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King Street Honda Site Environmental Clean-Up Underway

After years of dormancy, the 5.35 acre former Northampton Honda Site at 171-187 King Street is secured behind a construction fence and workers with heavy equipment are performing an environmental cleanup. According to a formal public notice to Mayor David J. Narkewicz, the GZA GeoEnvironmental firm from Norwood, MA firm has begun a “Phase IV remedial action” which will be completed by August 31, 2015.

“This clean-up is welcome news for Northampton and will position this key commercial property along our busy King Street corridor for redevelopment,” said Mayor Narkewicz. The property is located in the city’s Entryway Business (EB) zoning district, which allows retail, restaurant, hotel, and residential above the first floor.

The site has been vacant since 2005 when the then-Northampton Honda dealership was sold and relocated to its present location at 239 King Street as Lia Honda. The property had been in use as an automobile repair and sales dealership since 1946. Between 1928 and 1951, portions of the property housed several businesses, including a machine shop, lumber and coal yard, and junk yard. A northern parcel had been leased by Mass Electric as recently as 2001.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) put the site in 21E regulatory status in early 2006 for soil contamination pending a cleanup plan. A mixed-use retail and office development was approved for the site in 2007 but was never constructed in part due to the site’s environmental issues. The former showroom and service buildings were demolished last summer by order of the building commissioner due to structural and safety issues.

Mayor Narkewicz personally thanked property owner Don Lia for advancing the clean-up of the property and offered assistance in identifying developers and end-users for the site. “I am pleased that the long-standing environmental obstacles for putting this property back into productive use are being removed, unlocking its potential for generating economic development, job creation, and increased commercial tax revenue for Northampton,” Mayor Narkewicz said.

The 5.35 acre vacant property, currently assessed at \$984,000, is considered a prime development site due to its location on the heavily travelled King Street retail corridor with close access to I-91 and the consumer purchasing power of the Northampton and Amherst area.