



City of Lowell - Planning Board

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 23, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

Mayor's Reception Room, 2nd Floor, City Hall

City of Lowell, 375 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA

Remote Participation Optional via Zoom

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For a recording of the meeting, visit www.ltc.org

Members Present

Chairman Linnehan

Vice Chair Frechette

Member Cheng

Member Tenczar

Member Walker

Associate Member Sar

Members Absent

Associate Member Cardoso Silva

Others Present

Mary Brundage, Associate Planner

A quorum of the Board was present. Chairman Linnehan called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

I. Minutes for Approval

4/6/2026

G. Frechette motioned to approve the minutes. T. Linnehan seconded. Motion passed unanimously, (5-0).

II. Continued Business

Special Permit - 260 High Street, 01852

The Lowell Planning Board will hold a public hearing to hear all interested persons relative to an application by Quynh Quach to open an adult day care facility at 260 High Street. The subject property is in the Urban Mixed-Use (UMU) zoning district. The proposal requires a Special Permit per Article 12.3 for the use.

On Behalf:

Quynh Quach, 260 High Street

Q. Quach stated that she is a pharmacist and opened a pharmacy in 2021 at this location. She then got a permit for a package had been in 2022. She explained that she wanted to convert the package store to an adult day care. The program would provide structured programs for older adults and would be in compliance with applicable regulations and be respectful to the neighborhood.

Speaking in Favor:

Harini Aiyer, 80 Smith Street

H. Aiyer was speaking in her capacity as a candidate for state representative in the 17th District that includes Belvidere, Downtown and South Lowell. She stated that there was a need for health clinics in the area that can prevent older people getting to the point where they need an ambulance and have to depend on a health care system that is already pressured. It would be a way to have health practitioners monitor and help seniors. It would prevent accidents or complications of chronic illnesses and save money by not going to the emergency room.

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

G. Frechette asked the applicant if she had received the comment dated March 2nd. He stated the transportation comments regarding the day-to-day operation, how the seniors will be arriving, and where staff parking would be located. In speaking with people with experience in adult day care, he understands that most of the clients would be dropped off by a van or driving themselves there.

Q. Quach responded that transportation will be provided by van pick up. She also owns a non-emergency transportation company. Participants would need to use their own car. Parking would be in front of the facility. Employees would park down the street at the Lower Locks garage and be reimbursed 50% on parking fees.

G. Frechette stated that traffic would more controlled than the existing use as a package store where people are currently backing out onto High Street. He sees the synergy with the pharmacy. It's a challenging spot but would be with any kind of retail business there.

C. Cheng expressed similar concerns. He suggested to make it condition to require the business to provide transportation. He said it would be a good service to the community.

D. Tenczar stated that he liked the business but hated the location. Not sure how long having employee parking at Lower Locks would last. His biggest concern was with safety.

L. Walker shared similar concerns with parking, but any business would struggle with the high traffic and limited parking there. She asked about customers coming into the pharmacy at the same time.

Q. Quach responded that she would change her pharmacy hour to open at 9AM. She stated that the majority of her pharmacy business is seniors who she delivers to after store hours. She may have one or two patients who come into the business.

T. Linnehan stated that if you pull in the van that it would have to back onto Andover Street. He was concerned about having a van trying to back onto Andover Street with the volume of traffic.

T. Sar had the same concerns with traffic.

Q. Quach responded that she would have someone there to assist with slowing down traffic when the van is going out.

T. Linnehan asked about how many van trips.

Q. Quach responded that would be a total of 24 participants with 2 vans.

G. Frechette asked about how lunches would be served.

Q. Quach responded that she would work with a dietician and have local restaurants drop off. No food preparation would be done at the location.

G. Frechette commented that the business would be mostly controlled since the clients would be there all day and then go home at night. What over businesses could go there? This would fill in a need. The most controlled. They are there all day. What retail business could in there? Would fill in a need. He suggested a condition to have clients transported to and from the facility or in walking distance.

D. Tenczar appreciated the applicant's dedication. Still feels that is a lousy location but is willing to give it a try given the clientele.

C. Cheng asked about the business hours.

Q. Quach answered that it would Monday through Friday with the first van coming in at 9 AM and moving out around 2 PM.

C. Cheng mentioned rush hour traffic can be difficult.

Q. Quach stated that by 9 AM traffic is quieted down.

C. Cheng asked about expanded at that location.

Q. Quach stated that she would look for a bigger space if she has more than 24 clients, maximum capacity would be 30.

C. Cheng asked if it would be okay to condition that the cap would be 30 participants.

Q. Quach agreed.

C. Cheng asked about traffic safety training.

Q. Quach said that she had safety training for non-emergency vehicles.

C. Cheng asked about the fire and building code.

Q. Quach said that the architect working on code analysis. She said she would be complaint with fire department.

T. Linnehan stated that an automatic fire sprinkler system and smoke detectors need to be placed and maintained with power back up in order to receive a building permit.

M. Brundage confirmed that the applicant will need to go for a site plan review approval.

Motion:

G. Frechette motioned to approve the Special Permit with the following conditions:

1. The owner/operator will provide transportation for the clients of adult day care.
2. The adult day care will not exceed 30 clients.
3. Employees of the adult day care must park offsite.
4. The owner/operator will provide assistance in the egress and the entry of the daycare vans.

L. Walker seconded. Motion passed unanimously, (5-0).

III. New Business

IV. Other Business

Preliminary Subdivision – 2 Prince Avenue (1 Markley Way) 01852

The Dude's Place, LLC has applied to the Lowell Planning Board seeking a preliminary subdivision approval to split the lot at 2 Prince Avenue (1 Markley Way).

On Behalf:

Antonio Moura, engineer, Stantec

Daniel Bailey, attorney, Pierce Atwood

A. Moura presented the plan. The subdivision is taking the three parcels: 2 Prince Avenue, 56 Newhall Street and 48 Newhall Street and subdivide them into 4 parcels and propose a new private subdivision roadway off of Newhall Street. He stated that the plan meets the requirements for a preliminary subdivision and zoning; and will be required to come back to Planning Board for a Definitive Subdivision approval. Additional details requested on the comment memo regarding landscape, utilities, wastewater, water, engineering, etc. will be incorporated into the Definitive Subdivision plan.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

Holly Flynn, 34 Newhall Street

H. Flynn stated she is a member of Honest Future for Lowell and is opposing the subdivision plans. She questioned the moving the lot line and how it will impact the entrance to the condos at her building. It will negatively affect 50 residents, and the existing line should remain. She mentioned concerns about the proposed driveway on Newhall Streets as it is a curved narrow road with no sidewalks and poses a safety hazard. Asked about the what the plan is for that.

Jake Fortes, 36 Iowa Street

J. Fortes stated he represents Honest Future for Lowell. He asked for transparency on this project. He expressed concerns about the proposed road on Newhall St. and whether is contaminated soil underneath that and noted that they had to replace the trees repeatedly. He urged the need for soil sampling. He asked what the proposed lots 1, 3, and 4 are for. Lot 2 is where the data center is located.

Mary Wambui, 668 Princeton Street, #416

M. Wambui stated that the subdivision should not be approved, that can be used as a strategy for expansion. She expressed concerns that the land use could be backdoor way for industrial expansion and violates the spirit of the current data center moratorium. She stated that the company in question has a history of non-compliance. She stated concerns about the expansion of diesel infrastructure and impact on public health.

Sarah Lapp, 200 Market Street, #416

S. Lapp stated she was a member of 350 Mass of Greater Lowell, a climate justice and environmental organization that advocates for residents of the City. She shared the same concerns regarding soil and the data center. She asked for more transparency.

Ron Peachtree, 240 Beacon Street

R. Peachtree stated that he has worked in the data center business and is familiar on how they operate. He urged for more testing regarding what potentially is going downstream toward the school.

Sean McDonough, 61 Market Street, #3D

S. McDonough asked about the preliminary subdivision and data center moratorium. He said that it appears as a layman that this might look an expansion of the data center. His hope would be that the company would disclose that they are not expanding the data center and not violating the data center moratorium.

Kim Scott, 27 Commonwealth Ave.

K. Scott asked for transparency and what the plans are for.

Harini Aiyer, 80 Smith Street

H. Aiyer asked what the company is doing on all the issues going on before expanding. She asked about the water consumption and impact on the neighbors. She noted that water rates have gone up at her condo association.

Nancy Pappas, 46 Staveley Street

N. Pappas mentioned she can see the work going on across the river. She expressed concerns about who is overseeing the construction and where is the dirt being hauled away.

H. Aiyer asked about the trees on Newhall Street that provide shade and if they would be cut if the entrance gets relocated.

Discussion:

A. Moura responded that they are proposing new street trees on the additional street they are proposing to mitigate any loss of trees on Newhall Street. He stated he does not have a lot of information on the use of the parcels other than the applicant is still trying to determine what is the best use of the parcels. He stated that once they decided to what they are going to do with those parcels, they would have to go back to the Board with a detailed site plan and address concerns and comments.

T. Linnehan stated before the site plan, that would have to come to the Board for a definitive subdivision plan approval. For site plan review, the Board would have to look at water, contamination, traffic and all the other mitigating circumstances. Even with the data center moratorium in effect that does not affect the preliminary subdivision.

A. Moura agreed and stated he can't speak on past or future projects just the preliminary subdivision before the Board now.

T. Linnehan stated that we know that is zoned light industrial and if they wanted to change that zone, it would have to go through City Council. He stated that for the preliminary subdivision that applicant does not have to tell us what they are putting there. If they wanted to develop something, then they would have to come for a site plan or special permit. What the Board needs to consider is if the applicant met the compliance requirements for the preliminary subdivision. He reviewed those requirements and stated that it meets all the criteria from the various city departments.

C. Cheng asked for clarification on lot line changes on Newhall Street and how it will affect the access easement.

A. Moura responded that the access easement will carryover with the lots, so the access easement won't change. The subdivision will not change any of that.

C. Cheng asked for further clarification.

A. Moura pointed out it on the plan for the Board.

C. Cheng asked about sight lines on the road.

A. Moura stated that will be part of definitive subdivision process.

D. Tenczar stated his frustration with the lack of transparency from the applicant and the preliminary subdivision plan process. He expressed concerns about potential contaminated soil on the site and water consumption.

L. Walker asked if this would go against the moratorium.

D. Bailey stated that it would not have any effect on the moratorium.

L. Walker asked if the Board could ask what the land use is according to Section 2.A.1 of the Subdivision Regulations under the Preliminary Plan.

D. Bailey responded that it's industrial and further explained that the preliminary subdivision process is determine what flexibility there is for further subdivision. He mentioned that in regard to testing for contamination that it's all done under the supervision of a licensed site professional for the MA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

L. Walker reiterated that she thinks the Board has the right to know what the proposed use is.

T. Linnehan answered in his opinion that it's zoned industrial, and they say going to put industrial in, that answers the question. He explained that the preliminary subdivision plan process is allowed through the state and the City. The applicant can opt in to come in for a preliminary or they can go directly to a definitive subdivision which they have to answer a lot more questions.

G. Frechette stated that this is more of an administrative process.

T. Linnehan stated that some subdivisions qualify for the ANR process under Mass. General Law and don't come before the planning board if they meet the criteria.

G. Frechette stated that the use would be addressed if it required a special permit, site plan review or definitive subdivision approval. That the Board would have more latitude in those applications.

H. Aiyer asked about getting a commitment from the applicant not to do anything until the next steps.

T. Linnehan stated that the Board has recommended to City Council for follow through enforcement on conditions the Board sets. He mentioned that the Board cannot use past experiences with an applicant as a basis to deny an application if they meet all the criteria of zoning.

N. Pappas asked about oversight on Markley creating different LLCs and buying property.

T. Linnehan responded that there is none; anyone can buy a piece of property under any name and it's legal. She asked about how oversees the soil. T. Linnehan responded that the State does, that the DEP would get involved if there is contamination. He further explained the purpose of zoning and that the preliminary subdivision approval does not give the applicant permission to do anything at this point. He again explained that the applicant would have go back for a definitive subdivision and site plan approval.

G. Frechette clarified that certain uses are allowed by right within the light industrial zone and may not necessarily come before the Board unless a site plan review is required.

C. Cheng stated that regarding landscaping that there isn't a specific permit unless it's a contaminated site in which they would have to follow the Mass. contingency plans. If there is suspected soil contamination, MA DEP would be responsible to enforce the law. In terms of soil removal, the building inspector would likely determine if it's just landscaping or if they need a permit.

Motion:

T. Linnehan motioned to approve the preliminary subdivision. G. Frechette seconded. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Preliminary Subdivision – 45 Bolt Street, 01852

Meadowbolt LLC has applied to the Lowell Planning Board seeking a preliminary subdivision approval to split the lot at 45 Bolt Street.

On Behalf:

Antonio Moura, engineer, Stantec

Daniel Bailey, attorney, Pierce Atwood

A. Moura presented the subdivision plan; the property will be subdivided into two lots plus a private subdivision roadway. He stated that the application complies with the subdivision rules and regulations along with the zoning ordinance. He pointed out that there is a small area on the site that has restriction on the use due to previous contamination. The use would be restricted to commercial, retail or industrial uses. That area would comply with the regulations of the Mass. contingency plan under the supervision of a licensed site professional. Any excavation would have to comply with the standards for soil management and health and safety. Details regarding landscaping, utilities, stormwater and water would be addressed in the definitive subdivision plan.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

Jake Fortes, 36 Iowa Street

J. Fortes mentioned that someone was injecting something in the ground behind his house, probably to help the arborvitaes that are dying on the site. He observed a woman taking soil samples on Bolt Street. He talked about his concerns with soil contamination and the schools in the area.

Nancy Pappas, 46 Staveley Street

N. Pappas expressed concerns with light and noise pollution and soil contamination.

Mary Wambui, 668 Princeton Street, #416

M. Wambui expressed concerns that the DEP won't necessarily protect people from pollution.

Ricardo Solis, 187 Fletcher Street

R. Solis has experienced paint smells in the area and implored the Board to think about the children and residents.

Harini Aiyer, 80 Smith Street

H. Aiyer stated regarding the waste coming out the data center. There is a lot of coolant and other chemicals used to keep the cooling towers clean and prevent bacterial fungal growth. Also, PFAS contamination can be an issue.

Holly Flynn, 34 Newhall Street

H. Flynn asked about testing already being done by the site professionals at Markley.

D. Bailey responded that the information is available on DEP website where they keep a list of all reported sites. He further explained with the restricted use that typical commercial use is allowed but residential, daycare, vegetable gardening, etc. would not be allowed. For digging in the contaminated soils would require a soil management plan under the supervision of a licensed site professional.

T. Linnehan asked if the City gets involved.

D. Bailey responded that typically the Board of Health gets copied on the activity and use limitations.

Discussion:

D. Tenczar stated he heard the concerns regarding soil contamination. He encouraged the community to be vigilant.

C. Cheng asked if the demolition of the building would that be addressed on the definitive subdivision plan.

A. Moura responded that there would be a general note in the plan, and it would require a permit from the building inspector.

C. Cheng asked for clarification on the where the restricted use location. He asked if there is a soil management plan required that it could be a condition on the definitive subdivision.

A. Moura was agreeable to that.

T. Sar acknowledged the comments and that the Board will keep in mind when the time comes.

Motion:

C. Cheng motioned to approve the preliminary subdivision. G. Frechette seconded. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

V. Further Comments from Planning Board Members

G. Frechette mentioned that he would like to have a discussion to review the At-Home at Greater Lowell regional housing plan and the strategies within that plan at the next meeting.

VI. Adjournment

D. Tenczar motioned to adjourn. G. Frechette seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 PM