

**LOWELL HISTORIC BOARD  
MINUTES  
Mayor's Reception Room, Lowell City Hall  
July 10, 2023 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](http://www.LTC.org).

**Members Present:** Jeffrey Harris, Chair; Yovani Baez-Rose, Lisa "LC" Cassidy, Troy Depeiza, Aurora Erickson

**Members Absent:** Kerry Regan Jenness, Richard Lockhart, George Villaras

**Others Present:** Stephen Stowell, Administrator

*The following represents the actions taken by the Historic Board at the 7/10/2023 meeting.*

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

1. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. **DLHD-23-34: 477 Market Street**

A two and a half story commercial building built in 1990. Application for a Historic Permit by Project Learn for installation of a mural pursuant to the Lowell Historic District Act (Chapter 566, Acts of 1983).

On Behalf:

Eric Allshouse, Lowell High School

Tara Hong, Project Learn

Autumn Kleiner, Project Learn

Arianna 'Nev' Morin

L.Z. Nunn, Project Learn

L. Nunn introduced the proposed mural project while A. Kleiner, E. Allshouse, A. Morin, and T. Hong presented the design concept and plans.

Speaking in Favor:

Penny Hamourgas%

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

T. Depeiza stated his support for the project and noting that as an architect, art is an important community component.

Y. Baez-Rose said that the design was a perfect fit for the location and community, that she liked the involvement of the city's young people in the project and seeing that the property owner is supportive of the project is critical. She noted it was good to see they had everything in order prior to coming to the Board and that she is fully supportive of the project.

A. Erickson said that nothing is affecting an historic building here and that the proposal reflects the context of the neighborhood, that it seems like a great fit for the neighborhood. She asked the Administrator what the activity was at the adjacent property. The Administrator said that was a project previously approved by the Board for ground floor commercial with two floors of residences above.

L. Cassidy noted her support for the project.

The Chair concurred with the previous comments and noted it was wonderful to see the students engaged in the project. He noted that the Board's mural policy says that murals should not be painted directly on unpainted masonry but that in this case, it is veneer brick on a 1990 building and does not have the typical properties of historic brick where deterioration could occur over time if it were painted. The Chair stated that since it is veneer brick, he does not see painting on this surface in conflict with the mural policy and supports the project.

Motion:

By L. Cassidy, seconded by Y. Baez-Rose, to:

Vote to issue the Historic Permit for the installation of a mural at 477 Market Street in the Downtown Lowell Historic District conditional upon the following:

1. Submittal, review, and approval of final mural specifications including, but not limited to, dimensions and materials. No bleed of the mural is allowed on to any other building elevations. An on-site review and confirmation of final dimensions to occur prior to project start; and
2. Submittal, review, and approval of final installation details and any scope of work alterations prior to commencement of work.

The mural is proposed for a side wall, constructed of veneer brick of a 1990 building and is consistent with the Board's Mural Policy in terms of type of building, façade proposed for installation, and location.

Unanimously approved, 5-0.

2. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Enforcement/Violations Update

Several minimum maintenance projects have been approved including repainting of the Bon Marche storefronts and work at 45 Kirk Street including painting, shutter repairs, and work to siding and trim on the rear wooden ell. Non-conforming signage continues to be addressed with only a scattered number of lit signs being an issue. All continue to be addressed via personal visits that also include distribution of the Board's custom open/closed signs and offers of sign grants.

B. Administrator's Report

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

**Upcoming Projects:**

Several projects are in the review stage and will require public hearings including the rehabilitation of the Hildreth Building (including two connected structures to the rear on Paige Street) at 45 Merrimack Street. Post-permitting review and approval of design details and materials continues at a variety of projects including 733-735 Broadway Street, 279 Dutton Street, 62 Gorham Street, 80 Gorham Street, 199 Market Street, 555 Merrimack Street, 78 Middlesex Street, and 160 Middlesex Street. This is in addition to routine signage and maintenance work.

**City Hall Stained Glass:**

As you may recall, the Community Preservation Act is funding the restoration of City Hall's stained glass in the amount of \$473,713, bonded over 20 years. As actual costs come in, future funding may be needed to complete the project due to increases over time. An RFP for services will be produced in partnership with DPW who will ultimately oversee the project.

In order to have a well-defined work scope and restoration specifications included in the RFP, renowned stained glass restoration firm Lyn Hovey Studios has prepared the specifications that were covered by \$7,200 in Historic Board funds. Use of the funds is consistent with Section 7 (14) of the statute that directs the Board to hire technical staff or consultants to carry out its responsibilities. Lyn Hovey has previously provided analysis and estimates over the years for the stained glass project and is very familiar with the windows. The next step will be to coordinate the development of the RFP with DPW and the Purchasing department. The Administrator distributed the specifications for review by the Board.

**Downtown Lowell Historic District Building Markers & Black History Trail Markers:**

There's positive news on the building marker front as the sign fabricator will be able to produce the next dozen

after experiencing trouble locating the design computer files. Hopefully these will be installed later this summer, adding to the 44 presently in place.

As previously noted, 11 new Black history panels have been installed throughout the downtown prior to the city's Juneteenth events. The City's cyber incident only delayed the original installation by a little over a week with access to technology and materials at the UMass Lowell Center for Lowell History being critical. The project was undertaken in partnership with the Board, Free Soil Arts Collective, and DIY Lowell and similar to the District building markers, is consistent with Section 7 (10) of the statute that directs the Board to establish marker programs. To that end, \$2,200 in Historic Board funds were used to cover the costs of the marker designs as part of the Board's community engagement and outreach programming. Funds available at the Lowell Heritage Partnership covered fabrication while a brochure developed in partnership with Mosaic Lowell was also funded by the LHP with the City's Sign Shop undertaking the installation.

A. Erickson mentioned the new Black Joy sculpture that will be dedicated at the corner of Gorham and Appleton streets. The Administrator noted that the 11<sup>th</sup> marker describes the new sculpture and that its location takes a forgotten brick plaza area and gives it a new purpose, much like the 911 memorial did on Arcand Drive in Liberty Tree Park. A. Erickson said that both the Black history markers and the sculpture began as DIY Lowell community projects and it was nice to see them become permanent features. She also noted the input of Free Soil Arts Collaborative and Martha Mayo's research into the Lowell's Black history.

#### **Sun Sign:**

Included in the packet is an update on the Sun Sign initiative in the form of the City Council motion response authored by the Administrator. The response has been very positive from the community regarding this project that has complicated ownership issues and ultimately, funding issues that will still need to be addressed.

#### **Illustrated Review Process and Design Standards Publication:**

One project that has been in the background for some time is a new community engagement and outreach initiative related to the production of online and physical illustrated review process and standards materials. Despite having good materials easily available through the Board's website, there can never be enough information available to assist and inform the public and applicants. Over the years, the Administrator has collected a variety of similar materials in both print and electronic form that will be used for the basis of this initiative. Illustrated guides from New York City, Vieux Carre in New Orleans, San Antonio, Paterson, New Jersey, and many others have been gathered that will provide the foundation for the Board's materials and will take our existing documents to another level.

A less ambitious first step is being taken with creating companion pieces to the existing district review process factsheets available on-line and in the office. While the factsheets will still exist, the companion pieces will be more graphically oriented. The designer that was used for our Black history markers has been contacted and the Administrator is in the process of providing her with information to develop a concept design. Longer term will be the project noted above but both are very doable.

Projects in this area are consistent with Section 7 (7) of the statute that directs the Board to create and publish

a variety of materials, as it has over the years, related to not only documenting and highlighting the city's historic resources but also review processes, standards, and procedures. To that end, costs will be covered by Historic Board funds with additional funds to be sought from other partners if needed.

**Bicentennial Committee:**

A City Bicentennial Committee has been created to focus on the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Lowell becoming a town on March 1, 2026. The committee met several times prior to the start of the pandemic and has recently begun meeting monthly again, expanding to include many diverse representatives from the community including the Administrator. The bicentennial website is scheduled to launch later this year to help build interest in the bicentennial year which will run from February to November, 2026.

**Social Media:**

Social media continues to be a very popular and effective community engagement and outreach tool for the Board and is in many aspects, the cornerstone of those efforts. The Board's Facebook page has 8,020 followers, while individual posts continue to reach thousands and the page is seen as one of the most comprehensive, timely, and detailed municipal historic preservation pages in the region and nationally. Other platforms include Instagram (1,688), Twitter (700 followers), and Pinterest (34 followers).

The Administrator noted that the projects at 62 and 80 Gorham Street get a lot of interest on Facebook and that people are happy to see those buildings being rehabilitated. A. Erickson said that 80 Gorham Street seems to be the building she's asked about the most and it's nice to see it coming back.

**Next Meeting:**

The Board's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 14, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Reception Room.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

By Y. Baez-Rose, seconded by T. Depeiza, to:

Adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Unanimously approved, 5-0.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Stephen R. Stowell, Administrator