



City of Lowell - Planning Board

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 4 6:30 p.m.

City Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, City Hall

City of Lowell, 375 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA

Remote Participation Optional via Zoom

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For a recording of the meeting, visit www.ltc.org

Members Present

Thomas Linnehan, Chairman

Gerard Frechette, Vice Chairman

Richard Lockhart, Member

Robert Malavich, Member

Caleb Cheng, Member

Russell Pandres, Associate Member

Sinead Gallivan, Associate Member

Members Absent

None

Others Present

Serena Gonzalez, Assistant Planner

Francesca Cigliano, Senior Planner

A quorum of the Board was present. Chairman Linnehan called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

I. Minutes for Approval

March 21, 2022 Minutes

R Lockhart motioned to approve the minutes seconded by GFrechette. Approved unanimously 5-0

II. Continued Business

Site Plan Review and Special Permit: 733-735 Broadway Street, 01854

Boston Capital has applied to the Lowell Planning Board and Lowell Zoning Board of Appeals for Site Plan Review, Special Permit, and Variance approval to redevelop the existing historic mill building at 733-735 Broadway Street into 53 affordable units. The project includes the redevelopment of the existing structure, as well as the construction of an addition to include additional housing, a management office, and parking. The subject property is located in the Traditional Multi-Family (TMF) zoning district. The project requires Site Plan Review approval per Section 11.4, and Special Permit approval per Section 4.5 from the Lowell Planning Board. The project will also require Variance approval pursuant Section 5.1, Section 5.2, Section 5.3, and Section 6.1 from the Lowell Zoning Board of Appeals, and any other relief required under the Lowell Zoning Ordinance.

On Behalf:

Cliff Boehmer from Davis Square Architects
CBoehmer showed the changes made to the building elevations and showed the proposed landscape plan.

Speaking in Favor:

CBA wrote a letter in support

Stephen Stowell wrote in favor

Roberta Emerson resident and employee of the Merrimack Valley Food Bank

Deb Shasay, 10 Dayton St, Executive Director of Lowell House of Hope Shelter

Amy Pescia Merrimack Valley Food Bank

Speaking in Opposition:

Kevin Murphy from Lowell Housing Authority

KMurphy proposed the following conditions: the 16 parking spots that LHA uses on Tyng St be preserved, construction begins at 8am and concludes at 5pm, Tyng St not be used as a recreational area, no college or graduate housing to be allowed on the premises.

KMurphy objected the condition from Vanessa Hagan that there be no parking on the first 40 feet of Tyng St, it is not necessary and it will impact the parking LHA has on Tyng St

Discussion:

Jeffery Dirk from Vanasse & Associates

JDirk said the project is going to generate 330 trips, not a large increase in traffic. The intersection (streets) is a high crash location, suggests that the applicant conduct a road safety audit and look at the traffic signal timing. The applicant should submit a turning analysis for the parking garage.

Bill Martin, applicant's attorney

BMartin stated that this project shouldn't bear the entire responsibility for improving the safety of the intersection

RLockhart asked about guest parking. BMartin said that there is a university parking lot available to the public. GFrechette said that the university lot is a short walk around 600 feet.

GFrechette would have liked to see fewer units and more guest parking. Likes that it provides affordable housing to Lowell which is needed.

GFrechette asked about the LHA parking on Tyng St. KMurphy says that any abutter to a private way may use the private way as long as it does not over burden the other abutters rights to Tyng St. KMurphy says they were not granted the right to the parking spaces, but they have been using them for 20 years.

GFrechette asked about the road safety audit.

CChang is receptive to the conditions proposed. Was concerned about the facade of the building, but stated that the Historic Board and applicant did a good job coming up with a design.

SGallivan says that she is receptive to the staff conditions and to those of the traffic study. SGallivan proposed that the applicant get the parking on Tyng St approved by the fire department.

SGallivan asked which sidewalks will be rebuilt and will they be accessible. Brian Geaudreau said that the sidewalks on Broadway will be reconstructed. Tyng St is intended to remain the same.

RPandres agreed that the fire department should approve the plan.

RMalovich asked where staff will be parking. Rich Mazzocchi from Boston Capital said they will be parking in the UML parking lot.

RMalovich asked about snow removal. He stated it is a good project.

GFrechette asked about parking and parking passes. BMartin said that it will either be by pass or by gate access, but that it hasn't been determined yet.

TLinnehan wonders if there will be parking on Tyng St. Without further information from the fire department they are at a standstill, it is crucial that there is an answer before it is approved. What would the traffic safety audit cost and how much it will cost to implement the changes needed based on findings.

GFrechette would like to see the changes to the driveline in the garage as well as the changes to the impervious surfaces.

BMartin suggests that they be continued to the next meeting

SGallivan would like the applicant to confirm if there are going to be changes to the walkway on Tyng St.

TLinnehan motioned that the application be continued to the 5/2 meeting, seconded by RLockhart
Approved 5-0

III. New Business

IV. Other Business

MBTA Zoning Presentation

Staff will present recent changes to M.G.L. Chapter 40A pertaining to zoning changes that will be required in MBTA communities over the next several years.

RPandres asked about the goal of the legislation and asked how many housing units there are in Lowell.

GFrechette is frustrated that Lowell is bearing the burden of providing housing when other cities like Newton are choosing not to implement the zoning changes.

GFrechette believes that the MBTA zoning is a good thing for Lowell; the funding will be beneficial.

V. Notices

VI. Further Comments from Planning Board Members

VII. Adjournment

GFrechette motioned to adjourn seconded by BMalovich. Approved unanimously 5-0