in order to ensure a transparent process. As part of this project, the developer also approached the city about acquiring the adjacent Morley Field to create a parking area for the new facility, while simultaneously assisting with acquisition costs of larger green space for the residents of Pawtucket to enjoy as a new public park.

This process has included multiple public meetings about the proposed distribution facility, the purchase of Morley Field, and the need to accommodate a new, larger green space/public park in the vicinity. As part of the process, soil samples taken at Morley Field found elevated levels of environmental hazards in particular lead, gas and petroleum related byproducts at levels above residential and industrial direct exposure criteria. Once we were made aware of these results, we immediately notified the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and abutters. Out of an abundance of caution we also limited public access to Morley Field, which is standard procedure in a case such as this.

The Planning Department has worked with JK Equities and the City Council, and has a proposal that will create additional greenspace about a mile away from Morley Field. The site is 9.49 acres of undeveloped land along the banks of the Seekonk River and is adjacent to Max Read Field.

Eight public meetings have been held in regard to Morley Field and the proposal that will be discussed at the September 21st City Council meeting. The City of Pawtucket and the Planning Department are always willing to listen to our residents. We have been working to identify potential properties to be used as additional greenspace.

Due to the limited amount of properties for sale in the District, the following process was used for identifying properties for potential acquisition. The Zoning Department utilized the Water Supply Board's water shut off list and cross referenced it with tax liens and notices of violations. This generated a list of potential vacant and/or vacant and abandoned properties. The only way to accurately ensure that a property meets the criteria as vacant and abandoned is a visual inspection by either a Code Enforcement Officer and/or a Building Inspector.

Over the course of a weekend, I authorized the Interim Zoning Director to have the Code Enforcement Officers go out and visually inspect each property and narrow the list down to properties that potentially met the guidelines for Vacant and Abandoned in District 5. Please note that in the last half a dozen years this list has dramatically decreased with the increase in demand for housing. They were able to identify 3 potential properties (2 on Bullock Street and 1 on Utton Avenue). Community Development Program Manager Ed Soares and myself then conducted site visits with Councilor Clovis Gregor.

All 3 properties, while in a state of disrepair, did not meet the eligibility for tax sale, condemnation or receivership meaning that the City would not be able to acquire these properties under these parameters. Furthermore, none of the three identified properties is currently for sale. The Planning Department will continue to assess all options for additional green space in the area and will work with the Council and Administration on moving forward.

Please let me know if you need additional information or have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'B. Policastro', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bianca Policastro  
Planning Director

Cc: Mayor Donald R. Grebien  
Dylan Zelazo, Director of Administration

Timeline of public meetings about Morley Field and the potential purchase of 724 Pleasant Street as a replacement public recreation area and greenspace:

- **May 18, 2021** – Pawtucket City Planning Commission public meeting to consider recommendation to Pawtucket City Council regarding proposed Purchase & Sale Agreement for Morley Field
- **July 22, 2021** – Pawtucket City Council Property Committee public meeting to consider recommendation to Pawtucket City Council regarding proposed Purchase & Sale Agreement for Morley Field
- **August 11, 2021** – Pawtucket City Council public meeting adopting resolution authorizing administration to enter into Purchase & Sale Agreement with Blackstone Distribution Center LLC; JK Equities LLC regarding Morley Field properties
- **March 23, 2022** – Pawtucket City Council public meeting introducing and referring Zoning Ordinance amendment to rezone Morley Field properties from Public Open (PO) to Industrial Open (MO) to City Council Ordinance Committee, City Council Property Committee, and City Planning Commission for recommendations
- **April 19, 2022** – Pawtucket Planning Commission public hearing in consideration of Master Plan Review for potential redevelopment of Morley Field including recommendation to City Council regarding petition to rezone Morley Field properties from Public Open (PO) to Industrial Open (MO).
- **April 20, 2022** – Pawtucket City Council public hearing approving second passage of Zoning Ordinance amendment to conditionally rezone Morley Field property from Public Open (PO) to Industrial Open (MO)
- **May 11, 2022** – Pawtucket City Council public meeting approving second passage of Zoning Ordinance amendment to conditionally rezone Morley Field property from Public Open (PO) to Industrial Open (MO)
- **August 16, 2022** – Pawtucket City Planning Commission public hearing considering Preliminary Plan Review for potential commercial redevelopment of Morley Field