



MEMORANDUM

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*

DATE: March 24, 2020

FROM: Diane N. Tradd, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

SUBJECT: MOTION OF 2/25/2020 BY COUNCILOR ELLIOTT
REQUEST CITY MANAGER REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE VACANT/ABANDONED
HADLEY HOUSE ON BROADWAY STREET AS WELL AS THE FRANCIS GATEHOUSE

Diane Nichols Tradd
Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

Craig Thomas
Deputy Director

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has been closely monitoring the progress of the vacant historic house on 719 Broadway Street known as the “Judge Hadley House” along with the Francis Gatehouse and related facilities at Guard Locks adjacent to 713 Broadway Street. The Hadley House is one of the best-preserved examples of Federal style architecture in Lowell, the only remaining intact (interior and exterior) example of a home of its period in Lowell, and the former home of a family of prominent citizens. It was moved from its original site on 1708 Middlesex Street to its current site in 1990 in an attempt to preserve the house when its owners no longer wished to maintain it.

The site was chosen because the land was owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MA DCR) and was within the Lowell Historic Preservation District, which opened the possibility of Lowell Historic Preservation Commission funding and City of Lowell Housing Rehabilitation funding for seasonal Lowell National Historical Park (NPS) and State Heritage Park rangers. The Jaycee Place Housing Corporation took ownership of the house to open the possibility of additional grants. Preliminary stabilization was done at that time. However, a reduction in seasonal rangers in 1991 eliminated the need for ranger housing. Several attempts to transfer ownership of the land and the house for reuse were unsuccessfully undertaken in the subsequent decades. The house suffered multiple fires during that time, but Building Commissioner Shaun Shanahan undertook a visual inspection in 2016 and determined that, upon that visual inspection, it appeared to be structurally sound.

In October 2019, Revitalization Effort towards New Urbanism (RENU), an affiliate nonprofit of the Lowell Housing Authority, purchased the Hadley House from Jaycee Place Housing Corporation. RENU has plans to restore the building and create four to five units of affordable veteran housing with an onsite service component. The building would be comprised of one-bedroom dwelling units. RENU’s land attorney is working with MA DCR to explore possible land swaps between RENU (LHA) and MA DCR. RENU plans to commence restoration following a successful transfer of land.

The Francis Gatehouse and related facilities are on property which abuts the Hadley House site. These facilities relate to the historical operation of the Pawtucket Canal, are owned by MA DCR, and maintained by MA DCR and NPS. NPS repaints and makes minor repairs on the facilities approximately every four years. NPS repainted and repaired siding on the Francis Great Gate and Francis Gate Locking House in 2018/2019. In addition, NPS and DCR have the following plans:

- Rehabilitate Great Gate Structural Supports - Timber support structures have been destroyed or heavily damaged by a carpenter ant infestation (DCR completed a condition assessment and alternatives at NPS's request; NPS is currently working on design docs. It has not been determined who will fund the repair).
- Rehabilitate Lock Gates and Wickets - The lock chamber gates and wickets require work to continue to operate NPS boat tours (NPS design planned for FY21; Construction FY22).
- Repair and Replace Cedar Francis Great Gate Roof (NPS Planned for FY22).
- Rehabilitate Francis Gate Hydraulic Gatehouse North Elevation - Deteriorated wood clapboards, dam walkway boards and handrail, and granite steps and handrail require replacement or repair (NPS planned FY23).
- Rehabilitate Francis Gate Grounds Fencing (NPS planned FY25).

Finally, as part of FERC relicensing, Boott Hydro is currently studying soil conditions surrounding the Francis Gate complex to determine stability under flood conditions.

DNT/ns

cc: Craig Thomas, Deputy Director
Chris Hayes, Neighborhood Planner
Stephen Stowell, Historic Board Administrator