

THE STIGMATINE NORTH AMERICAN PROVINCE



Volume IV

Other Churches and Houses:

Espousal Center & Cape Cod (MA), Woodbridge & Manassas (VA),
Winslow (AR), Information Centre & St. Joseph Church (Canada)

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Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS
Tereza Lopes [Lay Stigmatine]

Easter Sunday, 2025

Latest revised on the feast day of St. Gaspar Bertoni, 2025

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PRESENTATION

In this volume, we will go through the history of the historical Espousal Center, in Waltham, MA, and the Stigmatine Retirement House, in “Cape Cod”, MA; the churches in Woodbridge and Manassas, VA; the mission Church in Winslow, AR; and the Information Centre and the St. Joseph the Worker Church, both in *Sault Ste Marie*, ON, Canada.

None of these churches and houses belong to the Stigmatines anymore. The last closing among them was the historical Espousal Center, in Waltham.

Follow a chart with the Mother-Churches covered in this volume, and afterwards a map with their locations as well:

Volume IV: Other Houses & Churches	Chapter 11	Espousal Center	Waltham MA
		Retirement House	East Lynn MA
	Chapter 12	All Saints	Manassas, VA
		Our Lady of Angels	Woodbridge, VA
	Chapter 13	Our Lady of the Ozarks	Winslow, AR
	Chapter 14	Information Centre	Sault Ste Marie, Canada
		St. Joseph the Worker	Sault Ste Marie, Canada

Location (A General View):



Waltham, MA

Espousal Center
544 Lexington Street
Waltham, MA 02452

"Cape Cod", MA

Retirement House
32 New Hampshire Ave.
West Yarmouth, MA
02673

Manassas, VA

All Saints Church
9300 Stonewall Rd.
Manassas, VA
20110

Woodbridge, VA

Our Lady of Angels
13752 Mary's Way
Woodbridge, VA
22191

Winslow, AR

Our Lady of the Ozarks
22741 N Hwy 71
Winslow, AR
72959

First Resident Pastor:
Rev. Francis W. Mackin, CPS
1944

Sault Ste Marie,
ON, Canada

Information Centre
222 Albert St East
Sault Ste. Marie, ON,
Canada

Sault Ste Marie,
ON, Canada

St. Joseph the Worker
135 Arden Street
Sault Ste. Marie, ON
P6C 5K6
Canada

**CHAPTER ELEVEN: ESPOUSAL CENTER (Waltham, MA)
and the RETIREMENT HOUSE (“Cape Cod”, MA)**



“The history of 554 Lexington Street in Waltham is a rich one indeed. From its very early days, as a piece of raw land, its picturesque nature, its serene setting and its choice center city location have been memorialized by its significant street frontage on the westerly side of Lexington Street, just north of Piety Corner, and its significant wooded hillside, that is one of the few remaining in the area. This is the first stage in its history.”

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PART ONE

The Espousal Center in Waltham, MA

I. Historical Background

The history of 554 Lexington Street in Waltham is a rich one indeed. From its very early days, as a piece of raw land, its picturesque nature, its serene setting, and its choice center city location have been memorialized by its significant street frontage on the westerly side of Lexington Street, just north of Piety Corner, and its significant wooded hillside, that is one of the few remaining in the area.

In 1894, when Orilla and Lowell Sanderson sold the property to William H. Clark, the property took on even more significance when Judge Clark commissioned the construction of a new Colonial Revival Style mansion of the finest detail.

The structure consists of 2 ½ stories, and was originally used as the Clark residence by William, Elizabeth and Mary, until the last of them passed away in 1922. In 1923, the property was conveyed to James A. Adams, a representative of the Boston Manufacturing Company, which owned the Mill on Moody Street. The mill, of course, was the employment center of the city, and many Italian and Irish immigrants worked there.

In 1922, the Stigmatines came to Waltham to establish the Sacred Heart Parish on River Street, in order to minister to the Italian immigrants, who largely worked at the mill and lived on the South side of the city. Thus, began the history of the Stigmatines in Waltham, as ministers to the Italian immigrants who moved to the city.

Shortly there after, the Stigmatines acquired 554 Lexington Street to establish the first Junior College Seminary in Waltham. This signaled the third stage in history of the property.

In 1923 and 1924, Mr. Adams conveyed both the Sanderson property and the adjacent Armstrong property to the Stigmatines.

From the cupola and turret on the roof, to the port *cochère* at the front door, the structure is an architectural gem, that invites inspection to its finest details. The exterior details include extensive wooden ornamentation, including a main entrance with sidelights and pilasters, bowed bay windows on the south, brackets and dentils in the eaves, balustrades and some Palladian windows.

The interior finish is even more intriguing, and provides excellent evidence of the “Golden Age of Mill Working” (1880 - 1910). Custom designed decorative millwork predominates the finish of the first and second floor. Fine cabinetry, significant casework, ceiling trims, embellishments of all types, chair rails, wooden wainscoting, columns, cornices, moldings, sashes, trims, beamed ceilings, spectacular wood stairways, and ornate fireplace mantels are found throughout the structure.

Stigmatines acquire the property

In December 1923¹, the Superior General left for North America, accompanied by two students, Joachim Bortignon and Louis Zuliani. They were being sent also to help out in the Apostolic School there, and they were at the same time to continue their studies in the Diocesan Seminary, in Brighton. It was the intention of the Superiors to open an Apostolic School in Lynn. But it soon became apparent that that would not be the best place. The city of Waltham offered a much better locality, as nearby was an elementary school conducted by Sisters, and a nearby high school, conducted by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. A few miles distant there was also the Boston College, conducted by the Jesuits and the nearby Diocesan Seminary. Therefore, after our fathers had been invited to care for the Italian Parish in that locality, they acquired a piece of property on Lexington Street, with a beautiful main residence and a rather large piece of land. It was there, in 1924, that Fr. Erminio Lona initiated the Apostolic School, the “Juniorate”.

II. The development of the Infra-Structure

Over the years, the Espousal Center incorporated other facilities and resources to meet the needs of the Stigmatine apostolic ministries and the Catholic Church - and has been constantly renovated for its conservation. During the years 2000, and up to 2019, these were the buildings in the property:

- Bertoni Hall, the residence of the Stigmatines for many years (and that was a remodeling of the mansion existent in the property when it was acquired by the Stigmatines, in 1924);

- The Gift-Shop, attached to Bertoni Hall;

- Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine.

- Provincial Hall, house for the Superior Provincial of the Province of the Holy Spouses for many years;

- St. Ann’s Hall, the mission office.

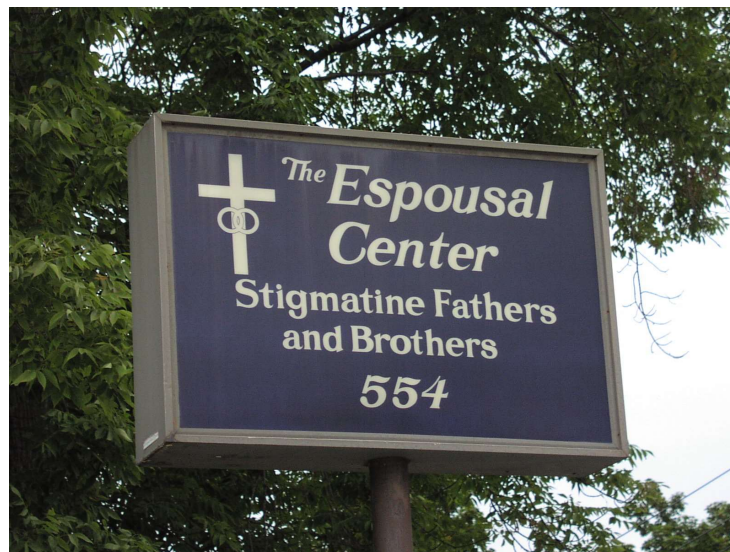
¹ This year was estimated according to the sequence of the narrative in the *Breve Cronaca*.

- St. Joseph Hall, the residence of the retired Stigmatines.
- The Holy Spouses Shrine.
- The Retreat House and Conference Center, that hosted so many retreats, meetings and conferences for many years;

Follow an aerial photo of the Stigmatine Campus, taken through Google Earth, on year 2015:



And the following pictures intend to show inside views of the Espousal Center:



Entrance Sign



At the entrance, a warm welcome!



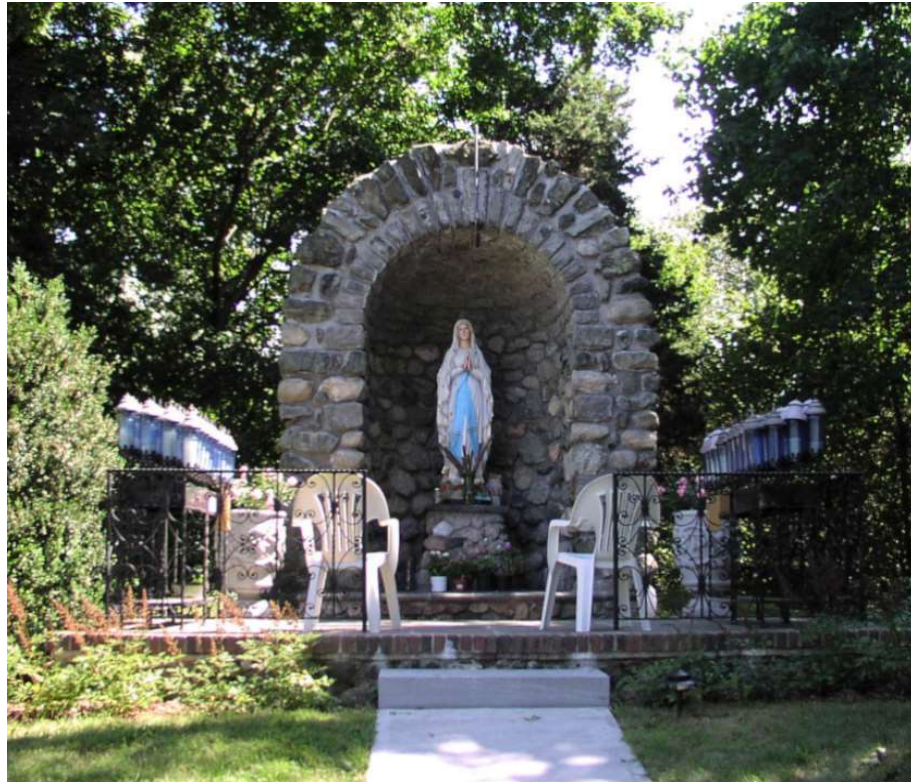
Bertoni Hall, with the American manufactured statue of St. Gaspar Bertoni on its front



The "Bertoni Hall Chapel"



The Gift-Shop, attached to the Bertoni Hall



The Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine



The Provincial Hall



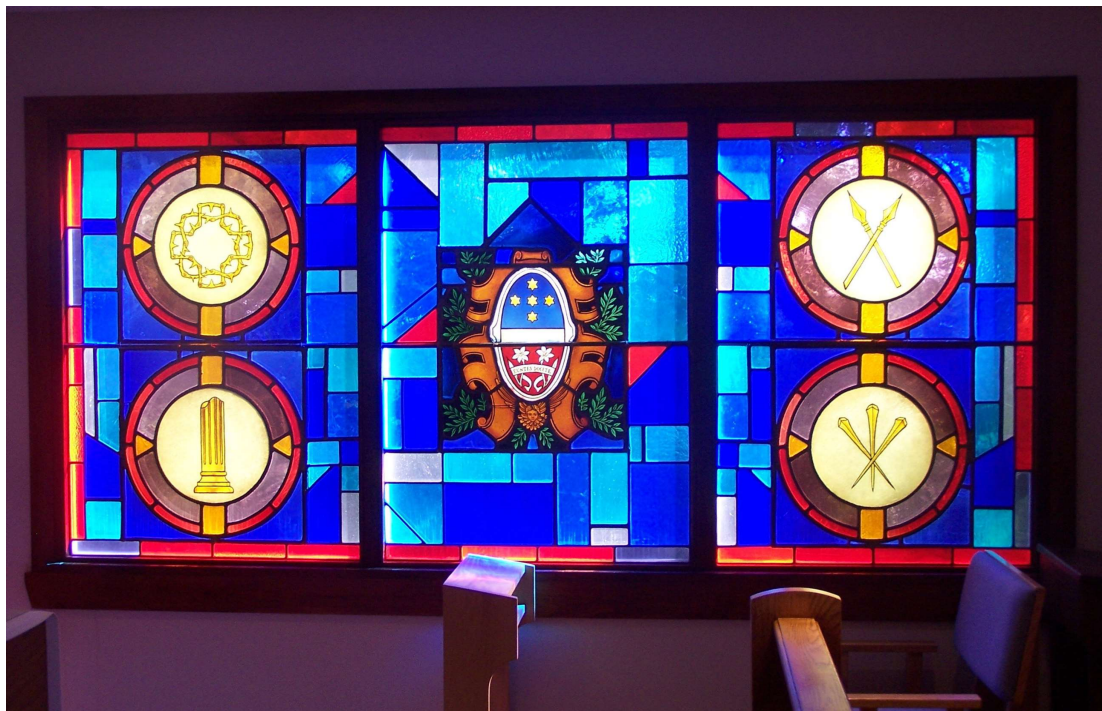
The St. Ann's Office Mission



St. Joseph Hall - the residence for retired Stigmatines



The "Chapel of the Sacred Stigmata", in St. Joseph's Hall



Stained glass window detail in the Chapel



Stained glass window detail in the Sacristy



The Holy Spouses Shrine



The Retreat House and Conference Center, at the top of the hill



The “Espousal Center Chapel”, in the Retreat House and Conference Center



Chapel right hand-side view, showing the Tabernacle



Chapel detail - the Tabernacle



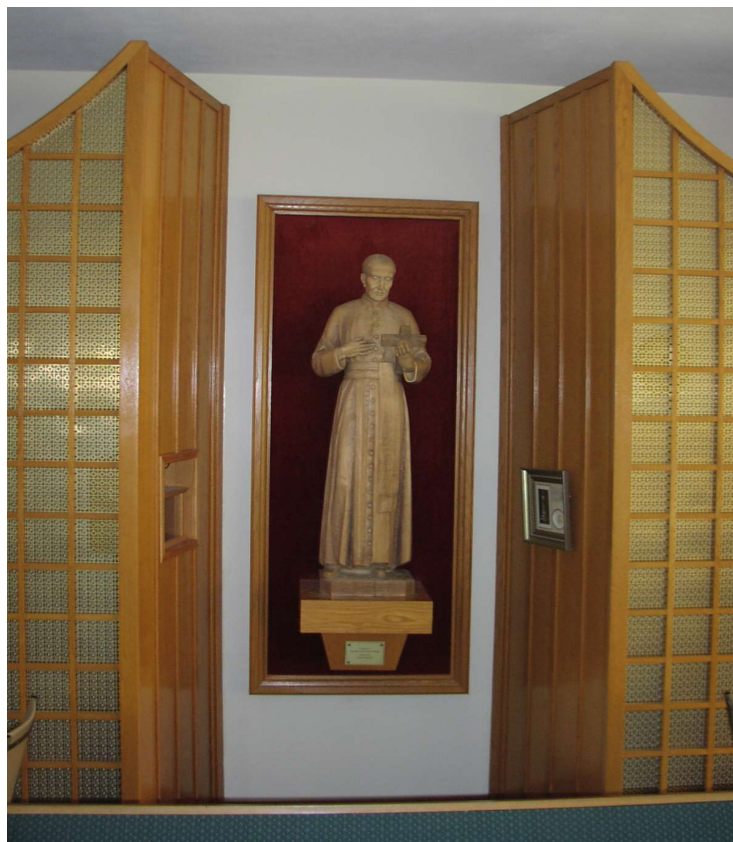
Chapel left hand-side view, showing the altar of the Holy Spouses



Chapel detail - the altar of the Holy Spouses



Chapel back view, showing the statue of St. Gaspar Bertoni



Chapel detail - the statue of St. Gaspar Bertoni

III. The development of the Ministries

A. Provincial Hall and Mission Office



Rev. Gregory
Hoppough, CSS

For many decades, the Espousal Center hosted the Provincial Headquarters. The most recent Superior Provincial resident in the **Provincial Hall** was Fr. Gregory Hoppough (born in 1947), who also hosted for many years the chair of Liturgical and Sacramental Theology at the Blessed Pope John XXIII National Seminary, for second career vocations, in the nearby city of Weston, MA.

The Espousal Center also hosted for many years the **Mission Office**, where not only Americans but also Stigmatines from other nations, especially from Asia, could develop their missionary work.

B. Bertoni Hall

Fr. Joseph Henchey (1930- +2021), author of this chronicle, was also resident in the Espousal Center when he was Superior Provincial, before his twenty years in Rome, when he served as General Councilor, and professor and spiritual director in the St. Thomas Aquinas University and in the North American College. Afterwards, returning to the U.S. in 2002, he resided for several years in **Bertoni Hall**, serving as professor of Spiritual Theology and spiritual director in the Blessed Pope John XXIII National Seminary in the nearby city of Weston, as well as spiritual director of the Stigmatine Laity and several other ministries in area.



Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS

Many other Stigmatines resided in Bertoni Hall when serving in area, as this was the residence for the Stigmatines in activity.

Bertoni Hall also included a Chapel and a Catholic Gift-Shop, and in front of it there was the Our lady of Lourdes Shrine.

C. St. Joseph Hall

St. Joseph Hall was, for many decades, the residence for retired Stigmatines. It included a Chapel and a large refectory, that served all the Stigmatines in the Espousal Center.

The following pictures can illustrate a little of the life in St. Joseph Hall on this XXI century:



L-R: In the Refectory: Bro. Edwin Limpiado, Fr. Vito Cannizzo, Fr. Anthony Parchesky, Bro. Richard Spencer, a missionary Stigmatine priest from Thailand and Fr. Leonard Della Badia (June, 2004).

Brother Edwin, Filipino, who completed his formation in the U.S., was ordained a priest later on that same week, on June 11, 2004, at the Chapel in the Retreat House and Conference Center, a little up hill in the Espousal Center.

Fr. Vito Cannizzo (1915 - +2006) served in the Stigmatine parishes in Springfield, West Springfield and Agawan (MA), White Plains (NY), Manassas (VA) and Northern Ontario, Canada. He was also Novice Master (1952-1953) and Director of the Stigmatine House of Studies (1956-1959), in Washington, D.C. He retired at St. Joseph Hall on July 1, 1993.

Fr. Anthony Parchesky (1918-2006) served as prefect of both the high school and college students in Stepinac High School in White Plains (NY); and in the Stigmatine parishes in Waltham, Milford and West Springfield (MA), Manassas (VA). He served also in the Stigmatine Information Centre in Sault Ste. Marie, Canada, and in a non-Stigmatine parish in Pompano Beach (FL). He retired at St. Joseph Hall in 1996.

Brother Richard Spencer (1929- +2008) professed his perpetual vows on June 12, 1989. For most of his religious life, he was stationed in the Espousal Center, in Waltham, and served the community in many capacities. He ran the Print Shop for the community for many years.

A Thai priest in mission in the U.S., serving in the Mission Office.

Fr. Leonard Della Badia (1911- +2004) served in many ministries in Lynn, Pittsfield and Feeding Hills (MA); White Plains (NY); Timmins and South Porcupine (Canada). In 1936, he was the first Stigmatine to go to Canada and start our presence in that country. He served until he was 93 y-o, and then retired to St. Joseph Hall.



L-R: In the refectory: Fr. David Gallagher, Fr. Jim Cunningham, Tereza and Vicente Lopes (lay Stigmatines), Fr. Joseph Connolly, Fr. Charles Dolan, Fr. Joseph Henchey, Fr. Leonard Ferrecchia and Fr. Anthony Corigliano (2008).

Fr. David Gallagher (1930- +2023) served in the Sacred Heart Parish in Milford (MA), in Concord (NH) and in Dedham (MA). He was also a Latin teacher at the Stigmatine College in Wellesley (MA). Following his music talent demonstrated since a teenager, he obtained a Master Degree in Musicology at Boston University. He suffered a long time from diabetes, heart failure and sleep apnea. Since the expropriation of the Espousal Center by the city of Waltham municipality in 2019, he had to retire to the St. Patrick's Manor Retirement Home in Framingham (MA), where later he died.

Fr. James ("Jim") Cunningham (1919- +2016) served as associate pastor at the Stigmatine parishes in Manassas (VA), Winslow (AR), Agawan (MA), White Plains (NY) and Waltham (MA). He was also chaplain at Waltham Hospital (1981 - 1998). He was very much appreciated by the people for his kind and charitable character, and pleasant and humble behavior. He was very popular for the songs that he accompanied by his accordion.

Fr. Joseph Connolly (1930- +2015) served as parochial vicar in Manassas (VA), Springfield and Lynn (MA). He served also as teacher in the Stigmatine Minor Seminary in Wellesley (MA), Bishop Fenwick High School in Peabody (MA) and Aquinas Junior College, in Milton (MA). He was also retreat master at the Espousal Center in Waltham (MA). He was also a remarkable historian.

Fr. Charles Dolan (1927- +2011): After being ordained a priest in Rome, in 1959, he left almost immediately for Thailand (1959), where he spent almost all his life as a missionary. He was in Phuket as a teacher, in Ranong and Trang as a pastor, and in Samphran as Superior Vice-Provincial. Returning to the USA in 2003 to direct the Missionary Office, he worked again for Thailand, returning every year. The Lord called him just as he was preparing to make one of these trips. He leaves us a beautiful legacy: dedication to the ministry, willingness to serve anywhere, and a pleasant sense of humor.

Fr. Joseph Henchey was already mentioned above.

Fr. Leonard ("Lenny") Ferrecchia (1929- +2019) served his entire priestly life in various parishes of the Province of the Holy Spouses. Ordained a Stigmatine Priest in 1955, he left the congregation and the priesthood in 1974. Though, he was reinstated and professed vows again in 1999.

Fr. Anthony Corigliano (1929- +2021), in his first nine years of priesthood, served as parish vicar in the Stigmatine parishes in Milford and West Springfield (MA), and in White Plains (NY). He was then assigned to help prepare candidates for the Stigmatine religious life and priesthood, and from this experience he would twice go to South Africa to facilitate international Stigmatine formation conferences. It was during

this period that he obtained a Master's degree in psychology that would lead him into pastoral counseling. This was the ministry he most enjoyed and through which he had such a positive impact on the lives of those who sought his guidance. He also found great joy and fulfillment, and developed enduring friendships, through his involvement with Worldwide Marriage Encounter. The Stigmatine community turned to Father Anthony to serve in various capacities, as a Provincial Councilor, as Provincial Superior (1980-1985), and as Province Treasurer (1988-2015.)



Mass presided by Fr. Joseph Henchey and concelebrated by (L-R) Frs. Charles Dolan, Henry Linse and Anthony Corigliano (2009)

Frs. Henchey, Dolan and Corigliano were already mentioned above.

Fr. Henry Linse (1919 - +2015) served as Director of the Novitiate in Waterville (NY); as Teacher in Guam; as parochial vicar at the Stigmatine parishes in Springfield and Pittsfield (MA), White Plains (NY), Woodbridge and Manassas (VA); as pastor in Lynn, MA. He also served as a lend-lease priest at St. Joseph Parish, Lewiston and St. Mary's Parish, Biddeford (ME); and as Chaplain at Shirley (MA) and Concord (NH) State Prisons.



Fr. Joseph Henchey preaching a Day of Recollection to the Stigmatine Laity at the Chapel in St. Joseph Hall (2009)

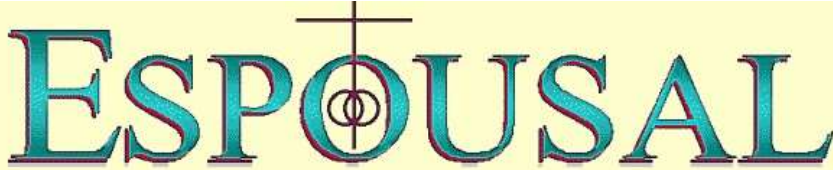
D. Retreat House & Conference Center

Located atop of a hill in the Espousal Center, the Retreat House and Conference Center was, for many decades, the ideal place in area for retreats, religious and non-religious conferences, youth programs, marriage preparation and encounters, and other events.

In a privileged location, quiet and just 20 minutes from downtown Boston, the facility was very spacious, comfortable and affordable for meetings of 6 to 200 people.

Since 1977, the House hosted a Prayer Group that met weekly to offer prayer, teaching and guidance to all who wish to begin or deepen their relationship with Jesus.

Following some pictures of the homepage of the Retreat House and Conference Center on this XXI century:



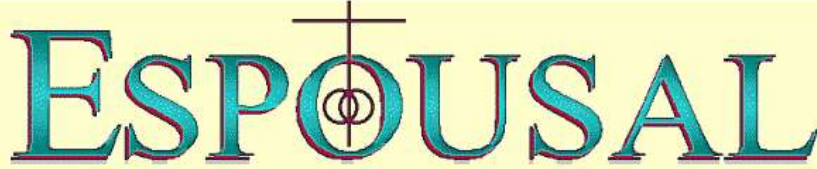
Retreat House and Conference Center

Lives Change Here. Forever.

Home Programs Marriage Preparation Prayer Group Youth Programs Facilities Directions Support our work Ask Bob Links	<p>WELCOME!</p> <p>Located atop a hill on 50 beautifully wooded acres just 20 minutes from downtown Boston, The Espousal Retreat House and Conference Center offers a quiet oasis for individuals, groups and organizations seeking "a place away."</p> <p>Our spacious, comfortable and affordable conference facilities are ideal for meetings of 6 to 200 people.</p> <p>Run by the Stigmatine Fathers and Brothers, the Center hosts a variety of religious and non-religious groups and events.</p>	<p>*NEW*</p> <p>Special Programs</p> <p>Day Retreats for women & Days of Renewal for all with Jerri Lou Buffo</p> <p>Complete Listings</p>	<p>Prayer Group</p> <p>Since 1977, the Espousal Prayer Group has met weekly to offer prayer, teaching and guidance to all who wish to begin or deepen their relationship with Jesus, Join us every Tuesday at 7:30 pm.</p> <p>More</p>
		<p>*NEW*</p> <p>Fr. Bob Message</p>	<p>*NEW*</p> <p>Testimonials</p>
		<p>Marriage Preparation</p> <p>Help your upcoming marriage get off on the right foot and join the thousands of couples who since 1995 have made Espousal the area's most popular "Pre-Cana" program.</p> <p>More</p>	<p>Youth Programs</p> <p>Espousal welcomes CCD, Confirmation and other youth groups for day or weekend programs. Bring your own leaders or let our experienced teams create a fun, long-lasting experience.</p> <p>More</p>

Never miss a program again! Request the Espousal newsletter today! Specify [Email](#) or [Print](#)
 554 Lexington St. Waltham, MA 02452 (781) 209-3120 Fax (781) 893-0291 admin@espousal.org

Homepage of the Retreat House and Conference Center



ESPOUSAL

Retreat House and Conference Center

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[Click here to email Fr. Bob](#)



About Father Bob

Rev. Robert H. Masciocchi, CSS, has counseled thousands of adults, young people and couples about healing, happiness and spiritual growth.

An active and experienced pastoral counselor, Father Bob is the founder of several Christian counseling centers and healing retreats. He has spent more than 25 years in ministry at the Espousal Retreat House and Conference Center, where he has served as director since 1992.

He holds a Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling from the Andover-Newton Theological School in Newton, Mass., as well as Masters Degree in Ministry and Philosophy from pontifical universities in Rome.

In 2004 Father Bob celebrated his 50th anniversary as a priest.

Your email is completely confidential!
Under no circumstances will your identity or email address be shared with anyone.

Got a question or concern?
Ask Bob -- Today!

Never miss a program again! Request the Espousal newsletter today! Specify [Email](#) or [Print](#)
 554 Lexington St. Waltham, MA 02452 (781) 209-3120 Fax (781) 893-0291 admin@espousal.org

Page “Ask Bob” in the website of the Retreat House and Conference Center, offering a link for free and confidential spiritual counseling and advising.

Fr. Robert (“Bob”) Masciocchi (1927 - +2017) was the founder of several Christian counseling centers and healing retreats. He spent over 35 years in ministry at the Retreat House and Conference Center, where he served as director since 1992. He held a Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling from the Andover-Newton Theological School in Newton (MA), as well as Master Degree in Ministry and Philosophy from pontifical universities in Rome.

To illustrate, follow now some pictures of Stigmatine events in the Retreat House and Conference Center: ²

Priestly Ordination of Deacon Edwin Limpiado, CSS

June 11, 2004



L-R: Fr. Charles Dolan, Fr. Anthony Parchesky, Fr. Albert Aszack, the diocesan deacon, the just ordained Fr. Edwin Limpiado, the ordaining Bishop Most Rev. Emilio S. Allué, SDB (auxiliary bishop of Boston), Fr. Gregory Hoppough (Stigmatine Superior Provincial), Fr. Joseph Henchey, two priests from the Blessed John XXIII National Seminary in the nearby city of Weston, Fr. Geoffrey Deeker (Stigmatine Director of Vocations), (possibly) Fr. Anthony Corigliano (behind Fr. Deeker), Fr. Leonard Ferrecchia, Fr. James Cunningham and Fr. Vito Cannizzo - in the Chapel of the Retreat House & Conference Center (on Friday, June 11, 2004).

² For copyright reasons, we are not showing here photos of events realized in the House for third parts.

Let us introduce Fr. Albert Azrack, the only not introduced yet:

Fr. Albert Azrack (1932 - +1920) served as pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Milford for sixteen years, and at Mount Carmel Parish in White Plains (NY) for eighteen years. He served also as Coordinator of Works and later Director and Administrator of the Espousal Retreat House and Conference Center in Waltham, and Director of the Elm Bank Seminary in Wellesley (MA). He was also parish vicar in Lynn (MA). He retired to the Saint Joseph's Hall, the Stigmatine residence in Waltham, but declining health required his admittance to Saint Patrick's Manor, a skilled nursing facility in Framingham, MA.

Fr. Joseph Henchey's Priestly Golden Jubilee Reception

March 26, 2006



The Jubilarian Fr. Joseph Henchey, CSS with some of his invitees in the reception at the refectory of the Retreat House and Conference Center (March 26, 2006).



The Jubilarian Fr. Joseph Henchey, CSS with members of his family and the Most Reverends Moacyr Vitti, CSS, (Archbishop of Curitiba, PR, Brazil) and Timothy Dolan (then Archbishop of Milwaukee, WI, and later Cardinal of New York, NY). Both Archbishops came from Brazil and Rome, respectively, to attend Fr. Henchey's Priestly Golden Jubilee celebrations.

Recollection Day to the Stigmatine Laity

On July, 2008, Fr. Joseph Henchey, CSS directed a Recollection Day to the Stigmatine Laity in the Retreat House & Conference Center.

The following pictures can illustrate it:



Fr. Joseph Henchey, CSS presiding Mass during the Day of Recollection to the Stigmatine Laity at the Chapel of the Retreat House & Conference Center (July, 2008).



Fr. Henchey, CSS preaching to the Stigmatine Laity at the Retreat House & Conference Center during the same above mentioned Day of Recollection (July, 2008).

IV. Stigmatines leave Waltham [2019]

This sad story started with the need of a new site for a large high school by the city of Waltham, in 2016.

In December, 2016, the Waltham School Committee voted in favor of the Stigmatine Espousal Center at 554 Lexington Street as its preferred site for a new high school, contradicting a previous School Building Committee vote naming the existing site as its preferred location. Then, on February, 2017, the Waltham Mayor filed a request to take the 46-acre Stigmatine property, eyed as the preferred site for a new high school - by eminent domain.³

But on May, 2017, “after an impassioned plea from an attorney defending the Stigmatine Fathers & Brothers against the taking of their 46-acre piece of land through eminent domains, the Waltham City Council votes to oppose the purchase of land”.⁴

Soon after, still on May, Fr. Robert White, CSS, superior of the Stigmatines in the U.S., spoke “to clear up what he called a ‘campaign of rumor and innuendo’ behind the city council committee vote”. “In a letter, he commended the committee for its decision to reject the mayor’s request to seize the Lexington Street property by eminent domain and slammed comments about a ‘secret deal’ the congregation has in place as false.”⁵

In September, 2017, Waltham mayor accused city councilors of “thwarting progress”, referring to their vote to oppose the purchase of the Stigmatine land, back to May, 2017. According to the mayor, “the acquisition of the Stigmatine land had been in the city’s open space plan since 1994”.⁶

In February, 2018, “more than 100 Waltham residents took up signs and rallied outside of Waltham City Hall to get the attention of City Councilors and officials”.⁷

In June, 2018, “after Waltham residents showed up in droves bringing signs and making themselves known to city officials before and during each Monday city council meetings for the past several weeks, tonight they were at it again, hoping to influence the outcome of the future of the placement of a new high school, and perhaps, even, to hear that outcome. But by 9:25 p.m., some three hours after councilors entered into

³ According to Appendix 11.1.

⁴ According to Appendix 11.2.

⁵ According to Appendix 11.3.

⁶ According to Appendix 11.4.

⁷ According to Appendix 11.5.

a closed door session to discuss the high school and the possibility of eminent domain, there was no end in the site.⁸

However, the outcome, known later on that same evening was not the one the protesters were wishing to hear: “Waltham City Council voted to take the Stigmatine property by eminent domain to use for the new High School”.⁹

Soon after, still on June, 2018, Fr. John Zuhisdorf commented this decision on his ‘Fr. Z’s Blog’, noting “he was wondering why press had published the names of the councilors who voted against the proposal, but not those who voted in favor of”.¹⁰

In July, 2018, the NBC press in Boston also commented the decision of the Waltham City Council taken in the previous month: “A Catholic Order that has been around for almost 100 years is fighting the city of Waltham, Massachusetts, over plans to take their property by eminent domain”.¹¹

In August, 2018, also the Pilot, ‘America’s oldest Catholic newspaper’, commented this matter, with the headline: “Stigmatines vow to challenge Waltham eminent domain seizure”.¹²

Still in the same month, The Patriot Ledger reported the “Feasibility study for Stigmatine property is approved by committee”.¹³

And, still in the same month, press reported the words of Stigmatines to Waltham City: “No Surveyors on our Property”. “This week, the Fathers of the Stigmatines reiterated that plan to fight the taking of their land for the building of a new high school through their attorney, insinuating the eminent domain action might not be valid and calling for cease and desist”.¹⁴

But in February, 2019, press reported “The Massachusetts School Building Authority just gave the green light to Waltham to begin the schematic design phase of the \$381 million high school building project across the street at the Stigmatine property”.¹⁵

And, finally, a Middlesex Superior Court judge established the final date for the Stigmatines to move from their property: June 30, 2019.¹⁶

⁸ According to Appendix 11.6.

⁹ According to Appendix 11.7.

¹⁰ According to Appendix 11.8.

¹¹ According to Appendix 11.9.

¹² According to Appendix 11.10.

¹³ According to Appendix 11.11.

¹⁴ According to Appendix 11.12.

¹⁵ According to Appendix 11.13.

¹⁶ According to Appendix 11.14.

At that time, these were the Stigmatines domiciled on the campus: Fr. Albert Azrack, Fr. Paul Burns, Fr. Geoffrey Deeker, Fr. Leonard Ferrecchia, Fr. David Gallagher, Fr. Donald Higgins, Fr. Gregory Hoppough, Fr. Jean Kambou and Brother Antonio Banda Lopez.

Fr. Gregory Hoppough (72 y-o), who was living there part of the time, returned to his residence in the Blessed John XXIII National Seminary in the nearby city of Weston, where he was professor. Later on, when he retired of the Seminary, he moved to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Milford, as associate pastor.

Fr. Leonard (“Lenny”) Ferrecchia (89 y-o) moved to the Sacred Heart Parish in Milford, as resident. Fr. Geoffrey Deeker (86 y-o) returned to the Mount Carmel Parish in Pittsfield, where he had been pastor.

Fr. Jean Kambou (46 y-o) and Bro. Antonio Lopez (53 y-o) returned to their provinces in Italy.

The other priests, Frs. Albert Azrack (87 y-o), Paul Burns (84 y-o), David Gallagher (89 y-o) and Donald Higgins (84 y-o) had to be moved to nursing homes in area.

It is worthy to be noted during this litigation the Stigmatines lost Fr. Robert “Bob” Masciocchi, who had served the Retreat House and Conference Center for 35 years (including 25 years as director), and suffered a massive stroke that led him to death in 2017. Stigmatine attorney Adam Paton suggested in 2017 that “the recent passing of Father “Bob” Masciocchi was in part related to the ongoing stress of the land deal”.¹⁷

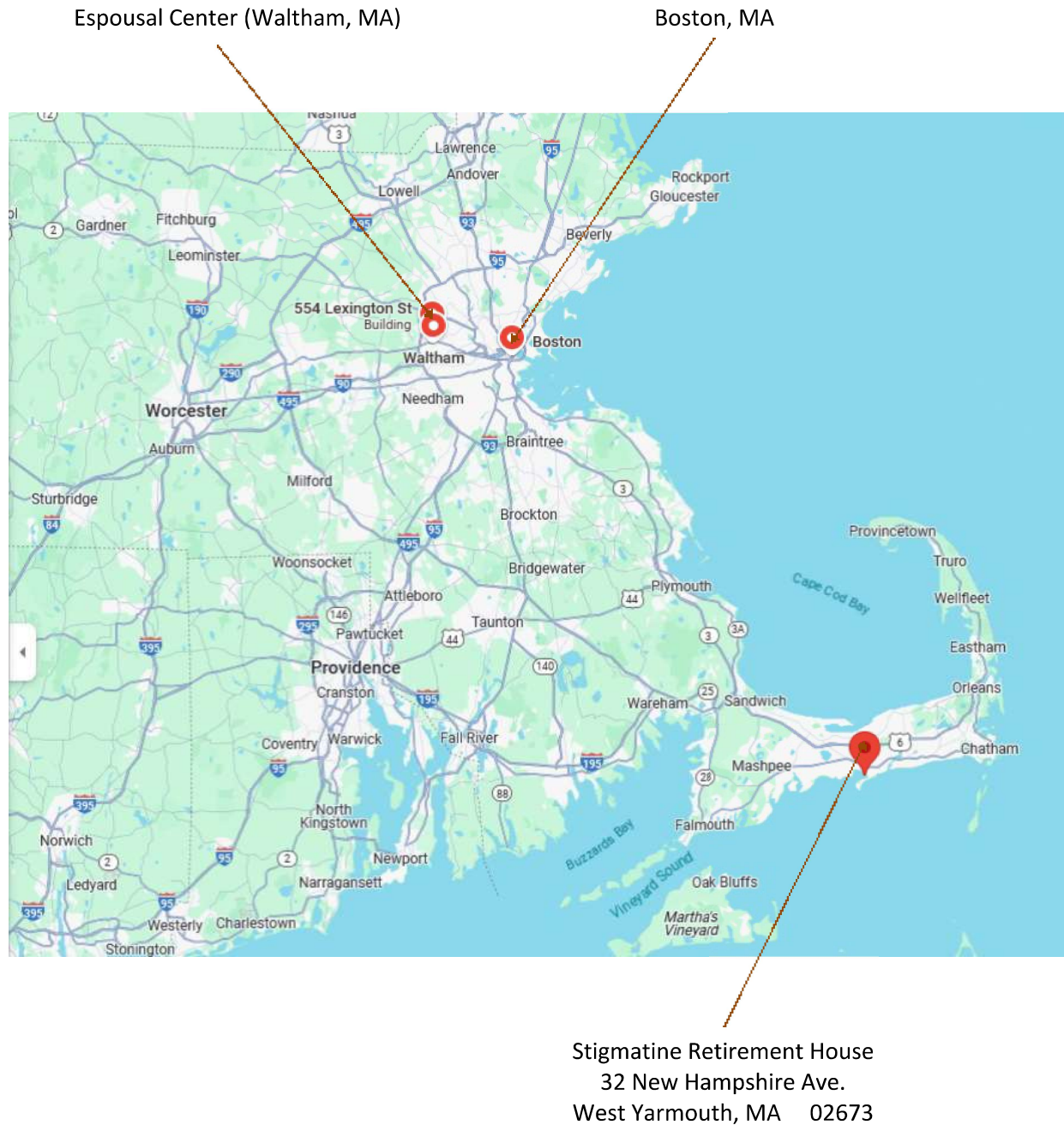
And to close with a ‘golden key’ this chapter, we can find in the Appendix 11.15 a very well done description of the Stigmatine property at 554 Lexington Street, Waltham - the Espousal Center - written by Father Robert White, CSS, the Superior of the Stigmatines in the U.S.A.



¹⁷ According to Appendix 11.2.

PART TWO**The Retirement House in "Cape Cod", MA**

Unfortunately, not many records were found on the Stigmatine Retirement House in "Cape Cod". However, we know its address and location:





Street view



Fr. Paul Burns, CSS
[1935 - + 2023]

For many years, until its closing in 2010, the Retirement House was care of by Fr. Paul Burns, CSS.



Patch

Waltham, MA

[Politics & Government](#)

Waltham Mayor Requests Eminent Domain of Stigmatine

If approved by councilors, the city could take the 46-acre property, which has been eyed as the preferred site for a new high school.



Alex Newman, Patch Staff

Posted Wed, Feb 15, 2017 at 2:32 pm ET



WALTHAM, MA – Waltham Mayor Jeannette McCarthy recently filed a request to take the 46-

In December, the Waltham School Committee voted in favor of Stigmatine as its preferred site for a new high school, contradicting a previous School Building Committee vote naming the existing site as its preferred location.

in this case, to the tune of \$15 million to the Stigmatine trustees. *Photo Credit: Alex Newman/Patch Staff* THE MOVE COMES MONTHS AFTER \$18 million in funds was approved by the city council in order to negotiate a deal to purchase the land.

The Stigmatine Congregation in Rome, which owns the land, has said that 30 acres of land on the property could be sold to the city, but it wishes to keep the portion that houses the espousal center and other buildings, [according to the Waltham News Tribune](#).

The decision would need 10 of 15 city council votes to pass, and will likely be voted on at the next council meeting on Feb. 21, [the Waltham News Tribune reported](#).

Web address:

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/waltham/waltham-mayor-requests-eminent-domain-stigmatine>

WALTHAM NEWS TRIBUNE

Council votes against eminent domain taking of Stigmatine site

Ignacio Laguarda ilaguarda@wickedlocal.com

Published 11:32 a.m. ET May 16, 2017 | Updated 3:08 p.m. ET May 16, 2017



The entrance to the Stigmatine Fathers & Brothers site in Waltham. Mayor Jeannette McCarthy recommended taking the 46-acre piece of land through eminent domain, but 12 out of 15 Waltham city councilors voted to block the taking on Monday, May 15. [Wicked Local photo/ignacio Laguarda] *Wicked Local*

After an impassioned plea from an attorney defending the Stigmatine Fathers & Brothers against the taking of their 46-acre piece of land through eminent domain, the Waltham City Council voted to oppose the purchase of the land.

Twelve of the 15 councilors voted to recommend denial of the eminent domain request during the Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, May 15, but the case still needs to go before the full council for a final vote.

Most councilors seemed swayed by the comments from attorney Adam Paton, who said the land is not for sale, and that any taking would be challenged in court.

"The Stigmatines are requesting mercy from the council to put a stop to this nightmare that has been going on for a year and a half," he said.

Litigation threat swayed some

The Stigmatine site was viewed as a potential home for a new Waltham High School, but with the possibility of litigation dragging on for years, many councilors decided against the taking, saying it would only delay the building of a new school.

Diane LeBlanc, president of the council, was one of the most vocal opponents against the taking of the land.

Fathers claim no ondo plans

Paton added that there are no plans to develop the property, refuting a claim from Mayor Jeannette McCarthy that the owners were looking to sell to a developer interested in building roughly 400 condos.

During the meeting on Monday, Paton said multiple times that the Stigmatie land at 554 Lexington St. was never for sale, but councilor Bill Fowler challenged that statement, since the owners of the site hired Atlantic Management to solicit interest in the property.

Paton said that was done to send proposals to Stigmatine representatives in Rome about what could be done with the site, and what could be provided to the priests.

"We knew whatever we came up with was subject to Rome's approval," he said.

"'Never for sale' isn't altogether true," responded Fowler, one of only three councilors who didn't vote against the eminent domain taking. "You hired a management property to solicit proposals. Is that not the intent to sell?"

Attorney demands apology from city

Councilors George Darcy and John McLoughan also voted against the measure to stop the eminent domain purchase.

Paton said the city's plan to acquire the Stigmatine plot has cost the Stigmatines several thousand dollars in legal fees, and has caused "incredible anxiety" among members.

Paton even went as far as to suggest that the recent passing of Father Bob Masciocchi, the director of the espousal center on the site, was in part related to the ongoing stress of the land deal.

"It took a heavy toll on Father Bob," said Paton.

According to Paton, Masciocchi was in the office of a real estate professional when he suffered a stroke, which resulted in his death on April 10.

On top of denying the eminent domain request, Paton also asked that the city issue a formal apology to Stigmatine representatives.

"This whole nightmare of an episode has taken a heavy toll on the Stigmatines," he said.

City solicitor spars with Stigmatine attorney

Paton was harsh in his criticism of McCarthy, who pushed for the purchase of the Stigmatine site, after the entire Waltham School Committee voted in support of examining the site as a potential home for the new high school.

He mentioned the final sentence of a letter to councilors written by McCarthy last week that read, "the Stigmatine Fathers were always going to be provided for."

"I choked on my Cheerios when I read that," said Paton, claiming McCarthy threatened the tenants with immediate expulsion if the eminent domain purchase went through.

"We're a little bit angry," said Paton. "I think we have a right to be."

Councilor Kathleen McMenimen pushed back on the comments made by Paton, and called on the city's solicitor, John Cervone, to respond.

Cervone said many of Paton's comments were misleading or false.

"It was a moving and impassioned general statement to arouse emotions without dealing with the facts," said Cervone, who added that Paton was not involved in negotiations until late last year.

He said McCarthy was not going to evict the tenants immediately, but that provisions were offered to maintain all of the Stigmatine representatives onsite.

McCarthy was not present at the meeting.

The full city council will vote on the final decision regarding the eminent domain purchase, perhaps at their following meeting on May 22. There is no council meeting the following week.

If the Stigmatine proposal is denied, school officials will have to decide whether or not to build a new high school on the current site of the school, at 617 Lexington St., or find a new location, perhaps revisiting the idea of building at the Fernald.

Web address:

<https://wdtpers.com/2018/06/waltham-ma-council-votes-to-seize-church-property-by-eminent-domain/>



Waltham, MA

[Politics & Government](#)

Stigmatine Official: 'Our Property Is Not For Sale'

The Stigmatine saga continued Thursday, as Rev. Robert White addressed what he called a "campaign of rumor and innuendo."



Alex Newman, Patch Staff 

Posted Thu, May 18, 2017 at 3:20 pm ET | Updated Thu, May 18, 2017 at 3:34 pm ET



WALTHAM, MA – A top official from the Stigmatine Fathers & Brothers religious retreat spoke Thursday to clear up what he called a "campaign of rumor and innuendo" behind Monday's city council committee vote. In a letter, Rev. Robert White commended the committee for its decision to reject the mayor's request to seize the Lexington Street property by eminent domain and slammed comments about a "secret deal" the congregation has in place as false.

"It is misleading and manipulative. Frankly it is insulting," he wrote. "It questions my integrity and that of my confreres. Those of you making such statements and fear mongering please stop."

The City of Waltham has sought to acquire the land for open space for several years, and it has been eyed as the preferred site for a new Waltham High School. Mayor Jeannette McCarthy has said the Stigmatines have not met with the city after multiple requests to negotiate the sale of the property, while the congregation has maintained the city did not come up with a proposal suitable for the ministry's needs and the property is not open for bidding.

White reiterated that stance in his letter Thursday, writing, "I don't know how to say this more plainly or more clearly than that. Our property is *not* for sale, in whole or in part. We are not marketing it privately or publicly."

White was addressing an argument many supporters of taking the land by eminent domain have made: if the property is not used for a new school, it will be used for commercial or residential developments.

"It is incorrect and unfair for anyone to characterize the action of the Committee as 'choosing condos or apartments over children,'" White wrote. "As I firmly stated above, there are no plans for development of the land, the land is not for sale, and if that should change, we will let the City know first."

The committee voted 12-3 Monday night to reject the mayor's request to take the land by eminent domain. The matter will now go before the full city council for a final vote on May 22.

Web address:

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/waltham/stigmatine-official-our-property-not-sale>

Patch**Waltham, MA**[Politics & Government](#)

Waltham Mayor Lays Out Case For Stigmatine, Accuses Councillors Of Thwarting Progress

Acquisition of Stigmatine land has been in the city's open space plan since 1994, according to the mayor.



Jenna Fisher, Patch Staff

Posted Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 5:04 pm ET | Updated Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 6:28 pm ET



WALTHAM, MA — There are City Councilors who are in the Stigmatine Father's corner and they're going behind the mayor sabotaging the possibility of any deal to build a high school on the property, Mayor Jeannett McCarthy said in a letter signed and dated Sept. 20 and tweeted out to the city today.

"Councillors have every right to vote anyway he/she wishes, however as long as Councillors continue to deal directly with private parties, including Stigmatine priests, Stigmatine followers, individual real estate people and the Stigmatine attorney compromising the city's bargaining position, there is no hope for an agreement because the Stigmatine attorney knows that these counselors are in his corner. The Stigmatine attorney indicated to the city attorney we have friends on the city council and this will never happen," wrote the mayor.

The city recently reopened discussion to consider the Stigmatine property after the city council voted against the possibility of using the land owned by the Stigmatine Fathers to build a new high school in the city to address the growing population of students. This comes after back and forth over whether the city should look at taking the site by eminent domain or explore using the Fernald site to build.

McCarthy applied requested an additional \$7.4 million to purchase the land on Lexington Street, and explained why in the three page letter, citing five main reasons, including that it was an effort to keep development there at bay. She also addresses the alleged \$100 million associated with the Fernald site and an override and how the Stigmatine property came to be the most viable spot for a high school.

"Not for sale? Really?" she wrote. "At least back to July 14th 2015, the Stigmatine fathers, Inc, had site development plans from a private developer: 'Scheme A' for 327 units and 'scheme b' for 447 units," she said.

But she said the Stigmatine fathers never told the city of any plans to develop their property. On Jan. 4, 2016 after hearing from consultants that the land was being sold, the mayor said she went up to the Stigmatine office herself with a letter expressing interest in the land.

"I was advised by the person sitting at the desk that 30 acres was currently in the process of being permitted, but she would make sure the provincial the president of Stigmatine fathers Inc /Springfield Priest would get my letter," she wrote of the land that some 96 single family homes could be built there. And the zoning is set for that, she said.

Acquisition of Stigmatine land has been in the city's open space plan since 1994, according to the mayor and she's wanted to use the land for a school first, and if not for school, for open space.

What city councilors think

Bill Fowler who is a city councilor up for reelection this year for Ward 2 said he was one of three who voted with the mayor to take the land by eminent domain back when it first came before the council.

It was the Stigmatine lawyers who reached out to individual councilors. "They continually showed up at our houses with packets and I asked them to give it to the clerk and distribute. I have voted for every single time with the mayor. I agree with every thing she said," he added.

Councilors who have opposed taking of the land from the beginning have also said if the Stigmatines are open to buying it, they'd support the plan, he said.

"Well, if we haven't upped the anti to them of what we're willing to pay them. How can she negotiate a potential sale? I don't know if it's possible at this time. But if she has \$7.4 million more in her hand, it helps," he said.

He questions why the Stigmatines would call a developer to assess land if they didn't need to sell. "My own belief was they needed money then they needed money now. Shouldn't we have the mayor in the best position to negotiate with them?" he said adding that out of the three locations to place a high school he still believes the Stigmatine spot is the best place for both long term and short range needs of the high school.

"People say if we take this property we'll end up in court for years... That's just simply not the reality if you talk to a land court attorney," he said. Once the deal is done the land would become the city's to build on. The only thing the Stigmatines could do is sue for more money, he said.

"It's very frustrating because this should have been a much smoother thing. Unfortunately it wasn't. ... If not the Stigmatines where? If you say at the current site aren't we going to be looking for property three years from now? All we're doing is kicking the can down the road for someone else to have to deal with," he said.

But he acknowledges he's in the minority on that point when it comes to the city council's view.

'We denied it'

"I'm at a loss for words," said City Council President Diane LeBlanc. "We have a form of government. There's a process. The council has decided the eminent domain issue. We denied it."

She said she understands that the mayor asked for \$25 million to enhance her power to negotiation, but she said the Stigmatines were clear that they did not want to negotiate when they sent a letter saying as much.

"You can only negotiate if you have a willing entity. I understand the mayor wants people to understand her position, but it's been decided," she said.

As for the matter of the \$100 million in reference to an environmental clean up at Fernald, LeBlanc said that was taken out of context. "I'm only one councilor but I believe whatever the environmental impact is there it's our responsibility to clean it up. We won't know what that looks like until the environmental study of the entire property can be done," she said. Whatever a full fledged environmental analysis comes up with - be it \$100 million or \$1 million - she said the city should foot the bill.

"We don't know what we're dealing with right now. We're operating without real information in fear of environmental issues and the bottom line is we own this property and we have a responsibility to clean it up," she said.

She said that the mayor brought up the possibility of a tax override in her letter is misleading. "You don't ever hit the taxpayer with that kind of a bill, those types of expenses are handled by long term bonds," she said.

And as for accusations of sabotage?

"She's made some accusations that councilors interfered with negotiations. I never dealt with negotiators. I never met that attorney or Father White 'til they showed up in council when we were taking the vote," she said. She acknowledged meeting with the father and talking with him because he lives and works in the city, though.

"I never ever provided him with any information that was not a matter of public record. I mean seriously, the man lived in Waltham. He worked in Waltham. Is he not entitled to information that's a matter of public record, especially when you're talking about taking away his ministry and his home?"

Web address:

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/waltham/waltham-mayor-lays-out-case-stigmatine-accuses-councillors-thwarting-progress>



Waltham, MA

[Politics & Government](#)

Waltham Residents Rally At City Hall With Message For Councilors

Here's what it was.



Jenna Fisher, Patch Staff

Posted Mon, Feb 12, 2018 at 5:22 pm ET | Updated Mon, Feb 12, 2018 at 9:01 pm ET



WALTHAM, MA — Monday night more than 100 residents took up signs and rallied outside of Waltham City Hall to get the attention of City Councilors and officials. Their message? Cooperate with the School Committee and do it for the kids. Oh, and don't build a new high school on the existing school spot.

The School Committee and sub committee recommended that the city work with the Stigmatine religious order to build a new high school on that property. When they brought that proposal to the City Council after some back and forth and questions about whether the Stigmatines would consider negotiations the City Council voted it down. The School Committee maintains that the site is the best for the city and for the students. But the two boards appear to be at an impasse. In order for any new school building to be built it must first have the approval of the School Committee and the council and the mayor but no one seems to be able to agree.

Enter a [petition](#) and now a rally. Both have the aim of getting the City Council's attention and both want the end result to be boards working together.

"It seems like it's about the Stigmatines but it's not. It's only about the Stigmatines in so far as that what happens to be the what the School Committee Building Committee has identified as the preferred site," said John Saxe who started an online petition asking for the City Council to cooperate with the School Committee.

His petition has more than 1,400 signatures as of Monday evening.

The overall objective of the petition is to get cooperation, first within the Waltham City government, the mayor and City Council, he said.

"The opposition has put us in a stalemate. And we're trying to make sure that they see the community is demanding cooperation," he told Patch.

The goal of Monday night's rally is parallel to that goal, said organizers. But rally organizers say they also want to let City Council know they don't want to build in place at the high school.

The two boards edged forward on cooperation at a meeting last week where they had the chance to come together in one room and ask lingering questions. It seemed the other option much talked about was building at the existing high school. By the end of the meeting the mayor told the group she was proud of them for coming together as such.

But not everyone was as impressed.

Saxe said although he recognized the value of transparency, the boards needed an opportunity to sit down together and talk it through behind closed doors.

"What you had instead were politicians using the opportunity to ask questions ... and use that line of questioning to make their political points," he said.

So Monday night Saxe will join with the separate but parallel protest Monday night. Organizers Krissy Scheufele and Donna Megquier and a number of other Waltham residents plan to show solidarity with the School Committee and ask the City Council to reconsider their stance.

"I am hopeful that the community will come together to show [City Council] that this matters," said Scheufele who has an child in 8th grade and one at the high school in a message to Patch.

She said she was inspired to host a rally because she felt the students were missing from the discussion.

"John Graceffa did a great job outlining some of the problems with building on site and the implications to students but I think that the [City Council] needs to hear that from students. At the end of the day it's all about the kids in the city and building this amazing high school that supports the education plan and supports the kids."

And, she said, she wants City Council to know one more thing:

"We don't support building the new high school at its existing location," she said.

Four things

Saxe said the movement as he sees it comes down to four things: supporting the education plan that was developed by the School Committee; building the High School somewhere that allows the city to preserve the existing high school building so that can be used as a future grades k-8 school in the very near future; building a new high school in an area where everyone can have reasonable access to it regardless of where they live in the city. And last, to assure that the students' education isn't compromised by construction.

"They don't deserve to be cheated out of their high school education just because some city officials couldn't come together on a plan," said Saxe.

At the end of the day, he said, the petition and movement happening now in the city is a show of support for the School Committee and the committee that was set up to make a recommendation for a school site.

"They are headed by the top educational official in the city, Dr. Echelson, and the top elected officials who are elected to provide that guidance. So for City Council to disregard what they're recommending is absurd," he said.

Solution within reach

Add to that, Saxe, who has invested much time and thought into studying the issue himself, said they feel that a mutually beneficial outcome is within reach.

"It's not just one that's minimally acceptable but actually strengthens the positions of each one that they couldn't achieve in the absence of a negotiated outcome," he said.

What's missing in the conversation is for city officials actually taking the time to listen and look at a bigger picture he said.

"Everybody needs to take a step back from their entrenched positions and remember that this is about not only generations of Waltham students but their families and entire communities. Because if we get this right Waltham will be a much richer place for us all to live for decades to come and conversely if we get it wrong we really run the risk of diminishing the value not only of our prop and the quality of education, but the quality of life that people who live in Waltham appreciate about the city and drew them here in the first place," he said.

As for the petition? Saxe said he hopes events like the protest will help keep the momentum going. Eventually he'll present it to the City Council, Mayor and the Stigmatines.

"But really it's up to them. The petition can't force anyone to do anything it's just a request for collaboration," he said.



"Find a place for me", reads one homemade sign from a young protester Monday night in Waltham. Photo Courtesy Krissy Scheufele.

Web address:

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/waltham/residents-rally-waltham-city-hall-high-school>



Waltham, MA

[Politics & Government](#)

Residents Camp Out At Waltham City Hall For Latest On High School

Residents showed up hoping to influence the city council as they went into closed-door session that lasted more than three hours.



Jenna Fisher, Patch Staff

Posted Mon, Jun 25, 2018 at 5:43 pm ET | Updated Tue, Jun 26, 2018 at 7:17 pm ET



WALTHAM, MA — After Waltham residents showed up in droves bringing signs and making themselves known to city officials before and during each Monday city council meeting for the past several weeks, tonight they were at it again, hoping to influence the outcome of the future of the placement of a new high school, and perhaps, even, to hear that outcome. But by 9:25 p.m., some three hours after councilors entered into a closed door session to discuss the high school and the possibility of eminent domain, there was no end in site.

Parents and community members held signs filled Waltham City Hall's City Council Chamber so much so the mayor had trouble getting through. One person estimated there were close to 300 people. They overflowed into the hallway, some wearing "I love The Farm" stickers, in support of keeping the Waltham Community Fields Farm for farming and not an option for the placement of the new high school, some in support of taking the Stigmatine property to use.

But residents who filed back into the halls as the closed door session began, planning to stick around in the hope of hearing the council had voted and put an end to the contentious conversation about just where the high school would be situated, had to wait for it.

The last scheduled executive session scheduled before the summer break for City Council regarding the acquisition and/or use of real estate parcels in relation to Waltham High School project "and other projects" started just after 6 p.m. and was slated to end at 7:30 p.m. However, as of 9:10 p.m. councilors popping out of the council chambers told those lining the hallway that it would be a while.

A Former City Councilor told folks waiting that the last executive session for the year was always long.

"That said, this is beyond long," he said.



Standing room only. Credit: Cristina Montgomery

"The process for identifying a new site for Waltham High School will soon end. We hope a sound and smart decision is made for our children, our families and for our community," wrote Christina Montgomery on Facebook highlighting the reason many folks had turned up for Waltham Citizens for Education.

The folks at Waltham Field Farms also sent out an email telling supporters to come out, and that they did.

As did city council hopefuls and other residents.

Sharline Nabulime, who is running in August for a seat on the council said from the hallway of City Hall she trusted the process and whatever decision the elected officials came up with, although she said she wasn't keen on the idea of taking a property by Eminent Domain.

"Our education leaders, the mayor, Drew, the School Committee and sub committee all spent a lot of time and effort on selecting an education plan and site," said Celeste Woodside outside the City Council chambers Monday night. "Anything less is, frankly, sub par for the school."

The school committee made it clear their choice is the Stigmatine property. That's complicated by the fact that the Stigmatines, a religious order on the private land, have flat out told the city that they do not want to sell.

"Before what appears to be the most important decision to be made in the city for the next century, we are proud of what we have accomplished as a group of committed citizens who care deeply about our city, our community and the quality of education that all children in this city receive. Whatever decisions, if any, are made," wrote Christina Montgomery, a former candidate for council in Ward 8. "The Waltham Citizens for Education will leverage the support we have received from every corner of this city to remain strong and engaged in educational issues in this city. We will continue to monitor the decisions that are made and continue to support those individuals who commit to making smart and thoughtful decisions in the best interest of our city, our children, and our families."

Web address:

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/waltham/residents-rally-waltham-city-hall-new-high-school>



Waltham, MA

[Politics & Government](#)

Waltham City Council Votes To Take Stigmatine Property For HS

It was a 10 to 4 vote after more than three hours in a closed-door session.



Jenna Fisher, Patch Staff 

Posted Mon, Jun 25, 2018 at 9:48 pm ET | Updated Thu, Jun 28, 2018 at 10:08 am ET



WALTHAM, MA — Waltham City Council voted to take the Stigmatine property by eminent domain to use for the new High School.

The vote on Monday night to take the 46 acres of land owned by the religious order came after the years of controversy surrounding the property's future. City Council members went into a closed-door session, the last such session scheduled before the summer, to discuss strategy related to the high school. They were supposed to come out by 7:30 p.m. to hold an open session. Instead, after three hours in executive session they came out with an announcement. There would be a vote in open session.

The final vote was 10 to 4. And the room went wild. Many of the people who had packed the room three hours earlier to show they were eager for an outcome, mostly in favor of the Stigmatine Property on Lincoln Street, cheered, giving the news a standing ovation.

The four councilors who voted against the proposal were Councilors Diane LeBlanc and Bob Logan along Dan Romard and Carlos Vidal.

This comes after years of back and forth on just where to place the new high school and multiple clear statements from the Stigmatines saying they did not wish to sell.

Throughout the process, the School Committee studied and eventually dismissed a number of other locations, including the Fernald property which is owned by the city but has environmental concerns. They also dismissed expanding in place at the current high school spot, saying it would not only disrupt learning at the high school, but also that space would be better served to use for other needs as the entire district grows.

In addition, an ambitious, state-of-the-art education plan developed by the school department calls for a campus-type of experience so other spots around town wouldn't work, the groups studying the spaces available argued.

While the Stigmatine property has been the number one choice for the School Committee and sub committee and the mayor and a number of families and community members for a while, not everyone is happy about taking it by eminent domain.

The Stigmatines described the process as coercive in a statement.

"The Mayor's efforts to acquire the Stigmatine property for the high school have been coercive and relentless. No one is doubting or discounting the need for a new high school in Waltham. We just don't believe the City should be able to end our existence here in Waltham because it covets our land for its own use. Nor do we believe any Citizen of Waltham should ever be treated the way Stigmatines have been treated by the City throughout this process," they wrote.

"This is our home, our place in the world, our public identity. Our presence and our work are associated with this beautiful expansive property. It is a place where we have provided meaningful and even life-changing ministry for thousands upon thousands of men, women and children through the retreats and other spiritual programs offered at the Espousal Retreat House. It is also the home for our retired priests who are no longer capable of continuing in ministry. We continue to use our property in Waltham as we have for almost 100 years. We wish to continue our ministry here on our property without further interference from the City."

Web address:

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/waltham/waltham-city-council-votes-take-stigmatine-property>

Fr. Z's Blog

Waltham, MA council votes to seize Church property by eminent domain

Posted on 28 June 2018 by Fr. John Zuhlsdorf



From [HERE](#):

*Waltham City Council Votes To Take Stigmatine Property For HS
It was a 10 to 4 vote after more than three hours in a closed-door session.*

WALTHAM, MA — Waltham City Council voted to take the Stigmatine property by eminent domain to use for the new High School.

The vote on Monday night to take the 46 acres of land owned by the religious order came after the years of controversy surrounding the property's future. City Council members went into a closed-door session, the last such session scheduled before the summer, to discuss strategy related to the high school. They were supposed to come out by 7:30 p.m. to hold an open session. Instead, after three hours in executive session they came out with an announcement. There would be a vote in open session.

The final vote was 10 to 4. And the room went wild. Many of the people who had packed the room three hours earlier to show they were eager for an outcome, mostly in favor of the Stigmatine Property on Lincoln Street, cheered, giving the news a standing ovation.

The four councilors who voted against the proposal were Councilors Diane LeBlanc and Bob Logan along Dan Romard and Carlos Vidal. [They published the names only of those who said NO. I wonder why?]

This comes after years of back and forth on just where to place the new high school and multiple clear statements from the Stigmatines saying they did not wish to sell.

Web address:

<https://wdtprs.com/2018/06/waltham-ma-council-votes-to-seize-church-property-by- eminent-domain/>



MASSACHUSETTS

Catholic Order Fights City of Waltham Over Eminent Domain Plans

Waltham City Council voted last month to take Lexington Street property from The Espousal Center of the Stigmatine Father's and Brothers

By Cassy Arsenault • Published July 12, 2018 • Updated on July 12, 2018 at 5:22 pm



A Catholic order that has been around for almost 100 years is fighting the city of Waltham, Massachusetts, over plans to take their property by eminent domain.

What to Know

- The Waltham city council voted to take the property belonging to The Espousal Center of the Stigmatine Father's.
- The Stigmatines is a Catholic order, and the Espousal Center is the headquarters for the United States.
- The city of Waltham wants to use the property to build a new high school.

A Catholic order that has been around for almost 100 years is fighting the city of Waltham, Massachusetts, over plans to take their property by eminent domain.

Last month, the Waltham city council voted to take the 47-acre property off Lexington Street that belongs to The Espousal Center of the Stigmatine Father's and Brothers. The hope is to build a new high school for students, according to members of the community.

The Stigmatines is a Catholic order, and the Espousal Center is the headquarters for the United States.

Evelyn Reilly, who has been going to the congregation and prayer service for 42 years, said their retreat center has helped thousands of people over the years.

"Out of all the weekends in a year, typically they have some kind of retreat going on there 48 weekends and the other times they don't are holidays," said Reilly.

Reilly claims the Stigmatines were never looking to sell the property, and she is not a fan of the executive session meetings the city council has been having on their decision to take the property. She said they are closed-door meetings, and no one knows what they are discussing and why.

"What happened to transparency in government? This is a clear conflict here. A clear conflict," said Reilly.

Massachusetts municipal governments are allowed to use eminent domain to force the sale of private land for public use like school buildings, and there is no exception in the law for property owned by religious institutions.

"My heart tells me that I hope to God they fight this. I hope they push back. This is so wrong. It's an injustice," said Reilly.

There's a group in Waltham that agrees with Mayor Jeannette McCarthy and the city council. If you drive around the city, blue signs that read "Stand up for Waltham students" most likely indicate that person is a part of the Waltham Citizens for Education group.

The group sent us a statement that said in part:

"Enrollment is growing by 100-150 students a year. City officials had a responsibility to plan for now and for the future. While we appreciate how hard that decision was to make, we also applaud the city council and Mayor McCarthy for standing up for thousands of students."

The mayor declined to comment while negotiations are going on.

Reilly contends there are dozens of other properties that could be considered for a new high school.

"I think the Stigmatines have earned the right to be left alone and do what they want with their own property," said Reilly.

The provincial father of the Stigmatines did not return NBC10 Boston's request for comment.

Congregation members said that the value of the property is close to \$20 million.

Web address:

<https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/catholic-order-fights-city-of-waltham-over-eminant-domain-plans/1946809/>

The Pilot

America's oldest Catholic newspaper



The Espousal Retreat Center, one of the buildings located on the 46-acre Waltham property of the Stigmatine Fathers and Brothers. Pilot file photo.

Stigmatines vow to challenge Waltham eminent domain seizure

Jacqueline Tetrault Pilot Staff

LOCAL

THURSDAY 16TH OF AUGUST 2018

WALTHAM -- The Stigmatine Fathers and Brothers say they intend to challenge the City of Waltham, which plans to take their property by eminent domain for use as the site of the city's new high school.

The Stigmatines own 46 acres located at 554 Lexington Street. Its facilities include the Espousal Retreat Center, a conference center, and a retirement home for priests. Four Stigmatine priests live there, and the order hosts retreats, prayer meetings, and monthly marriage preparation classes.

The current conflict comes after years of tension between the City of Waltham and the Stigmatine Fathers and Brothers over the use of the land.

In 2015 the Stigmatines engaged real estate consultants and brokers to gauge developers' interest in the site and determine its market value. One developer suggested building multifamily rental housing.

The Stigmatines maintain that they never planned to sell their property and merely wanted to explore potential uses for the property. However, when it became known that they were gauging interest, it raised concerns with the city government. The concerns centered partly around the potential negative impact a large housing development could have on the Waltham community, but also because the city sees the Stigmatine property as a prime site for constructing a new high school to meet the needs of Waltham's growing student population.

While the current high school's location at 617 Lexington Street has been considered as an option for the new school, it would not be large enough for the new, state-of-the-art, college campus-style high school that the city has envisioned for years. Additionally, building at a different location would allow students and staff to continue using the old building throughout the construction of the new campus. The old building could then be used as a K-8 school.

Mayor Jeannette McCarthy approached the Stigmatines in January 2016 to explore the possibility of the City of Waltham purchasing the property. Negotiations were attempted but ultimately broke down over the course of that year.

In May 2017 the City Council voted 12-3 against taking the land, since the Stigmatines' lawyers said they would challenge a taking by eminent domain, and such litigation would delay the building of the new school.

On Sept. 7, 2017, McCarthy submitted a new bond request to the City Council for an additional \$7.4 million to purchase the Stigmatine property. The city council rejected this request because it was essentially identical to a previous one.

A few weeks later, on Sept. 20, McCarthy issued a statement to the Waltham News Tribune outlining her five reasons for making the request: "To provide for the needs of 5,663 students; To protect the interests of the Waltham taxpayers; To protect the Waltham neighborhoods from overdevelopment; To try to unite the City Council with the School Committee, School Building Committee, Superintendent, and Mayor; To try to restore the City's bargaining position."

In the letter, McCarthy acknowledged that the 196-acre Walter E. Fernald Developmental Center -- once an institution for people with developmental disabilities, now unused and falling into disrepair -- was considered as a site for the high school. However, McCarthy pointed out that the Fernald center was located on the city line between Belmont and Lexington, and argued that its cleanup would take too long and could cost taxpayers up to \$100 million, while the Stigmatine site was valued at \$25.4 million.

McCarthy claimed, "Acquisition of Stigmatine land has been in the City's Open Space Plan since 1994."

At a meeting on Feb. 26, 2018, the City Council directed McCarthy to restart negotiations with the Stigmatines.

On June 25, the Waltham City Council voted 10 to 4 to take the Stigmatine property by eminent domain. They would pay the Stigmatines \$18 million despite its property being valued at several million more.

According to Peter Flynn, one of the Stigmatines' attorneys with a strong background in eminent domain, the Stigmatines planned to accept the payment on a pro tanto basis, meaning they would reserve the right to challenge either the amount of compensation or the validity of the legal process within the next three years.

On July 18 Flynn and the Stigmatines' other lawyer Adam Paton announced their intent to fight the eminent domain claim. Concerns about the legal process include their belief that the City of Waltham did not have an up-to-date appraisal of the land, as well as the city's failure to provide a legally required relocation advisory agent to help the Stigmatines plan their relocation.

In their July 18 letter notifying the Massachusetts School Building Authority of their intention to challenge the city, attorneys Flynn and Paton said, "It is important to emphasize that the Stigmatine fathers have been located in this locus for almost 100 years. It has historically provided a year-round schedule of religious retreats and marriage preparation courses, sanctuary for elderly and disabled Priests and has a number of facilities including significant religious monuments and shrines and a gift shop. It was not and is not a site that the Stigmatines intended to sell or relocate from."

The attorneys further wrote that "under no conditions could they (the Stigmatines) replicate the historical roots of this sanctuary property," which "truly represents the Stigmatines' public and private identity. It is a place where the Stigmatines have provided a meaningful and even life-changing ministry for thousands upon thousands of men, women, and children through their retreats and other spiritual programs offered at the Espousal retreat house. Providing a home for retired Priests who are no longer capable of continuing in the ministry has been a hallmark of their existence. Any relocation or taking will cause irreparable harm for this esteemed religious order."

A statement on the Stigmatines' website reads, "No one is doubting or discounting the need for a new high school in Waltham. We just don't believe the City should be able to end our existence here in Waltham because it covets our land for its own use."

Web address:

<https://www.thebostonpilot.com/article.php?ID=183046>

The Patriot Ledger

WALTHAM NEWS TRIBUNE

Feasibility study for Stigmatine property is approved by committee

Kerry Feltner kfeltner@wickedlocal.com

Published 2:30 p.m. ET Aug. 23, 2018 | Updated 2:35 p.m. ET Aug. 23, 2018



A statue of Jesus Christ is shown in this file photo, standing with arms outstretched, at the entrance to the Stigmatine Fathers & Brothers property in northern Waltham.

[Wicked Local File Photo] *Wicked Local*

A feasibility study for the contested Stigmatine Fathers property—554 Lexington Street—has received the go-ahead after the Waltham City Council approved \$269,079 needed to fund the study.

The Waltham School Committee requested the mayor to request permission from the council to proceed with the study of the property back on May 2. On June 26 the funds were approved.

By Aug. 7, architects were authorized to walk the property and just under a week later on Aug. 13, the Waltham School Building Committee approved the budget for the study.

Back in June, the City Council voted 10-4 to take the 46-acre property by eminent domain to build a new high school. That plan would result in an \$18 million purchase by the city.

A month later, the Stigmatine Fathers—who have resided on the property for almost a century—fought back, stating if the school building committee would proceed with that claim, they would fight it in court.

This Tuesday, attorney for the Stigmatine Fathers Peter Flynn submitted a letter to John Cervone, the city solicitor.

The letter states, “the City of Waltham is under the impression and acting as if they have made a valid taking of the Stigmatine property...our clients do not want and will not permit any activity on the Stigmatine property. This shall include any activity involving agents, contractors, surveyors, engineers, or consultants on behalf of the City of Waltham of any kind for a minimum of (one hundred and twenty) 120 days commencing from July 23, 2018.”

Web address:

<https://www.patriotledger.com/story/waltham-news-tribune/2018/08/23/feasibility-study-for-stigmatine-property/10975594007/>

Patch**Waltham, MA**[Schools](#)

Stigmatines To Waltham: No Surveyors On Our Property

'Waltham is under the impression and acting as if they have made a valid taking of the Stigmatine property,' wrote the Stigmatine lawyer.



Jenna Fisher, Patch Staff

Posted Fri, Aug 24, 2018 at 11:00 am ET



WALTHAM, MA — This week the Fathers of the Stigmatines reiterated that plan to fight the taking of their land for the building of a new high school through their attorney, insinuating the eminent domain action might not be valid and calling for cease and desist.

“Waltham is under the impression and acting as if they have made a valid taking of the Stigmatine property...our clients do not want and will not permit any activity on the Stigmatine property. This shall include any activity involving agents, contractors, surveyors, engineers, or consultants on behalf of the City of Waltham of any kind for a minimum of (one hundred and twenty) 120 days commencing from July 23, 2018,” Peter Flynn wrote in a letter submitted to City Solicitor John Cervone.

Still, it's difficult to fight eminent domain if a government can show it exhausted other options.

The Waltham School Committee and Superintendent's office have long argued that 544 Lexington is the only appropriate property available in the city that will work with their educational plan, which has already gotten approval from the State.

Although City Council originally refused to take the property by eminent domain the Waltham School Committee persisted, requesting the mayor to get permission from the council to proceed with the study of the property back on May 2. On June 25 the council changed course and voted to take the property by eminent domain and then the funds were approved.

Hundreds cheered the decision as the state body figuratively tapped its watch asking Waltham to agree on something and move forward on the school or risk losing funding.

But not everyone was happy about the move to take the 46-acre property where the Stigmatine religious order have occupied the property for nearly a century.

"I hope they fight it," Melissa Rossi was one of dozens of people who took to the Patch Facebook page at the time.

Former City Councilor Sally Collura asked folks to call their city councilors to weigh in.

"What don't they understand that it's not for sale. Why the hell do they have to STEAL the Stigmatine," wrote Jackie Pilla.

Recent Timeline, courtesy the Superintendent's office:

May 2, 2018: the Waltham School Committee requested of the Mayor to request of the Waltham City Council permission to conduct a full feasibility study at 554 Lexington Street.

May 9, 2018: the Mayor submitted to the Waltham City Council a request for approval to conduct a full feasibility study on the parcel and recommended that the Council appropriate \$269,079 to fund the study.

On June 26, 2018: [Waltham City Council Votes To Take Stigmatine By Eminent Domain](#) and the Waltham City Council approved the appropriation in the amount of \$269,079 from the unreserved fund balance to conduct a full feasibility study at 554 Lexington Street.

During the August 7, 2018: special meeting the Waltham School Committee approved the start of the feasibility study at 554 Lexington Street and authorized the architects to walk the property.

On August 13, 2018, the Waltham School Building Committee approved the budget for the feasibility study at 554 Lexington Street and for the designer to release the sub-contractors to commence work on the property.

Check out some of the comments pro and con to taking the Stigmatine property, there are more than 70 on the Patch Facebook Page about it:



Web address:

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/waltham/stigmatines-waltham-no-surveyors-our-property>

Patch**Waltham, MA**[Schools](#)

State Board Gives Green Light To Waltham High School Next Steps

The Massachusetts School Building Authority said Waltham can move on to the schematic design phase of building a new high school.



Jenna Fisher, Patch Staff

Posted Wed, Feb 13, 2019 at 11:35 am ET | Updated Wed, Feb 13, 2019 at 2:25 pm ET



WALTHAM, MA — The Massachusetts School Building Authority just gave the green light to Waltham to begin the Schematic Design phase of the \$381 million high school building project across the street at the Stigmatine property.

At the MSBA Board of Directors meeting Wednesday, the board unanimously voted the project into the schematic design of the project, according to Superintendent Drew Echelson in a statement. This is the latest forward momentum for a project to build a new high school that has been years in the making.

"I am glad that the MSBA has recognized the hard work and dedication of the Waltham team on this project. The work of the SBC and SC has positioned us well and now we will work with the community to deliver a world-class facility that provides all of our students and our entire community the access they deserve," said Echelson.

The MSBA Board of Directors must approve all projects in order for the MSBA ,which is helping financially support the district build a new high school, enter into a Project Scope and Budget Agreement and a Project Funding Agreement with the district.

The approval means it's now time for teachers and officials to start collaborating with the architect to work out details related to the inside of the new high school building, set to be built at 554 Lexington Street.

"Educators voices on these important topics will inform design decisions made by our team and SBC," said Waltham High School Principal Paul Maiorano, according to a district release.

A little more than two weeks ago, the district received a letter from the MSBA, outlining concerns about the project and requested a response from the city. Last week, the Superintendent's office and the mayor responded to the questions.

Echelson told the School Committee Monday he was confident the questions were routine and that the MSBA would green-light the next steps.

Mayor Jeannette McCarthy and the superintendent said they plan to share more details on the next steps at the next SBC and School Committee meeting.

The project has been long in coming – and not without critics.

For years the superintendent's office has been beating the drum about a need for an upgrade to the high school in order to accommodate increased enrollment and deteriorating building conditions.

The current high school building is 449,700 square feet and was built in 1968, with additions made in 1998 and 2002. Between mechanical, electrical and window issues at the school as enrollment has increased, the district estimated it would cost some \$135.6 million to renovate the current building without making any accommodations for larger enrollments. The district estimated to renovate the building with additions, while students were still using the building it would cost about \$366 million.

After back and forth between the school district and the city council about a site, the MSBA imposed a timeline for the city, if it wanted to get money from the state to help pay for any of it. The MSBA partners with communities to help financially support the design and construction of projects.

The City Council and the School Committee voted to go with the School Department's preferred location at the Stigmatine property, because of the size. The School Department likes that it would allow for a campus school that would work well with the new education plan. Building on that site would also allow the district to use the old high school building for other programs. When it became clear that the religious order that owned the property was not interested in selling it to the city, a number of city council members had at first voted against taking the property. With a deadline looming eventually, last year the city council voted to take the site by eminent domain.

Web address:

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/waltham/state-board-gives-green-light-waltham-high-school-next-steps>

Patch.**Waltham, MA**[Schools](#)

Stigmatines Must Move By June 30 For Waltham High School: Judge

A Middlesex Superior Court judge ruling comes after nearly a year of an eminent domain battle between the city and the Stigmatines.



Jenna Fisher, Patch Staff

Posted Thu, Jun 20, 2019 at 3:15 pm ET | Updated Fri, Jun 21, 2019 at 12:35 pm ET



The city paid the Stigmatines \$18 million for the land after securing it through the eminent domain process. (Jenna Fisher/Patch)

WALTHAM, MA — A Middlesex Superior Court judge ruled that the handful of priests who live on the Stigmatine property must leave by June 30. The court ruling enables the district to move forward with plans to build a new high school there, after years of back and forth about where to build in light of increased enrollment. It also comes after a months-long eminent domain battle with the Trustees of the Stigmatine Fathers religious order.

"The Trustees shall be required to vacate the Property as set forth in the City's notice to vacate letter dated May 1, 2019, which sets the final date to fully vacate the Property as no later than June 30," wrote Justice of the Supreme Court Valerie Yarashus in a court ruling late last month.

The city voted to take the 43 acre property by eminent domain last summer and, after being asked by a judge, paid the Trustees of the Stigmatine Fathers, the small religious order which had owned the property for about a century, \$18 million for it. But instead of leaving, the Stigmatines wrote a cease and desist letter, claiming the city did not follow proper procedure.

They also [refused to let city surveyors](#) and other workers on the property.

"No one is doubting or discounting the need for a new high school in Waltham," read a statement the Stigmatines posted to their website. "We just don't believe the City should be able to end our existence here in Waltham because it covets our land for its own use. Nor do we believe any Citizen of Waltham should ever be treated the way Stigmatines have been treated by the City throughout this process."

They implored residents to find a way not to take the land, calling the mayor's efforts to acquire the property coercive and relentless.

Municipalities can buy private property at fair value through eminent domain if they can prove they've looked everywhere else and there's public interest in taking the land, such as building a new school. The process requires the city to not only pay a price that is deemed fair, but help relocate the occupant. The property was valued at \$22.7 million, according to the assessor data. In May, the city worked with a relocater and came up with several options for the Stigmatines, none of which the order deemed suitable.

In September, a court ruled the Stigmatines had to allow the city on the property for the next four months. It ordered the court to pay the \$18 million for the property and told the city to be respectful when visiting the property. When November rolled around, the city started sending communications to the Stigmatines about leaving the property, at least once a month through March. Then, on May 1, Waltham gave a final notice to the Stigmatines and ordered them out by the end of June.

The court agreed.

She said the Stigmatines argument that they couldn't move anywhere until a suitable new spot was found could be revisited elsewhere.

"In light of the long procedural history of this eminent domain acquisition, the Trustees have and far longer to vacate than the four months required by statute," wrote Yarashus.

City Councilor Diane LeBlanc said although she has had no contact with the Stigmatines herself, she's heard from residents who worship there that they are moving forward to shut down operations and have filed an appeal.

Moving forward

Former Superintendent Drew Echelson said his big takeaway is that as a result of this process, the district now has an obligation to move the project forward.

"And move it forward quickly. That's the sense that I get from her ruling," he said.

The judge indicated that the city has shown good faith in terms of the negotiations with the Stigmatines, and that we've been honest and forthcoming with the purpose of the space for the school.

Property was in fact listed on the market for sale, and the Trustees allowed several potential purchasers access to the premises for the purpose of inspection and testing. Prior to taking the Property by eminent domain, the City had in fact attempted to purchase the Property by mutual agreement over a period of time, with the earliest discussions beginning in 2016.⁷ The primary reason the sale was not completed by mutual agreement is that there was disagreement over the selling price. This is not surprising, as it is reasonable for owners of property to want to obtain the maximum sales price. It is also not surprising, under the circumstances, that the City then moved to take the Property by eminent domain. I do not find bad faith on the part of either of the parties to this litigation in this regard. In addition, after reviewing all the conduct of the City that has been submitted by the parties to date, I find that the City has acted in good faith in all aspects of this eminent domain acquisition.

City of Waltham Vs. The Trustees of the Stigmatine Fathers

"I'm encouraged by the judge's rulings thus far, and I know that there will probably be a few more hurdles for us to move forward, but I feel like we're really well positioned," said Echelson.

The committee has a couple more meetings coming up before it submits a more detailed description of the plan and scope and budget for the new \$380 million (the MSBA grant is for \$130 million) Waltham High School in early July.

"Obviously we're working to reduce that, after feedback from the community," said Echelson.

It then heads to Waltham City Council and the mayor for discussion.

"This is an exciting opportunity," said Echelson." The new opportunities that will be provided to students as a result of this building, I think, are really going to be on par with the opportunities available to students in some of the stronger systems in the Commonwealth."

More background

For years, the superintendent's office has been beating the drum about a need for an upgrade to the high school in order to accommodate increased enrollment and deteriorating building conditions.

The current high school building is 449,700 square feet and was built in 1968, with additions made in 1998 and 2002. The current state of the high school falls below standards, and raises the prospect that the city could lose accreditation of its high school over the next few years, unless significant progress is made on the building.

After back and forth between the school district and the city council about a site, the MSBA, which helps pay for school building projects, imposed a timeline for the city if it wanted to get money from the state to help pay for any of it.

The City Council and the School Committee voted to go with the School Department's preferred location at the Stigmatine property, in large part because of the size of the property – it's 43 acres. The city-owned Fernald property was a strong contender but fell out as an option once environmental issues became clear.

When it became clear that the religious order that owned the property was not interested in selling it to the city, a number of city council members had at first voted against taking the property. With a deadline looming last year the city council voted to take the site by eminent domain.

In February, the Massachusetts School Building Authority gave the green light to Waltham to begin the Schematic Design phase of the \$381 million high school building project across the street at the Stigmatine property. Then, in April the school began to survey the property, after going to court to get a judge to allow it.

Web address:

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/waltham/stigmatines-must-move-june-30-waltham-high-school-court>

554 Lexington Street, Waltham

The history of 554 Lexington Street in Waltham is a rich one indeed. From its very early days, as a piece of raw land, its picturesque nature, its serene setting, and its choice center city location have been memorialized by its significant street frontage on the westerly side of Lexington Street, just north of Piety Corner, and its significant wooded hillside, that is one of the few remaining in the area. This is the first stage in its history.

The details of its ownership go back to the Sanderson Family, whose history in Piety Corner and in Waltham is renown. Although the specific details of the Sanderson ownership and its prior ownership are not known to me, the property's prior background is worth further research and study, given the property's location in the Piety Corner neighborhood on the main thoroughfare between Waltham Center and Lexington Center.

In 1894, when Orilla and Lowell Sanderson sold the property to William H. Clark, the property took an even more significance, when Judge Clark commissioned the construction of a new Colonial Revival Style mansion of the finest detail.



From the cupola and turret on the roof, to the port *cochère* at the front door, the structure is an architectural gem, that invites inspection to its finest details. The exterior details include extensive wooden ornamentation, including a main entrance with sidelights and pilasters, bowed bay windows on the south, brackets and dentils in the eaves, balustrades and some Palladian windows. The interior finish is even more intriguing, and provides excellent evidence of the “Golden Age of Mill Working” (1880 - 1910). Custom designed decorative millwork predominates the finish of the first and second floor. Fine cabinetry, significant casework, ceiling trims, embellishments of all types, chair rails, wooden wainscoting, columns, cornices, moldings, sashes, trims, beamed ceilings, spectacular wood stairways, and ornate fireplace mantels are found throughout the structure. Many of the original details exist today and are available for inventory and detailing, in order to preserve the many architectural gifts which this residence provides. This is the second stage in the history of the property, which began 125 years ago with the construction of the residence and nearby horse barn.

Following are photos of one of the rooms in the structure:



This room was subsequently converted to the Chapel by the Stigmatines, after they acquired the property. Notice the details of the wood work, the ceiling, the windows, the mantle and the marble fireplace and the walls.



The structure consists of 2 ½ stories, and was originally used as the Clark residence by William, Elizabeth and Mary, until the last of them passed away in 1922. In 1923, the property was conveyed to James A. Adams, a representative of the Boston Manufacturing Company, which owned the Mill on Moody Street. The mill, of course, was the employment center of the city, and many Italian and Irish immigrants worked there. In 1923 and 1924, Mr. Adams conveyed both the Sanderson property and the adjacent Armstrong property to the Stigmatines. In 1922, the Stigmatines, who were founded by Saint Gaspar Bertoni in Verona, Italy, came to Waltham in 1922 to establish Sacred Heart Parish on River Street, in order to minister to the Italian immigrants, who largely worked at the mill and lived on the South side of the city. Thus, began the history of the Stigmatines in Waltham, as ministers to the Italian immigrants who moved to the city. Shortly there after, the Stigmatines acquired 554 Lexington Street to establish the first Junior College Seminary in Waltham. This signaled the third stage in history of the property.



Over a significant period of time, 554 Lexington Street has played a major part in the history of the Catholic community, and specifically the Italian American Community in Waltham. Religious education, philosophical training, theological training, seminary education, and a connection with the language, practices and history of Italy were all benefits brought to the Waltham community by the Stigmatine Fathers and Brothers since 1924, over 95 years ago. In partnership with Sacred Heart Church on River Street, Masses, confessions, and sacraments in the native tongue were all available to the Italian American community of Waltham and the surrounding area. The Stigmatines from 554 Lexington Street worked closely with Sacred Heart Parish to “shepherd the flock” of new and old immigrants alike. And as the community grew, and the spiritual needs of the areas, Catholic became more significant, a dynamic public ministry also took place at 554 Lexington Street. Retreats, Days of Recollection, outdoor Masses, outdoor Stations of the Cross, confessions, religious celebrations in support of families, marriage preparation, spiritual guidance, counseling, public ministry through Alcoholics Anonymous, ALANON, confirmation retreats, prayer meetings, healing services, and regular liturgies, all became important to Waltham residents and the Catholic Church of Boston. And, even to today, the Stigmatines are meeting the needs of the local community with their Masses, their prayer groups, their healing services, and their gift shop.

And the relationship between the Stigmatines and Sacred Heart parish continues when as recently as Sunday, Fr. Jean Kambou said the 7:30 am. Mass at Sacred Heart Parish, at the request of Fr. Dennis. And the relationship is not limited to Sacred Heart Parish as the other parishes of the city, St. Mary's, St. Charles, St. Jude's and Our Lady Comforter of the Afflicted's continue to work with the Stigmatines on various aspects of ministry, for the benefit of the community. And 554 Lexington Street continues to serve as the home of the retirement community of the area's Stigmatines priests as well, some of whom have been associated with 554 Lexington Street since the 1940's, when they attended the Seminary on this property.

Following a list of some priests domiciled on the campus:

Fr. Albert Azrack Fr. Paul Burns Fr. Geoffrey Decker
Fr. Leonard J. Ferrecchia Fr. David F. Gallagher
Fr. Donald J. Higgins Fr. Gregory J. Hoppough
Fr. Jean Kambou Brother Antonio Banda Lopez

The Waltham Community owes them a debt of gratitude for their hard work and many hours of ministry. Currently, Fr. Robert White is the Provincial of the Stigmatines. 554 Lexington Street has served the Stigmatines well over the 95 years they have occupied the 46.41 acre campus of which they use 13.60 acres, while the balance of the campus is preserved as open space and woodlands. The buildings are set back, so you might not even know they are there from busy Lexington Street. The structures, when combined with the woodlands and open space of the pristine campus type setting, provides both visitors and residents with a sense of peace, serenity and tranquility, which is another historical quality of the property.

Based upon the significant history of 554 Lexington Street, this property warrants significant investigation study and documentation of the conditions of the property. It is hoped that the Waltham Historical Commission will delay the demolition for at least 1 years, as the property is properly evaluated for its historical benefits for the City of Waltham.

Fr. Robert White, CSS

(2019)¹

¹ Co-author's note: Even though the original document was anonymous, there are good reasons to believe this document was written by Fr. Robert White, CSS, and the year was 2019 (because his reference to Stigmatines owning the property since 95 years ago (after 1924). Fr. White was the superior of the Stigmatines in North America on that year, and remains until nowadays (2025).