



[Home](#) / [Approved](#) / 2 groups interested in redeveloping former Portland school

## 2 groups interested in redeveloping former Portland school

By [Colin Ellis](#) on September 7, 2015 @[colinoellis](#)

PORTLAND — Two groups have submitted qualifications to the city for the reuse of the vacant Thomas B. Reed School.

One is a collaboration between [Avesta Housing](#) and the [Developers Collaborative LLC](#). The other is [Community Housing of Maine](#).

The Developers Collaborative turned the former Nathan Clifford School on Falmouth Street into apartments, after it purchased the property from the city in 2013 for \$1. Renovations on the building concluded this spring.

Christine Grimando, the city's senior planner, said both groups would eventually involve other contractors. She said the city will now seek requests for proposals from both applicants.

"The RFP has not yet been issued, we're still digesting the responses," Grimando said.

The next step, Grimando said, would be for the Planning Department to present a draft RFP to the Housing and Community Development Committee, and there would also be a selection committee formed to review the submitted proposals.

"We're trying to keep this moving along as smoothly as possible," she said. "We will be working on it in the coming weeks."

Grimando said she expects the RFP to go out sometime this fall.

City Councilor David Brenerman, [who chaired the Reed School Reuse Advisory Committee](#), said the city will continue to work with the two organizations when the request for proposals is issued.

"I think we have two of the most active developers in the community," Brenerman said. "Hopefully we'll have a nice project."

He said he also expects the RFP to go out this fall.

Grimando said both plans called for retention of the school's original structure, as well as "significant open space" retention, [which were recommendations from the advisory committee](#).

"I think they're both interesting proposals and I'm interested to see where it goes," Grimando said.

The Planning Board held a workshop Sept. 8 to take up a requested zone change for the property at 28 Homeland Ave. [The task force had requested changing the zone from R3 to R5](#), because the property can't be developed to allow multi-family housing if that change isn't made, according to Brenerman.

Both proposals include senior housing for the property, which Brenerman said would be a good use. He said it will be up to the Housing and Community Development Committee to consider, and eventually the City Council.

The empty elementary school, which was built in 1926 with subsequent additions in the 1950s, sits on nearly 2.5 acres in the Riverton neighborhood. It was most recently used as the School Department's central kitchen, until that service moved to its current location on Waldron Way in 2013.

The city took ownership from the School Department in 2014.

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The Thomas B. Reed School at 28 Homeland Ave., Portland

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