



Town of Barrington

PLANNING, BUILDING AND RESILIENCE DEPARTMENT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Plans for 25 Watson Avenue on Financial Town Meeting Agenda

*Town Council advances housing and open space development
to the Financial Town Meeting on May 22nd*

BARRINGTON, R.I. – The Town of Barrington’s plan to redevelop 25 Watson Avenue into senior housing, single family homes and open space is moving forward. On May 6th, the Town Council approved the development for inclusion at the Town’s Financial Town Meeting on May 22nd where voters will be asked for their endorsement of the Town’s plan.

Following more than two years of public discussion and with the input of experts about the best use of the former Carmelite Monastery at 25 Watson Avenue, the Town Council and the community endorsed the following plan to use the property for a combination of:

- A two-acre public park
- Six market rate single family home sites
- A “Pocket Neighborhood” of twelve (12) cottage-style single family homes on approximately 1.56 acres (68,000 square feet) of the property:
 - All units will be age restricted to residents 55 or older and five of these cottages will be affordable for low- and moderate-income residents

“I am pleased that as a community we have reached consensus on the best use of the Watson Avenue property,” **said Carl Kustell, Town Council President.** “The responsible development of this property will create critically needed senior and affordable housing, as well as allow access to beautiful open space for our residents to enjoy. I extend my sincere thanks to the residents for their thoughtful input and the Town’s staff for their hard work on this project over the past several years.”

The developer of the 12-unit Pocket Neighborhood will be FJS Associates, Ltd., a Rhode Island company headquartered in Middletown. FJS, who has demonstrated experience creating market rate and affordable housing developments, was selected through a request for proposals process. The Town



will handle the sale of the six single-family lots at fair market value. The sale proceeds will fund demolition costs of the former monastery building, infrastructure improvements for the housing lots, and park improvements on the site, with any excess funds or future revenues applied to other municipal services such as athletic facilities, police, fire, road improvements, and schools.

In addition to the sale of the single-family lots and the development of the land, voters will also be asked to approve the demolition of the former monastery building on the property at the Financial Town Meeting.

“The Town is bringing a thoughtful proposal forward to the residents that is informed by development experts and reflects the input of the community,” said Teresa Crean, the Town’s Director of Planning, Building, & Resilience. “The proposed mix of housing types on the site and incorporation of resilience and sustainability measures will hopefully serve as a model for other communities.”

The Town purchased the property in 2021 borrowing \$3.5 million for the cost of the land, development, and environmental remediation for the monastery building. Over the past several years the town formed an ad-hoc committee and engaged experts to determine housing uses on the site. The Town continues to pay on the outstanding balance of the loan and other maintenance expenses, totaling over \$300,000 per year.

Voters can learn more about the development and Financial Town Meeting, including a detailed FAQ, [here](https://www.barrington.ri.gov/361/2519/25-Watson-Avenue) - <https://www.barrington.ri.gov/361/2519/25-Watson-Avenue>

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