



City of Lowell - Planning Board

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 24, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

City Council Chamber, 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 Walker

Member Tenczar

Associate Member Sar

Members Absent

Associate Member Cardoso Silva

Others Present

Mary A. 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

8/17/2026 Meeting Minutes

J. Frechette commented that Peter did a good job with the minutes given the amount of material to cover.

J. Frechette motioned to approve the minutes. D. Tenczar seconded. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

9/10/2026 Meeting Minutes

T. Linnehan motioned to approve the minutes. C. Cheng seconded. The vote was unanimous (3-0-3) with J. Frechette, L. Walker, and D. Tenczar abstaining.

II. Continued Business

Definitive Subdivision – 90 Bolt Street, 01852

Meadowbolt, LLC has applied to the Lowell Planning Board seeking Definitive Subdivision approval to split the existing lot at 90 Bolt Street into (2) lots. The subject property is located in the Light Industrial (LI) zoning district. The proposal requires Definitive Subdivision approval from the Planning Board under Lowell's Subdivision of Land Regulations.

On Behalf:

Antonio Moura, Santec Consulting

A. Moura presented the subdivision plans. The preliminary plan approval was obtained from the Planning Board on April 6. He stated they received the staff memo after the definitive subdivision plan was submitted with some department comments. The comment memo states that the definitive plan application meets the compliance requirements for a definitive subdivision plan in the City of Lowell. He stated that some of the proposed conditions are relatively straightforward and reasonable. He stated that a response to those comments was submitted. He noted that no comments were received from the building, economic development fire, police, solid waste and recycling, sustainability and the transportation departments. The planning department requested two additional shade trees along Bolt St., the revised plans submitted last week shows a total of four trees, two on either side of the proposed subdivision. Notes were included on the revised plan to show documentation to establish the long-term ownership and maintenance responsibilities for Bolt Road and for private sewer, drainage and stormwater management systems. The document also identifies the parties responsible for inspection, maintenance, repair and replacement of shared private infrastructure following the sale of any individual lots. A. Moura noted that the infiltration rate is based on anticipated on-site soils based on infiltration value that is published in Massachusetts stormwater handbook. Prior to construction, the applicant will coordinate with the wastewater department to obtain the stormwater permit and perform any additional soils testing if required. The documentation of the soil analysis will be part of that process. Regarding the sewer connection, the applicant had met with wastewater to coordinate details and added it to the revised plans. A. Moura clarified that the sidewalk is private and the city will bear no maintenance responsibilities. The applicant had met with the water department and incorporated their comments into the plans.

A. Moura showed on the plans where the subdivision would occur. He confirmed that the lots conform to the city zoning standards for lot size in the light industrial district. There's a proposed stormwater basin that has been designed to accept roadway runoff. Any development that occurs on individual lots will be the responsibility of the individual lot owner. Any development that occurs on those lots would have to come back to the Board for Site Plan approval.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

Emily Gertenbach, 124 Park Avenue East

E. Gertenbach stated that her home is within a half mile with the current data center. She stated that she can hear the data center. Having grown up near Three-Mile Island, she is aware of the lasting impacts that industrial contamination can have. There are already issues expressed by the residents living directly around the existing data center. She stated that this is the start of the business scaling up

that is being downplayed by Markley and the city. She expressed that she was disappointed the city has approved this expansion and is continuing to allow demolition and redevelopment during the moratorium. She mentioned that the Markley Group said that the Lowell facility is not going to be used for generative AI but their website states that the Markley experience is now available for generative AI workloads.

Chris Romero, 329 Bridge St.

C. Romero stated that he does not agree with this project and urged the Board and residents to speak up.

Jonathon Grossman, 83 Varnum Ave.

J. Grossman stated that given that this is a controversial operation that it would be helpful to have representatives of the company explain what they are planning to do with the site.

Alex Solange, 15 Robinson St.

A. Solange stated that he also wanted to know the applicant is doing with the site. He stated that the company has refused to discuss their plans. He expressed concerns about the site being contaminated and the planning board not being able to inspect the site.

Harinia Ayer, 80 Smith St.

H. Ayer ask if this was a continuation from July to answer all questions from that meeting. T. Linnehan confirmed that it was. H. Ayer asked if the applicant had answered all questions, is there any legal right for the Planning Board to deny the application. T. Linnehan responded that they receive a memo from staff and the first question is that they meet the criteria. If it does, then it goes to all the city departments, and the memo goes back to the Board. Given the short notice on the memo, a continuance was granted to allow the applicant to respond to the comments. Now that the Board got feedback that the applicant is agreeing to the conditions the city is requesting them to do; they have fulfilled their obligation, and the Board cannot hold the applicant back from dividing into two subdivisions.

H. Ayer stated that she appreciated the Board doing their jobs. She said that it seems like there is a slow inexorable movement to the expansion of the data center and we don't what is happening. She wanted to ensure that this does not invalidate the moratorium. She asked what a trigger for the residents would be to know that that the applicant would break the moratorium or that they were going to build. T. Linnehan responded that the applicant would have to come back for a site plan. The site plan has a different set of requirements but would go through the same process. He stated the applicant had filed preliminary subdivision plans prior to the moratorium. The city law department has stated that the moratorium does not affect them. While it can be inferred what the company is going to do with the plans, the Board does not know for sure. H. Ayer asked what recourse residents has in order to have their voices be heard. T. Linnehan responded the applicant would come back before they build. He stated that they ask question to city departments. He explained that the board looks at what the criteria is and whether it meets the city ordinance that is made by City Council. The Council can come before the Board for a nonbinding recommendation. The Board spoke in favor of the moratorium. When it comes to site plan, the board is guided by city professionals. H. Ayer asked if the applicant would have to come before the board if they wanted to put up diesel generators or cooling towers. T. Linnehan stated that there is nothing currently in the ordinance on data centers and that certain uses can be allowed by right in the light industrial district and they would not need to come before the board. J. Frechette listed the

allowed uses in the light industrial district. Depending upon the size of the facility, the project would never come before the Board and would go to the building department to file a permit.

H. Ayer asked about the soil sampling. T. Linnehan responded that the Board does not have jurisdiction, the Board would make a recommendation to go to the MA DEP. H. Ayer asked if this would be the last time the applicant would go before the Board. T. Linnehan responded that if they make a modification to the plan, they will have to come back. T. Linnehan stated since they filed the preliminary plans prior to the moratorium, the law that was existing the day filed the plan must be followed.

Steve Malagione, 200 Market St., Unit 216 - 350 Mass of Greater Lowell

S. Malagione asked if this facility would be hooked up to the combined sewer system. T. Linnehan responded that the water and sewer department gave their set of conditions. S. Malagione stated that the city has issues with CO2 with combined sewer overflow. He asked why we continue to add to this problem. A. Moura responded that proposed plans have only the sewer connection; stormwater will be handled on site.

Discussion:

J. Frechette thanked H. Ayer for questions she asked and bringing clarity to the situation they find themselves in with subdivision approval. He mentioned that he is serving on the zoning audit committee and they are looking at new zoning for data centers. That is not going to apply here. He stated that there needs to be more public discussion. There are timelines when the new zoning applies. He expressed appreciation for people coming out and speaking. He stated that they are not voting on the data centers and only on the subdivisions. He stated that the comments were responded to thoroughly by the applicant.

C. Cheng appreciated the company responding and positively adhering to the proposed conditions including the two trees that were added.

D. Tenczar appreciated everyone coming and letting their voices be heard. He stated that they have a certain job to do and rules to follow.

L. Walker agreed with the other members on the board. She stated that the applicant had met with all the requirements and responded to all the comments.

T. Sar had no comment.

T. Linnehan stated the applicant meets that all the compliance requirements for definitive subdivision under the subdivision of land regulations by the City of Lowell. He added that all departments weighed in, and the applicant agreed with the proposed conditions.

Motion:

T. Linnehan motioned to approve with the following proposed conditions:

1. The applicant shall plant four street trees along Bolt Street.
2. The applicant shall provide documentation establishing the long-term ownership, operation, and maintenance responsibilities for the Private Roadway and the private water, drainage, and stormwater management systems, including the basin. The documents shall identify the parties responsible for inspection, maintenance, repair, and replacement of the shared private infrastructure following the sale of the individual lots.

3. Before work begins, the applicant shall coordinate with the Wastewater Division to receive a Stormwater Permit.
4. The applicant shall obtain all required permits from the engineering Department prior to commencing work, including but not limited to street opening, trench, sewer, and water permits.
5. All utility trenches within Bolt St shall be milled and paved in one continuous patch.

D. Tenczar seconded. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Definitive Subdivision – 2 Tanner Street, 01852

Tanner Street Investco, LLC has applied to the Lowell Planning Board seeking Definitive Subdivision approval to split the existing lot at 2 Tanner Street into (2) lots. The subject property is located in the General Industrial (GI) zoning district. The proposal requires Definitive Subdivision approval from the Planning Board under Lowell's Subdivision of Land Regulations.

On Behalf:

Antonio Moura, Santec Consulting

A. Moura explained the project. The preliminary subdivision approval was granted on April 6. He stated they received the staff memo and that the plan meets the compliance requirements. He said that the proposed conditions are all reasonable except for one. Several departments have no comments on application. These include building, economic development, fire, parks, police, solid waste and recycling, sustainability and transportation departments. He stated that the project is located within Ayer City industrial park urban renewal area and these parcels proposed for subdivision are not identified as acquisition or disposition parcels in ACIP. However, the bordering parcel of 10 Tanner Street in addition to 12 Tanner Street are both identified as acquisition parcels. Both parcels are part of the redevelopment site C in that plan which calls for the redevelopment of up to 160,000 square feet of industrial space. Essentially the comment is asking the applicant to be made aware that those parcels may be developed for more intensive use in the future. The applicant recognizes and acknowledges that comment. The second comment identifies the 2 Tanner Street as having a hazardous release reported to the MA DEP and that the property is located near the Silresim Superfund Site. The applicant is aware and agrees to proposed condition to work with MA DEP and EPA for compliance. That all construction activities related to the subdivision will be performed under the supervision of a Massachusetts licensed site professional. He stated that the subdivision road will remain privately owned and maintained and is noted on the plan. Also, all utility infrastructure including the proposed basin will remain privately owned and maintained and the owner will be responsible for all inspection, maintenance, repair and replacement of all utility and roadway infrastructure. The applicant agrees to have all utility trenches with Tanner Street milled and paved in one continuous patch. The applicant also agreed to obtain all required permits from the engineering Department prior to commencing work, including but not limited to street opening, trench, sewer, and water permits and it is noted on the plan. All excavation work within the public right of way shall be inspected by the engineering department is also noted on the plan. Regarding the comment from the health department stating that landscaping will need to have MA DEP documentation that the land is usable; this condition is not feasible as there is no mechanism to request that from the MA DEP and EPA. The first proposed condition would cover that concern. The elevations of the drainage manhole have been added. He stated that they have met with both the wastewater and engineering departments and added the sewer connection details to the plan. The water department commented that they do not have any issues and the infrastructure around the two sites is adequately sized and can handled the proposed projects without an issue.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

Alex Solange, 15 Robinson Street.

A. Solange stated that he lives on the other side of the tracks and hears a lot of noise from that site in the last couple months. He would like to know if when construction like that happens since it shakes his house. He expressed concerns about what is being built on the site. A. Moura confirmed there was some demo on the site although his firm is not involved. A demo permit would have to be pulled. T. Linnehan mentioned that the building department would know. A. Solange asked about how the new state law regarding data centers would affect us. T. Linnehan stated that would be up to the law department to tell the board how to implement.

Harini Ayer, 80 Smith St.

H. Ayer recorded her opposition.

Emily Gertenbach, 124 Park Avenue East

E. Gertenbach wanted to record her continued opposition for this project. She asked what is allowed in general industrial district versus the light industrial district. J. Frechette explained that the table of uses that are in the zoning ordinance will show what is allowed by right or special permit.

Discussion:

J. Frechette asked about the landscaping condition, that being a superfund site that there would be limiting conditions that would be put on there. Similarly, there are deed restrictions on the properties that would be applied to what's happening on the property and that it's publicly available information.

A. Moura responded that the deed restrictions are tied to the property and is publicly available. He confirmed that the applicant will fully agree to abide all applicable laws with MA DEP and EPA related to the Silresim site.

C. Cheng asked about the licensed professional's role in contaminated sites and how they will ensure that the conditions and all the applicable laws will be complied with. A. Moura responded if an environmental condition is discovered during construction or is known; there is a process in place that's outlined by MA DEP on how to proceed. The process is overseen by a MA licensed professional who is an expert in contamination and will ensure that all applicable laws are being followed.

D. Tenczar wanted to follow up on the demolition/noise and the notifications. It is not something that the board deals with but something to bring up with city council.

L. Walker asked if there has been any communication with EPA and MA DEP. A. Moura stated that he was not aware of that.

T. Sar had no comment.

T. Linnehan stated that the applicant addressed all the proposed conditions and that condition one encompasses what the health department was looking for.

C. Cheng mentioned as a follow up to the construction noise that the building inspector would be the person to enforce.

A Solange stated that he is concerned about continued work and the dust.

J. Frechette encourage him to call the building department. There are certain hours of construction. They would have a record of the demolition permit and the conditions that the applicant would have to comply with.

Motion:

J. Frechette motioned to approve with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall follow any relevant requirements from MassDEP related to the Silresim Superfund Site.
2. The applicant shall provide documentation establishing the long-term ownership, operation, and maintenance responsibilities for the Private Roadway and the private water, drainage, and stormwater management systems, including the basin. The documents shall identify the parties responsible for inspection, maintenance, repair, and replacement of the shared private infrastructure following the sale of the individual lots.
3. All utility trenches within Tanner St shall be milled and paved in one continuous patch.
4. The applicant shall obtain all required permits from the Engineering Department prior to commencing work, including but not limited to street opening, trench, sewer, and water permits.
5. All excavation work within the public right-of-way shall be inspected by the Engineering Department.
6. The applicant shall obtain stormwater permit from LRWWU addressing any issues from the stormwater team.
7. The applicant shall update plans to show elevations for the sewer line and proposed SMH or which existing SMH that is to be used.

D. Tenczar seconded. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

III. New Business

Tree Hearing – 406 W Sixth Street (Saint Louis Park), 01850

In Accordance with MGL Ch. 87.5 and the Chapter 260 of the Lowell Code of Ordinances, the Lowell Planning Board will hold a public hearing to hear all interested persons about the proposed removal of two (2) Austrian Pine Trees with a DBH of approx. 14" located in Saint Louis Park, 406 W Sixth Street. The removal is necessary for the planned expansion of the playground. The planting plan calls for six (6) new trees to be planted.

*****This was taken out of order in the agenda*****

On Behalf:

Jess Wilson, Design Planner

J. Wilson explained the project. The request is to remove two Austrian pine trees at St. Louis Park. Phase One of the project was recently opened which is the new playground and splash pad. They secured additional funding to expand the playground for 2–5-year-olds. Hoping to finish that project in the fall. To accomplish that, they need to stockpile some of the soil that's on site, requiring the need to remove the Austrian pines. The planting plan calls for six new trees. They recently received a grant for Phase

Two to begin construction in the spring that will add 47 to 60 new trees, converting an unused baseball field into new recreational facilities.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

T. Linnehan commented the park with the splash pad has come along nicely since the last time tree hearing.

J. Frechette pointed out that the ratio is 2 to 6, so they're removing two trees and planting six new trees. It's a net increase of four new trees. He commented that the surface at the park is like walking on a mattress. He thought it's a safe environment and great addition to the city.

C. Cheng noted that his 3-year-old enjoyed the site visit. C. Cheng stated that he is in favor of the tree removal and replacement.

D. Tenczar stated that it was great project and noted that some of the trees needed to come down anyway.

L. Walker stated that it was a great cause and appreciated the replanting document that shows where and what types of trees will be replanted.

T. Linnehan stated that he is in support.

Motion:

T. Linnehan motioned to approve. D. Tenczar seconded. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Special Permit - 675 Andover Street, 01852

Debbie M. and Kevin Fernandes have applied to the Lowell Planning Board seeking a Special Permit to divide the property into two residential lots at 675 Andover Street. The subject property is in the Suburban Single Family (SSF) zoning district. The proposal requires a Special Permit per Section 5.1.1 for frontage reduction and per Section 5.2.9 for large SSF lots with reduced frontage.

*****This was taken out of order in the agenda*****

On Behalf:

None

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

T. Linnehan stated that the applicant has formally requested a continuance to the November 2nd meeting.

Motion:

T. Linnehan motioned to continue to the 11/2 meeting. D. Tenczar seconded. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

IV. Other Business

2027 Planning Board Schedule

T. Linnehan motioned to approve the 2027 Planning Board Schedule as presented. D. Tenczar seconded. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

V. Further Comments from Planning Board Members

T. Linnehan asked that the election of officers be added to the agenda for the next meeting

J. Frechette gave an update on the zoning audit meeting. The committee looked at the draft proposal for data center zoning. There were concerns with the section on electricity usage and regulation and wanted city council review. The consultant has looked at language used in other communities. Even though some of the communities have passed zoning relative to data centers, the concern is that it hasn't been tested. Regarding electricity usage, do we do that with other land uses or businesses. It could be challenged. He mentioned there was some back and forth on the floor to area ratio and they may be on compromise on that. Also, the committee is looking into allowing larger homes in all city zones, if they are of a certain age, that they can made into multi-family homes. Whatever comes out of the audit committee will go to the zoning subcommittee for the City Council. The City Council will ask the Planning Board for a non-binding vote and recommendation. DPD will seek input from other organizations and neighborhoods.

VI. Adjournment

D. Tenczar motioned to adjourn. C. Cheng seconded. The vote was unanimous (5-0). The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 PM.