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TO: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*
FROM: R. Eric Slagle, Director of Development Services
DATE: January 23, 2020
RE: Motion by C. Elliott - Req. City Mgr./DPD Report of the Status of Properties
Located at 246.1 Market St.; The Power House and the Coal Pocket Buildings.

This memorandum addresses the request from Councilor Elliott regarding the status of the property located at 246.1 Market St.

First, it important to provide a quick history and context of this parcel in relation to the rest of the Downtown. (Please see the GIS Map of the parcel below.) The parcel is located within the Downtown Historic District, and is made up of three structures; the Power House, which is the separate structure on the south side of the parcel, between the properties at 200 Market St. and 256.3 Market St.; the Boiler Building, which is the intact structure on the north of the parcel; and the Coal Pocket, which is the hollow structure without a roof attached to the south side of the Boiler Building. These structures make up some of the last mill buildings in downtown Lowell which have not been renovated and put back into use.

Back in 2010, the City issued enforcement against Boott Mills, the owner at the time, regarding a dangerous situation where deterioration of the bricks at the top of the Coal Pocket's exposed gables was causing bricks to fall and endanger vehicles and pedestrians. Though the City pursued litigation against the property owner, the entity claimed insolvency, and was unable to complete the work. The City erected fencing and scaffolding to protect pedestrians, and subsequently placed two liens on the property to cover the cost of the protective measures.

In 2014, a developer obtained an option to purchase the property, and filed an application for a special permit to convert the Power House into residential units. Prior to the application, the City required that the remedial work be done to secure the Coal Pocket, which was accomplished. The liens would be paid at the time of sale. The special permit was granted to convert the Power House into 13 residential units. Ultimately, the sale of the property did not go through at that time.

In 2016, Boot Mills sold the property to another entity, Emerson 100 Real Estate, LLC, a business managed by Steven and Brian Monahan. At the time of the sale, the liens on the property were paid. In early 2017, the owners pulled a permit for exploratory demolition work on the property in furtherance of their renovation plans, pursuant the earlier special permit. In 2018, the owners received a Historic Board permit to renovate the Power House, and filed for building permits to construct the 13 residential units. However, the building permits were never issued and work never commenced.

In late fall of 2019, the property owners approached the City with new plans to renovate the Power House. The City has been informed that the owners will be applying for a new special permit to construct residential units in the Power House, followed by the renovation of the Boiler Building for residential units as well. Staff has not seen the details of the new proposal, but we anticipate a submission within the next 2-3 weeks. Any change in the plans will likely require a new Historic permit.



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