

**LOWELL HISTORIC BOARD
MINUTES
Mayor's Reception Room, Lowell City Hall
June 8, 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, Vice Chair Jeffrey Harris, Yovani Baez-Rose, Troy Depeiza, Aurora Erickson, Deborah Belanger, Gray Fitzsimons, Lucia Walker

Members Absent:

Others Present: Dylan Ricker, Administrator

The following represents the actions taken by the Historic Board at the 6/8/26 meeting.

Chair Villaras called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

G. Villaras motioned to suspend the rules to take items out of order, L. Walker seconded. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

1. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. DLHD-26-31: 281 and 463 Moody Street

An application for a Historic Permit has been submitted by New North Canal LLC for the demolition of 14 D-rated inconsistent buildings (ca. 1969) and construction of one four-story residential building, one five-story residential building, and associated site improvements pursuant to the Lowell Historic District Act (Chapter 566, Acts of 1983).

On Behalf:

Catherine Flood, Applicant's Representative

C. Flood said the applicant has obtained Planning and Zoning Board approval for the project. C. Flood said they previously appeared before the Board and those plans were modified based on Board feedback. C. Flood explained the current conditions, and said the site would have only 1 building per site after work is complete.

Maura Tsongas, Applicant's Rep

Dan Rivera, Applicant

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

G. Fitzsimons and T. Depeiza said they had no comments on the revisions and thanked the applicant for their revisions.

Y. Baez-Rose thanked the applicant for the revisions. Y. Baez-Rose said the development adds a lot to the streetscape and the scale will still create the community that exists on site right now. Y. Baez-Rose expressed support.

J. Harris thanked the applicant for their revisions.

D. Belanger expressed support.

G. Villaras recommend a motion for review of site materials, and other details that have not been refined yet.

Motion:

Y. Baez-Rose motioned to issue the Historic Permit with the following condition:

- (1) Any changes to exterior materials, finishes, or sizes, or external equipment shall require review and approval from the Historic Board Administrator.

The motion was seconded by G. Fitzsimons. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

B. DLHD-26-45: 256B Market Street

An application for a Historic Permit has been submitted by Wexford Development, LLC. The applicant is seeking to construct a new commercial building on the lot at 256B Market Street, also known as Parcel 15 – Hamilton Canal District pursuant to the Lowell Historic District Act (Chapter 566, Acts of 1983).

On Behalf:

Joe Regan, Applicant

J. Regan noted they are building a manufacturing facility which has a history in Lowell.

Stephanie Valerio, Applicant's Representative

Tim Geiger, Applicant's Representative

Chris Qualls, Applicant's Representative

C. Qualls explained the site layout. C. Qualls presented the architectural plans, and said the intent was to be responsive to the nearby mills. C. Qualls said they wanted to introduce a modern feel as well. C. Qualls said the bricks will be cast into the concrete panels. C. Qualls said there will be terra cotta inlaid for a modern feel. C. Qualls said there will be glazing with spandrel panels. C. Qualls said the facility is primarily manufacturing. C. Qualls said they would add a glazing that prevents sight to the interior but meets the glazing requirements. C. Qualls explained each elevation. C. Qualls explained the materials for the building. C. Qualls explained the blend of brick to be used which was influenced by nearby buildings.

Conor Nagle, Applicant's Engineer

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

G. Villaras said the property design effectively reconciles both the nearby mill buildings and the newer developments in the HCD. G. Villaras said the design fits well with the space.

D. Belanger complimented the terra cotta which helps break up the building.

Y. Baez-Rose noted Francis St has not been officially accepted, but it is currently between the parcel and the HCD garage and there are plans to accept the street that will go before the Council.

Y. Baez-Rose expressed support for the proposal and noted the security concerns at the site and said the design adequately meets the form-based code and provides a good design while still maintaining the necessary security. Y. Baez-Rose noted this is the first building that people will see when they enter the district in this direction and expressed support for the design.

J. Harris asked about the security fencing shown on 2 of the facades. C. Qualls said the fencing will be 8 ft tall, black wrought iron style fencing. J. Harris asked how far from the building it will be. C. Qualls said 2.5 feet from the building. C. Qualls said the fencing is on the opposite side of the building from the canal. S. Valerio said the fencing provides an additional layer of security. J. Harris asked if the concern is related to people getting access to the 1st story of the building. S. Valerio confirmed.

J. Harris asked for the materials of the faux windows. C. Qualls said the window is a 2-inch panel and concrete. S. Valerio said they serve as a way to meet form-based code and meet the engineering requirements for their facility. J. Harris said the treatment does a good job serving as a window opening. J. Harris asked why a fence would also be needed for security in addition to the concrete wall. S. Valerio said the use requires additional layers of protection and the fence is needed at this location but not others. S. Valerio said the fence is to prevent anyone from touching the building or possibly putting a listening device on the building. J. Harris said he'd like to see the detail of the fencing. J. Harris expressed concern about trash or leaves collecting between the building and fencing. S. Valerio said they have a groundskeeper that will be responsible for this daily. S. Valerio said there will be gates within fencing allowing groundskeeper access.

J. Harris said the building relates well to nearby buildings. J. Harris expressed support for the terra cotta and design relating well to nearby mill buildings. J. Harris asked if the terra cotta panels are on the same plane as windows. C. Qualls said they are setback 0.5 inches from brick face and the windows are an additional 1.5 inches setback. J. Harris asked about the screening for the HVAC equipment. C. Qualls said there is an enclosed penthouse with horizontal metal panels, and there will be horizontal screening louvers for the equipment. J. Harris noted the equipment will be visible from Dutton St and recommended adding vertical elements along the top to relate well to the windows. C. Qualls said they can look into this.

T. Depeiza expressed support for the design of the building, and says it captures the modern industrial feel while relating to the nearby buildings.

G. Fitzsimons agreed with fellow Board members, and said the design fits in well with the Market Mills.

A. Erickson asked whether there is pedestrian access. S. Valerio confirmed there is a sidewalk. C. Qualls said the sidewalk runs around the building with a slight sidewalk along the access drive. C. Qualls said there is no sidewalk along the rear. C. Qualls added there is a sidewalk along the canal. A. Erickson said she is glad sidewalks are provided on the site. A. Erickson added that for visitors to the national park this will be one of the first buildings they see. A. Erickson said the building compliments the other buildings in the area and expressed support for the color of the building. A. Erickson said she would also like more information about the fence.

J. Harris asked about the screening for the generator area. C. Qualls said they would use the same or similar horizontal panels which will be either 8 ft or 10 ft. J. Harris said he'd like to see the material. C. Qualls agreed.

Y. Baez-Rose clarified the items they requested details on were the fencing, materials on roof and generator screening both panels and louvers. J. Harris said they would like bollard design too, and design for the seating area and flagpole near the main entrance.

D. Belanger expressed support for the design.

L. Walker agreed with colleagues and expressed support for the design. L. Walker asked about the Southeast elevation not carrying the brick up all the way. C. Qualls said they were trying to get more glass into the building. C. Qualls said they were reviewing the office environment and wanted to get more natural light in the area.

Y. Baez-Rose asked about the loading dock door and said they should get details on as well.

Motion:

Y. Baez-Rose motioned to issue the Historic Permit with the following conditions.

(1) The applicant shall submit details on the design, materials and color for the proposed fencing, screening louvers to be used for equipment screening on the roof and for the generators, bollards, seating area, flagpole area, and loading dock.

J. Harris seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, (8-0).

2. MINUTES

Approval of the Minutes of April 13, 2026.

J. Harris motioned to approve, the motion was seconded by L. Walker. The motion passed (7-0-1) with Y. Baez-Rose abstaining.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Informational Presentation: 5.1 Thorndike Street

This item was taken out of order and heard 1st at the meeting.

On Behalf:

Kevin Murphy, Applicant's Rep

K. Murphy said they were previously at the Historic Board and are returning with new plans. K. Murphy explained the unit mix. K. Murphy said S. Stowell provided input on the proposal and met with the City Manager at the site. K. Murphy said there may need infrastructure improvements. K. Murphy explained the relief required for the project.

Matt Hamor, Applicant's Engineer

M. Hamor explained the site layout and existing conditions of the site. M. Hamor explained the proposal and scope of work. M. Hamor explained the architectural elements of the building. M. Hamor explained the elevations. M. Hamor said the building will have anderson windows, a mix of hardie plank and hardie siding, and stone on the facade. M. Hamor said the siding would have a mixture of colors. M. Hamor said they will use textured and smooth azek trim. M. Hamor explained the floor plans. M. Hamor presented exhibits showing the building from different locations throughout City.

Discussion:

A. Erickson asked whether the color of the building was the same on both sides of the building. M. Hamor said the color is different on each side. It is red brick on one side and more beige on the other. A. Erickson asked why beige was chosen. M. Hamor said it was chosen by Gavin and Sullivan based on their experience with S. Stowell. M. Hamor offered to do a site visit to show the site. K. Murphy said Molly Kay's was around this location.

G. Fitzsimons asked about the entrance to the site and asked about the narrow driveway. G. Fitzsimons asked if there will need to be changes to accommodate vehicles. M. Hamor said he will need Fire Department approval and must provide a sufficient turnaround for safe access. M. Hamor said they would need to make alterations.

D. Belanger asked how many parking spaces there are. K. Murphy said there would be 35. M. Hamor said off-street parking is not required per TOD regulations, and sited nearby garages.

T. Depeiza asked about the hardie plank siding and where it would be located on the facade. M. Hamor said there is a detail on the drawings showing where each material is located and said they are differentiated by color and said there are 4 different hardie plank locations.

D. Belanger asked if the top floor would be apartments, M. Hamor confirmed and said they will all be market rate apartments.

J. Harris cited the concerns about the height in the historic context from the past meeting and asked if the height had been altered. M. Hamor said it had not been altered due to the economics due to costs for steel to construct the building. J. Harris noted the site is unusual in the Historic District given its location and elevation of the site relative to other properties. J. Harris said the building is larger in scale than other buildings in the Historic District.

M. Hamor compared the building to the judicial center in scale. J. Harris said a section view going down from Middlesex St across the canal to see the relative height in comparison to the Western Ave Mill would've been helpful. M. Hamor said it is difficult to provide the exact perspective because there are buildings in the way. J. Harris expressed concerns about the scale of the building and as it relates to the Historic District. J. Harris said the Board rarely sees buildings higher than 6 stories. M. Hamor sited the Judicial Center, and J. Harris noted this did not require Historic Board approval. J. Harris said he does not believe the scale of the building meets the Historic Board standards. J. Harris said the facade treatment was an improvement, but the facade is still a little busy. J. Harris said the facade should be refined.

G. Villaras thanked the applicant for the revision, and expressed support for the change of colors and materials.

D. Belanger asked if the Boys and Girls Club is building up. Y. Baez-Rose said they are not going up.

B. Informational Presentation: 412 Merrimack Street

This item was taken order and heard 2nd at the meeting.

On Behalf:

Owen Kelly, Applicant

O. Kelly said they are looking to put in a 500-seat event space and will be restoring the space to its original features. O. Kelly said they would be adding a bar and restaurant and shared restaurant space. O. Kelly said they will close on the property soon, and explained the cost of the project.

O. Kelly explained the funding breakdown. O. Kelly said they will finance about 40% of the project. O. Kelly said they are beginning phase 1 this summer. O. Kelly said they will use Davinci slate roof, and will be doing targeted masonry repair and repointing, and will begin replacing windows starting with windows in most need of replacement.

O. Kelly explained the floor plans. O. Kelly presented renderings. O. Kelly said original fencing will be maintained.

Dennis McCarthy, Applicant's Representative

D. McCarthy thanked the Historic Board. D. McCarthy said they have a permit for roofing and masonry with masonry expected to start in July with roofing in August. D. McCarthy said they have been speaking with contractors with the goal of beginning work on the interior. D. McCarthy said they have spent their own money starting to fix leaks and do other necessary work.

Discussion:

G. Villaras noted the applicant can continue to work with staff, and the Board on the project. D. McCarthy said their primary contractor is experienced.

J. Harris said it would be helpful for the Board to review the materials to confirm they are appropriate. D. McCarthy agreed.

C. Board Member Items/Inquiries

G. Fitzsimons expressed concern about the dismissal of S. Stowell and asked about voting to appoint a new Historic Board Administrator. Y. Baez-Rose said the legislation states that the role is a City of Lowell employee and decision was made in accordance with these rules. Y. Baez-Rose explained that a memo was sent out explaining Board administration. G. Fitzsimons said a vote should be placed on the Historic Board agenda. Y. Baez-Rose said it would. G. Villaras said this can be reviewed at the July meeting. G. Villaras said the process can be reviewed at the July meeting. Y. Baez-Rose noted the Board cannot hire City employees. Y. Baez-Rose said there can be discussion about the administration processes. G. Fitzsimons said he believed City Manager appointed an administrator to be approved by the Historic Board. G. Villaras recommended people come up with questions so we can get clarity at the July meeting.

D. McCarthy asked how the Board would like the materials presented before the Board. G. Villaras said they should work with D. Ricker and if additional assistance is necessary D. Ricker will share with the Historic Board.

4. ADJOURNMENT

G. Villaras motioned to adjourn, L. Walker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, (8-0). The time was 7:35pm.