



Diane Nichols Tradd
Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

Craig Thomas
Deputy Director

MEMORANDUM

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

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

DATE: October 15, 2019

SUBJECT: MOTION OF 9/10/19 BY COUNCILOR CONWAY
REQUEST CITY MANAGER MEET WITH PROPER DEPARTMENTS, PARTNERS; AND OTHER ENTITIES TO
DEVELOP LOWELL'S OWN HISTORICAL WALKING/FREEDOM TRAIL

The Department of Planning and Development is excited by the idea of exploring and developing strategies to encourage tourism in downtown Lowell by promoting the creation and marketing of historic tours and trails in and around downtown Lowell. Previous strategies led by residents in Lowell have shown the feasibility and promise of downtown tours and trails.

The popular annual "Lowell Walks" series, organized by Register of Deeds and local historian Richard Howe, Jr., often draws more than 100 visitors to downtown weekly during the summer months. Each of these free tours is led by a different community expert and covers different subject matter such as history, ecology, culture, or art. The tours are focused on the Downtown, Acre, and JAM neighborhoods and start at the Lowell National Historical Park Visitor Center. The Lowell Walks series receives support from community partners such as University of Massachusetts Lowell and Lowell National Historical Park.

In the summer of 2016, the Downtown Pop-Up History Trail was organized by Do-it-Yourself Lowell, a grassroots community group. This project consisted of temporary signs with historical facts zip-tied to lamp posts, chalk markings on the ground, and a brochure. The trail received positive coverage in media and remained active through the summer season. The trail was funded by a City of Lowell Neighborhood Innovation Grant, and it received technical support from community partners including Pollard Memorial Library and Lowell National Historical Park.

In addition to the above efforts, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Lowell National Historical Park, and other groups often organize walking tours in and around downtown Lowell. In response to the motion, the Department of Planning and Development in consultation with the Cultural Affairs and Special Events office is organizing a meeting to explore building upon these community efforts with the following stakeholders, among others:

- Lowell Walks
- Do-it-Yourself Lowell
- Lowell Downtown Neighborhood Association
- Middlesex Community College
- Lowell National Historical Park
- University of Massachusetts Lowell

DPD is targeting early November to convene these stakeholders. Early concepts to discuss include the development of a smartphone app or online webpage. Organizations are welcome to express interest and receive an invitation.

DNT/ns

cc: Chris Hayes, Neighborhood Planner