

**LOWELL HISTORIC BOARD
MINUTES
Mayor's Reception Room, Lowell City Hall
March 14, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.**

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For further detail, contact the Lowell Historic Board, Lowell City Hall, Room 51, 375 Merrimack Street or refer to video recordings available online at www.LTC.org.

Members Present: Jeffrey Harris, Chair; Aurora Erickson, Kerry Regan Jenness, Richard Lockhart, George Villaras, James Wilde

Members Absent: Lisa "LC" Cassidy, Troy Depeiza, Christine McCall

Others Present: Stephen Stowell, Administrator

The following represents the actions taken by the Historic Board at the 3/14/2022 meeting. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting occurred in hybrid form, both in-person and via the Zoom video conferencing platform.

Chair Harris called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. **DLHD-22-24: 733-735 Broadway Street**

Portions of the Pilling Shoe Mill (ca. 1920). Application for a Historic Permit by Boston Capital Development LLC for partial demolition, exterior rehabilitation, and new construction pursuant to the Lowell Historic District Act (Chapter 566, Acts of 1983).

The Chair stated that the applicant had submitted a request to continue the hearing to a date to be determined.

Motion:

By J. Wilde, seconded by G. Villaras, to:

Continue the public hearing for DLHD-22-24 (733-735 Broadway Street) to a date to be determined.

Unanimously approved, 6-0.

2. MINUTES

Approval of the Minutes of December 13, 2021

Motion:

By K. Jenness, seconded by J. Wilde, to:

Approve the minutes of February 14, 2022

Unanimously approved, 6-0.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

The Administrator noted that the materials in the packet are for informational purposes and would be included in the record.

The Administrator said that David Lieb, Historic Architect from the Lowell National Historical Park, was joining the meeting. He originally was going to provide some additional design review background for the 733-735 Broadway Street project that was continued but that he is soon leaving his position.

D. Lieb introduced himself and noted he would be at the National Park for the next four days before taking a position at the NPS Denver Service Center as a project manager remotely. He noted that he and the Administrator met with the new Park Superintendent Juliet Galonska a few weeks back, providing an introduction to the Historic Board, its important work, and the long-term working relationship between the Park and the Board through the Park's historic architect as well as its seat on the Board.

D. Lieb said he appreciated the opportunity to recognize the value and responsibility that the Historic Board has in maintaining the status quo regarding preservation in the city along with the National Park.

The Chair wished D. Lieb well and acknowledged the service provided in assisting the Board with design review of a variety of projects. He noted that the role of the National Park architect is important in providing an objective viewpoint and feedback to the various applicants that come before the Board. Design has improved greatly through the input of the Park architect over the years.

The Administrator thanked D. Lieb for his work and guidance. D. Lieb said that he and the Administrator first met two years ago at the Lord Overpass project to review granite samples and that it was well into the pandemic, that it was a bit of a surreal experience standing around and wearing masks. He noted though that we powered through it and that there have been a lot of interesting projects. D. Lieb also recognized the commitment of the community in working with the Board and the National Park.

The Administrator said that the pandemic changed how design review is undertaken in some ways, that previously we gather at the National Park with D. Lieb's predecessor Charlie Tonetti and before him, Chuck Parrott. But the pandemic forced a shifting of gears to remote options, that remote has certain real time benefits where a project architect can sketch up options or respond to questions remotely in a visual manner, which the Board has seen in various presentations.

The Administrator also mentioned the repair and re-restoration of two stairtowers, including the belltower, in the Boott millyard in the summer of 2020 that D. Lieb was also intimately involved with. In addition to the Board's permitting process, the National Park holds a deed restriction on the towers that D. Lieb was overseeing as well. D. Lieb said that the project was another great example of the partnerships in the city working toward preservation.

A. Enforcement/Violations Update

Work continues to assist businesses with DPD's Sign and Façade program assistance as well as Historic Board Sign Grants. Several businesses have removed lit "open" signs that have crept in during the pandemic and work continues to assist them and others on signage needs. Coordination is currently taking place to wrap up design and fabrication for several businesses in the Bridge and Merrimack street areas

A more long-term, or seasonal effort, focuses on minimum maintenance. To recap, documentation and notices are in the process of being wrapped up with the goal to have all permitted and ready to go as soon as winter clears. These projects are very much seasonal and involve painting for the most part that cannot be undertaken in the colder temperatures. These buildings continue to include –

- 101 Central Street (Mansur Building) – unauthorized ground floor painting and door replacement, rear ell painting)
- 147 Central Street (Bradley Block aka Saab Building) – ground floor storefront repairs, painting, mismatched doors
- 10 Kearney Square (Fairburn Building) – minor storefront stall riser glass repair in one area
- 1 Merrimack Street (Simpson Block) - ground floor storefront repairs, painting
- 45 Merrimack Street (Hildreth Building) - ground floor storefront repairs, painting
- 123 Merrimack Street – ground floor storefront repairs, painting
- 133 Merrimack Street (Thompson Building) - ground floor storefront repairs, painting
- 169 Merrimack Street (Welles Block) - ground floor storefront repairs, painting

B. Administrator's Report

Upcoming Projects

Several projects are in the review stage and will require public hearings including rehabilitation of 199 Market Street, a private parking garage on Jackson Street adjacent to the new justice center, and housing along upper Father Morissette Boulevard, all in the Downtown Lowell Historic District, and new housing at Willie and Wiggan streets in the Acre Neighborhood District.

City Hall Stained Glass – Community Preservation Act

Specifications for the stained glass work are currently being developed as is an RFP for solicitation of the work in coordination with the City's Purchasing Department and DPW. A final vote on the bonding for the work is expected at a City Council meeting in coming weeks.

Open/Closed Signs

As previously noted, since 1989 the Board has provided custom oval open/closed signs for businesses in the DLHD. A fresh supply of 200 signs have been delivered and have begun to be distributed to businesses who would like one. The first two were distributed to new downtown businesses Lala Books and Gormley's Café, both on Market Street. The Administrator passed around one of the newly fabricated signs.

While businesses aren't required to use them as traditional open/closed signs can also be used (not those of the lit variety obviously), businesses have liked these signs and they're also another engagement and outreach tool at the Board's disposal to assist businesses, like sign grants and design guidance.

Lowell Sun Sign

Efforts continue to arrange a meeting between the Sun newspaper and the Sun Building owners is in the process of being arranged while an update to the \$45,455 cost estimate is being obtained. As you recall, the sign would be converted to LED resulting in less maintenance and operation costs due to the longevity of the LED components and the fact they require far less power than neon.

Downtown Lowell Historic District Building Markers

24 new markers are in the process of being developed that will be installed as they are fabricated. To date, 44 markers have been installed.

Social Media

Social media continues to be a very popular and effective community engagement and outreach tool for the Board. The Board's Facebook page has 6,763 followers while individual posts continue to reach thousands. Other platforms include Twitter (721 followers), Instagram (1,568 followers), and Pinterest (28 followers).

Miscellaneous

On February 15, the Administrator toured portions of the Acre neighborhood with Harvard Graduate School of Design students, providing background information on the neighborhood to assist with their studio project.

Next Meeting

The Board's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 11, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Reception Room.

J. Wilde noted that the website has a few Board members in holdover status. The Administrator said that last year, both the at-large and the Bar Association nominations were provided to the Manager's office and that recently, the same with the Boston Society for Architecture/AIA and the Chamber of Commerce. He said he would follow up with the Manager's office. In addition the DCR Commissioner had reappointed J. Harris and that the DPD Director automatically renews by statute so those two seats are current with the other four noted being in holdover status.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

By J. Wilde, seconded by G. Villaras, to:

Adjourn the meeting at 6:16 p.m.

Unanimously approved, 6-0.

ATTEST: _____
Stephen R. Stowell, Administrator