



Michael Q. Geary
City Clerk

Lowell City Council

Zoning SC Meeting Minutes

JOINT WITH NEIGHBORHOODS SC

Date: March 5, 2026
Time: 6:00 PM
Location: City Council Chamber/Zoom (Hybrid)
375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA

PRESENT:

Present on Roll Call were (Zoning – C. McDonough, C. Descoteaux, C. Scott) (Neighborhoods – C. Scott, C. Descoteaux, C. Chau (6:06 PM)).

Also present were Camilo Espitia (DPD), Dylan Ricker (DPD) and Nels Nelson (Consultant – CommunityScale).

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Chairman McDonough called the meeting noting attendance.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

C. McDonough introduced Mr. Espitia who recognized his team and consultant, Mr. Nelson. Mr. Espitia noted the purpose of the zoning review and the parameters of the services as well as the many conversations that will take place. Mr. Espitia noted the many resources to be used to provide feedback from all partners and he reviewed the process. Mr. Nelson noted the timeline of the effort indicating a 2026 finish date. Mr. Nelson noted goals would align with Lowell Forward goals which would include update and modernization of the code; prevention of zoning by variance; and updating of table of uses so that all builders are subject to same requirements. Mr. Nelson noted that there are many parcels which



currently do not comply with zoning and that he would welcome all input from the subcommittee.

C. McDonough opened meeting to public. Belinda Juran, as a resident, commented on the audit and the need for further review and analysis from the City and the community. Ms. Juran commented on the issue of non-conforming lots noting that the majority are in compliance and that continued diversity in the neighborhoods is important. Jerry Frechette, Planning Board member, commented on prior rezoning noting the character of diversity in the neighborhoods. Mr. Frechette noted the importance of the process and that the final result should be easily understood by all.

C. Descoteaux commented on the involvement of the Front Runner Program as well as the alignment with the Lowell Forward Plan. C. Scott referenced how lot size affects parking in the area. Mr. Espitia noted different approaches to assist with parking in dense areas. C. Scott questioned process of the rezoning plan. Mr. Espitia noted an element of the process was the establishment of a steering committee to assist going through the various stages. C. McDonough noted the best approach is by way of diversity in each neighborhood. C. Chau outlined the needs of different neighborhoods. C. Chau questioned use of variances. Mr. Ricker outlined that process noting it was available to all property owners. C. Chau questioned the current state regulations regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU). Mr. Ricker noted those state regulations. C. McDonough noted concern with ensuring diversity and that certain areas are not made denser than they currently are. Mr. Nelson noted the feedback from the community will be vital. C. Scott noted session was informational and that no action is requested or needed at this point.



ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to Adjourn by C. Descoteau, seconded by C. Chau. So Voted.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Michael Geary, City Clerk.