

**LOWELL HISTORIC BOARD
MINUTES
Mayor's Reception Room, Lowell City Hall
February 9, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.**

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For further detail, contact the Lowell Historic Board, Lowell City Hall, Room 51, 375 Merrimack Street or refer to video recordings available online at www.LTC.org.

Members Present: George Villaras, Chair: Yovani Baez-Rose, Troy Depeiza, Aurora Erickson, Jeffrey Harris, Lucia Walker

Members Absent: Deborah Belanger, Gray Fitzsimons

Others Present: Stephen Stowell, Administrator

The following represents the actions taken by the Historic Board at the 2/9/26 meeting.

Chair Villaras called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. AND-26-01: 71 Willie Street

The Dugdale Worsted Mill (1860). Application for a Historic Permit by 71 Willie Street LLC for exterior rehabilitation and associated site improvements pursuant to the Lowell Historic District Act (Chapter 566, Acts of 1983).

On Behalf:

John Geary, Geary & Geary, LLP
Jim Jozokos, Jozokos Architecture, Inc.

J. Geary introduced the proposed project and J. Jozokos presented project plans and designs.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

The Chair complemented the project team and appreciated the work that has gone into the design. He asked

about the clock and tower design, that it looked like a new addition. J. Jozokos said that the clock is new and that underneath the false brick is evidence of siding and the blocked windows can be seen from the interior.

Y. Baez-Rose asked if the building had an elevator. J. Jozokos said there is an existing service lift but that the entire first floor will be ADA compliant.

L. Walker complemented the design and asked about the purpose of the rooftop railing. J. Jozokos said that it was to screen the mechanical units and to protect people servicing them.

A. Erickson said she was looking forward to having the shed additions removed and that it is always nice to see housing being developed.

J. Harris asked about the function of the tower on the front of the building. J. Jozokos said that it was a stairtower with a spiral stair inside that workers would use while the flanking one story sections contained mechanical and sprinkler systems. J. Harris asked if the door could be centered on the tower. J. Jozokos said that once interior demolition is complete, they will have a better idea if the door could be relocated. J. Harris said that having the door centered with the elements above, and be more period appropriate, would be desired.

J. Harris asked about evidence of historic windows on the tower. J. Jozokos said the windows exist beneath the siding. J. Harris said that if other windows exist on the tower, including the sides, they should be reintroduced to make the tower less monolithic. J. Jozokos said that the tower will not be the main entrance, that it will be on the left elevation facing the parking lot.

Motion:

By Y. Baez-Rose, seconded by J. Harris, to:

Vote to issue the Historic Permit for the exterior rehabilitation of 71 Willie Street in the Acre Neighborhood District conditional upon the following:

1. Submittal, review, and approval of final details related to all aspects of the window scope of work (historic replica and new contemporary) including, but not limited to, shop drawings, paint color, interior screen units (dark color), and blinds (dark color) prior to commencement of work;
2. Submittal, review, and approval of final details related to all entries and egresses (doors, hardware, etc.) prior to commencement of work;
3. Submittal, review, and approval of design, material, and color samples for masonry repair/cleaning, repointing, metal work/flashings, and paint. On-site mortar, brick, cleaning, and paint samples will be required for review and approval prior to commencement of work;
4. Submittal, review, and approval of a roof plan, including sightline study, illustrating location of mechanical units prior to commencement of work including dimensions and specifications for all elements; and
5. Submittal, review, and approval of final design and construction details, and any scope of work alterations, including, but not limited to, roofing/flashings/gutters/downspouts; siding/trim; lighting including traditional fixtures, security/emergency lighting, and architectural lighting;

cameras; dumpsters/screening; landscape plan; and building signage prior to commencement of individual work items.

Work is consistent with Sections 2.301, 2.31, and 2.32 of the Design Review Standards for the Acre Neighborhood District.

Unanimously approved, 6-0.

2. MINUTES

Approval of the Minutes of December 8, 2025.

Motion:

By J. Harris, seconded by T. Depeiza, to:

Approve the Minutes of December 8, 2025.

Unanimously approved, 6-0.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

A. North Canal Housing Redevelopment Informational Presentation

The Chair noted that this is an informational presentation to gather feedback from the Board and that afterwards, they should work with the Administrator on the final submittal and application.

Presenting:

Catherine Flood, Flood Law Office PC
Gabrielle Aitcheson, ICON Architecture
Thomas Emery, Coalition for a Better Acre

C. Flood introduced the proposed project and G. Aitcheson presented conceptual designs.

The proposed project involves the demolition of several buildings belonging to the North Canal Apartments, built as part of urban renewal during the late 1960s and early 1970s, on two sites along Father Morissette Boulevard with addresses of 281 and 463 Moody Street. Proposed new construction will create 160 units of affordable housing through a phased development.

Discussion:

The Chair said that the project is a nice reimagining of the site and how the massing mirrors what is in the neighborhood like Tremont Yard and Wannalancit but also reflects other new construction like in the Hamilton Canal District. G. Aitcheson said that in addition to researching the context that they researched heights as well in the vicinity. The Chair noted that the design fits nicely, that it isn't trying to push the envelope.

The Chair asked about the project phasing. G. Aitcheson said that the three sites are three separate phases.

Y. Baez-Rose said that she loves the project as someone who grew up at North Canal when it was very depressing. She commented that the current complex allows for individual tenant patios and that the new design appears to move more to shared open spaces. G. Aitcheson said they are moving away from the individual patios that are hard to manage and be equitable. She said the focus was on spaces where people can come together and that the landscape will include elevated gardens and dog parks, residents can activate their own outdoor spaces.

J. Harris asked about Site 2 on the plans and the lack of design. G. Aitcheson said that only Site 1 is being presented conceptually and that discussion here will help guide the Site 2 design.

A. Erickson asked if the present tenants will be able to stay in the new housing. G. Aitcheson said that was the intention. T. Emery from the CBA said that they are working with a relocation consultant that will provide assistance to tenants.

A. Erickson commented about pedestrian flow and a new, long building is planned and that people will not be able to cross through the site as one can now. She noted it is a really interesting design as the present buildings in no way relate to what was in Little Canada previously but the new design appears to have influences from nearby mill buildings in its length but also appears visually like triple deckers. She said that it is an improvement over what is currently there and attempts to reflect historic character. G. Aitcheson said that the project may create connections that had been lost in the past.

The Chair said that he liked the color blocking that creates a less institutionalized appearance and breaks it down, appearing less massive. G. Aitcheson said that the lighter and darker contrast is important, providing variation in character.

J. Harris said that the massing has been successfully broken up given the length of the building. He commented that the strong vertical elements help break up the Moody Street façade in addition to the colors and suggested also using that element on Father Morissette as it is an important, primary elevation and would assist in breaking up the length as well.

J. Harris inquired about retaining the mature trees along Father Morissette. G. Aitcheson said that many of them will be retained, that there is a buffer that will provide protection. J. Harris said retention of the trees will also help break down the scale of the building and screening, helping bring it down to pedestrian scale.

The Chair asked about the angular features seen on the elevations, if they hide something. G. Aitcheson said it was a little bit of whimsy but it also reflects exposing many of the roof and drainage elements, making them part of the design.

The Chair thanked the project team for the presentation and directed them to work with the Administrator with any follow-up and questions regarding design, materials, and process.

B. 291 and 341 Jackson Street Informational Presentation

Presenting:

Hayley Glidden, Cabot Cabot and Forbes
Sam Buckens, The Architectural Team

H. Glidden introduced the proposed project and S. Buckens presented conceptual designs.

The proposed mixed-use development consists of 363 market rate rental units and 10,000 square feet of commercial and retail space. Concept design takes advantage of the canal frontage location and reflects the scale of former industrial buildings which is also reflected in fenestration.

Discussion:

The Chair said that the design looks good and fits well within the area, relating to so many things in a positive way. He said that it was once an industrial area and the design harkens back to that without replicating it. It also relates to the courthouse and the nearby mill buildings. He noted that the building reflects past industrial buildings but with a modern approach and complemented the presenters on the design.

The Chair asked about the canal wall and if any repairs were anticipated. S. Buckens said it would be maintained.

Y. Baez-Rose described the Form Based Code in the Hamilton Canal Innovation District, that it focuses on the size and shape of buildings rather than uses. She said they've been working closely with the Cabot, Cabot, and Forbes team to ensure the code would allow for the type of development they wanted and can build, that DPD is close to signing off that the proposal is consistent with the code.

Y. Baez-Rose said that the team has done a nice job in creating designs that are visually appealing and will provide activation of Canal Street at a pedestrian level, that the project will be the one people will see driving down Dutton Street. She said that the design is really thoughtful in response to the district and the shape of the parcels. She noted that they've been very receptive to maintaining access to Utopia Park both around the site and through it. The project is exciting and it will diversify the type of housing in the district with 100% market rate with earlier housing efforts being affordable or mixed income.

A. Erickson appreciated the efforts to address pedestrian access and safety. She commented about the balconies on the concept design and asked if they were allowed as she couldn't remember other projects with them. The Administrator said that they are allowed and encouraged with new construction, that 160 Middlesex Street has small "juliet" balconies but the ones here would be true balconies. S. Buckens said that they help break up the façade and A. Erickson agreed, noting they're a nice element. H. Glidden said the balconies are located in priority areas with views of the canals, that not every unit have a balcony.

The Administrator commented on the project site being a focal point, surrounded by canals with boats and a trolley line which is very unique.

The Chair inquired about materials. S. Buckens said that a focus has been large areas of windows that harken back to Lowell's industrial past and the mills. He proceeded to describe various other design and material features. The Chair commented that the various materials, textures, and colors help break up the design so it doesn't seem as massive.

J. Harris concurred with the other comments and felt that the design does a good job of breaking up the large complex into smaller pieces with the different treatments of the façade including setbacks. He said that additional views placing the buildings in context would be useful to see and help in the review and analysis.

J. Harris said that the treatment will be critical of the elevation facing Swamp Locks to make the existing park area welcoming and inviting to the public. He thanked the project team for their submission materials.

The Chair thanked the project team for the presentation and directed them to work with the Administrator with any follow-up and questions on design, materials, and process.

C. Enforcement/Violations Update

Non-conforming signage continues to be addressed with only a scattered number of lit signs being the primary issue. All continue to be addressed via personal visits that also include distribution of the Board's custom open/closed signs and offers of sign grants. Maintenance work has wound down as the season is changing and will ramp up in the spring with several new addresses to be focused on.

With regard to violations and fines voted at the Board's December 8 meeting for Boost Mobile at 376 Merrimack Street (DLHDV-26-03), the two internally-illuminated video screens in the windows were turned off on or about December 10 and the matter is considered resolved. Note that per the Board's Violation Policy that if within six months the violation, or similar, is reintroduced, the Administrator or Board shall not be required to implement the entire violation procedure, but shall resume the procedure at the point it was interrupted when the temporary compliance occurred.

D. Administrator's Report

The Administrator noted that the materials in the packet are for informational purposes and would be included in the record.

Upcoming Projects and Project Review:

Post-permitting review and approval of design details and materials continues for a variety of projects including the Massachusetts Mills Main Power House/Boiler House (Bridge Street), 278 Central Street, 64 Clitheroe Street, 80 Mansur Street, 100 Market Street, 199 Market Street, 246.2 Market Street, 35-55 Merrimack Street, 484 Merrimack Street, 78 Middlesex Street, 218 Middlesex Street, 657 Middlesex Street, 50 Payne Street, 17 Rock Street, 684 Westford Street, 6 Wiggin Street, and 52 Wyman Street. This is in addition to routine signage, maintenance, and other Minor Development activity.

Upcoming projects that will require public hearings include demolition/new residential construction at 43 Fletcher Street (informational presentation held in December, 2025), the Lowell Community Charter School smokestack and expansion project on Middlesex Street (informational presentations held in July and November, 2025), North Canal Housing Redevelopment (informational presentation being held at this meeting), new mixed use construction at 291 and 341 Jackson Street (informational presentation being held at this meeting), and demolition/new residential construction at 564 Dutton Street and 22 Fletcher Street (informational presentation TBD),

Since the start of FY26 on July 1, applications are running even with FY25 when compared with the same time period.

2025 Development Numbers:

The Board approved over \$30.5 million in development projects via 47 applications in the 2025 calendar year (equal with 2024) which included 114 new housing units. The majority of the projects were in the Downtown Lowell Historic District with one project each in the Acre Neighborhood District, Belvidere Neighborhood District, and the Tyler Park Neighborhood District.

Doors Open Lowell:

Planning for the 21st Doors Open Lowell has begun which will be held on Saturday, May 9 during National

Preservation Month. The building roster has started to be populated while sponsors have begun to be secured through the Lowell Heritage Partnership. Coordination with vendors for various products including banners and stickers is also occurring while design services have been secured for the program guide. Finally, all event social media platforms and website have been updated to reflect the 2026 event.

State Tax Credit Support Letters:

Six applications for a variety of Lowell projects submitted for the January round of State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits administered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and support letters were provided for each. Projects included the Jacob Rogers House (285 Andover Street), Massachusetts Mills Main Power House and Boiler House (Bridge Street), Wyman's Exchange (9 Central Street), Bigelow-Lowell Picker and Power House (246.1 Market Street), and the Hildreth Building (45 Merrimack Street).

733 Broadway Street Ribbon Cutting:

A ribbon cutting event was held on December 16 for 733 Broadway Street and 52 new affordable housing units. A combination of historic rehabilitation and new construction, the project is located in the Downtown Lowell Historic District and was approved by the Board on March 14, 2022. Yovani-Baez Rose, Troy Depeiza, and the Administrator were in attendance.

UMass-Lowell City and the Environment Class:

The Administrator presented a session on Lowell's architectural styles, preservation, and design on February 4 for Allison Lamey's City and the Environment class at UMass-Lowell. Allison is the former Economic Development Director for the City, immediate past Director of the Lowell Plan and the Lowell Development & Financial Corporation, and currently works at DCAMM at the Commonwealth. The class consisted of a blend of students studying architecture, environmental sciences, and liberal arts as well as a mix of engineering and computer science students taking the course as an elective, so it was a diverse group.

Social Media:

Social media continues to be a very popular and effective community engagement and outreach tool for the Board and is in many aspects, the cornerstone of those efforts. The Board's Facebook page has 10,030 followers, while individual posts continue to reach thousands and the page is seen as one of the most comprehensive, timely, and detailed municipal historic preservation pages in the state and nationally. Other platforms include Instagram (1,942) and Pinterest (40 followers).

Next Meeting:

The Board's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 9, 2026 in the Mayor's Reception Room.

T. Depeiza commented that he is familiar with both design teams from the informational presentations and that they do good work, they're really good architects. He said that both sites are complex but they were able to execute the planning, scale, and architecture and agreed with everyone's comments.

The Chair noted that having over 10,000 Facebook followers is a great milestone.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

By Y. Baez-Rose, seconded by L. Walker, to:

Adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Unanimously approved, 6-0.

ATTEST: _____
Stephen R. Stowell, Administrator