

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council, December 15, 2022

Upon the recommendation of Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra and Planning & Sustainability

22.207 An Order to appropriate funds and authorize the acquisition of a building for a Community Resilience Hub (Hub)

Whereas, Downtown Northampton for Everyone: Residents, Visitors, Merchants, and People At-Risk (2019) recommended the creation of a community day center to serve Northampton's at-risk population (i.e., frontline communities, including homeless, Single Room Occupancy residents, those living in extreme poverty, and climate vulnerable populations); and

Whereas, Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan: Resilience and Regeneration (2021) recommended the creation of a Hub to support residents facing chronic and acute stress due to climate change, disasters, and social and economic challenges and to support the entire city; and

Whereas, On May 7, 2020 City Council authorized the creation of a MGL Chapter 44, Section 53 Gift Account to allow the acceptance and expenditure of grants and gifts for a Hub, including a substantial donation from Smith College; and

Whereas, The Mayor has allocated funds from its Federal Community Development Block Grant allocation (including CDBG COVID funds) for the Hub and there are upcoming deadlines to meet CDBG funding expenditures; and

Whereas, In response to a request for proposals, the City has received a signed Option to purchase or take 298 Main Street, Northampton (the former Baptist Church), a building that has been empty for three decades but has had a major renovation and is in excellent condition, for \$3,300,000; and

Whereas, The City has commenced due diligence studies of 298 Main Street (structural, mechanical, code due diligence, environmental site assessment, and appraisal); and

Whereas, The City needs City Council approval to complete due diligence and position the City for upcoming grant cycles to prepare the building as a Hub; and

Whereas, The City has a gap of \$1,000,000 to complete necessary studies and to acquire 298 Main Street; and

Whereas, the City received \$21.7 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and allocated \$10 million as Loss Revenue in FY2022 which has been certified to the FY2023 General Fund Undesignated Fund Balance (Free Cash).

Now, Therefore be it Ordered, that

\$1,000,000 be appropriated from FY2023 General Fund Undesignated Fund Balance (Free Cash) to the Community Resilience Hub Acquisition and Development account to acquire 298 Main Street. Further, that City Council authorize the acquisition of 298 Main Street, by gift, purchase or eminent domain.