



Diane Nichols Tradd
Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

MEMORANDUM

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

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

DATE: November 12, 2019

SUBJECT: MOTION OF 7/23/2019 BY COUNCILOR MERCIER
REQUEST CITY MANAGER HAVE PROPER DEPARTMENT FIND A LOCATION FOR THE
LOWELL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA TO REHEARSE

Craig Thomas
Deputy Director

The Lowell Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) was founded back in 1903 and their early performances were held at Huntington Hall in Lowell General Hospital. Over several decades, the LPO has grown in size, musicianship, number of performances and popularity. LPO's mission is to provide affordable musical performances to Lowell residents and surrounding communities. Composed of passionate semi-professional and amateur musicians, the LPO not only offers a pipeline for local talent, it also nurtures future generations of musicians by encouraging Lowell's youth to become involved with local music. LPO runs at least four large performances a year and will be expanding their 2020 programming to include additional performances (i.e. Lowell Spinners).

Currently, LPO has been operating at the Lowell Congregational Church on Pawtucket Street. They are very grateful for the congregation's generosity which allows them to rehearse and perform at the church; however this location presents the following challenges:

- Very limited parking
- Inadequate stage area lighting
- Insufficient space to store their instruments and accommodate their music library
- The building owner has expanded its own services/programs, and will need to occupy the space currently being leased by the LPO

LPO's ideal permanent home would be one building containing the following:

- Large performing stage with seating capacity of approximately 400 people
- Sufficient off-street parking
- Permanent storage area for their percussion instruments (timpani, percussion)
- Office space
- Archive room to accommodate their music library

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Economic Development staff have been working with the LPO on identifying a viable location. A few options were presented to them, including the Richard and Nancy Donahue Family Academy Arts Center, currently operated by Middlesex Community College (MCC) and the Lowell Memorial Auditorium. MCC's Performing Arts Center is a terrific venue; however it lacks storage area. Furthermore, there are schedule conflicts between the LPO's rehearsal times and the MCC and LMA programming.

Recently, LPO was able to successfully book the Stoklosa Middle School for their December 2019, March 2020 and May 2020 concerts. Unfortunately, the school lacks space for storage and offices; making it impractical as a permanent home.

The LPO would like to explore the possibility of becoming the "Orchestra in Residence" at Lowell High School. The future renovated Auditorium would make the perfect home for the LPO. LPO would also explore a closer collaboration with the Lowell High School Music Department and request to create a music library at the newly renovated High School which would be accessible to the students. LPO has recently discussed these possibilities with the LHS Fine Arts Coordinator and will continue discussions about collaborating going forward.

The Department of Planning and Development will continue to work with the LPO on identifying their forever home.

DNT/ns

cc: Maria Dickinson, Economic Development Officer