



# City of Lowell - Planning Board

## **Planning Board Meeting Minutes**

Monday, August 21, 2023 6:30 p.m.

City Council Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](http://www.ltc.org)

### **Members Present**

Thomas Linnehan, Chairman

Allison Dolan-Wilson, Associate Member

Caleb Cheng, Member

### **Members Absent**

Richard Lockhart, Member

Gerard Frechette, Vice Chairman

Sinead Gallivan, Member

### **Others Present**

Francesca Cigliano, Senior Planner

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

Chairman Linnehan held a moment of silence for Robert Malavich who passed away on August 8, 2023 after a long career in Lowell as a city planner, Director of DPD, and Planning Board member.

### **I. Minutes for Approval**

7/17/2023 Meeting Minutes

T. Linnehan motioned and A. Dolan-Wilson seconded the motion to continue the meeting to the 9/7/2023 Planning Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously, (3-0).

### **II. Continued Business**

Site Plan Review – 21 Christman Avenue, 01852

The Lowell Planning Board will hold a public hearing to hear all interested persons relative to an application by Landsmart, LLC to construct and operate a Veteran's Education and Housing Facility at 21 Christman Avenue. The proposed facility will include classrooms, meeting space, an associated office, and 12 temporary residential units. The subject property is located in the Traditional Single-Family (TSF) zoning district. The proposal requires Site Plan Review approval per Section 11.4 to construct greater than 3 residential units.

On Behalf:

Douglas Duschene, Applicant's Attorney

D. Duschene said that they could redo the sidewalk. A new crosswalk would need to be permitted by the state but the applicant is willing to help with it if allowed. D. Duschene walked the Board through a color coded map showing land uses in the vicinity. This would not be the only multifamily use in the neighborhood. D. Duschene walked the Board through the 10 site plan review criteria.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

T. Linnehan read a letter of opposition submitted by Nicole Levasseur of 50 Jean Avenue into the record.

David Donald  
33 Jean Ave

D. Donald asked if Board could add stipulations. Don't think engineering has control over sidewalks. D. Donald said all changes to ROW should be OK'd by the state. D. Donald said I am adamantly against this. How would dumpster affect their parking situation?

T. Linnehan addressed each of D. Donald's inquiries.

Doreen Botelho, 28 Jean Ave

D. Botelho discussed each of the points raised by D. Duschene. Comparing to other apartments isn't applicable because the other apartment building was constructed before current zoning laws. Dumpster issues/waste will be an issue. Would like to see something from the health and fire department. Question about trash pickup - is there enough room for truck. M. Hamor said that they could take out a parking space to create room for a truck turnaround for waste removal.

Julie Costello, 33-35 Christman Ave

J. Costello said that it is not safe pulling out into the street. Safety is not adequate in that area. Trees being removed to make ADA compliant. Snow removal, concerned about that. Water issues in my yard. Lake in backyard. Snow against fence would melt into my yard. Don't believe they should be allowed to store snow there. Concerned about trash in basement. Person who requested 8-foot fence. Don't understand why that hasn't been addressed. This would be 4x the size of my house. I don't know how that fits in the area. Would like to see two duplexes side by side instead.

Lu Prasada, Lowell Street

L. Prasada requested an independent traffic and safety survey. Sometimes Christman Ave becomes a ramp for 495. There are a lot of backups that happen. I have a copy of transportation engineer's report and don't think it is comprehensive enough.

Stacey Decker, 110 Hollis Street

S. Decker said that her kids could never walk, bike on the street due to traffic. Drove everywhere. Not safe. Lots of trees would have to be removed to build sidewalks. Flooding in basement already, abutters would have even more flooding if this was built. I do love veterans and love my country.

Cliff Chase, Hollis Street

C. Chase said that to me, this is a rooming house. Temporary housing. No laundry, no cafeteria. If the VA pulls out of this building, what does it become?

Karen Doulan, 37 Jean Ave

K. Doulan said she is concerned about public safety. There was a stabbing in Dorchester at the VA. Our neighborhood is one of the safest in Lowell and I would like it to stay that way. Would like to ask the Board if the Dover Amendment was not used, would board approve its construction? Housing is the main function here, education is the secondary use of this facility. Trees currently provide noise protection. What is the recourse if we have issues with this facility?

Al Price, 64 Armand Avenue

A. Price asked why they would be holding AA meetings there if there are no drug/alc problems?

Jeff Thomas, Neighborhood Group

Sanitation. A couple houses wouldn't be an issue. This thing is big. I don't agree with it.

Kim Scott, speaking as a neighbor, 27 Commonwealth Ave

K. Scott cited concerns about headlights. Flash into bedrooms. Lack of turnaround space. Not a safe area to park on street. Would have to remove healthy trees to construct new sidewalks. Neighborhood character. Separate zone is the ones with multifamily homes.

Dean Jenkins said that when they get to the site, they aren't coming off the street. Going through a process through the VA to get to sobriety. Only can get into program if sober. This facility takes them the next step further transitioning to the next step. Trying to help veterans move on with their lives. Talking about American veterans who fought for our country. I understand it is contentious. Trying to make this work.

D. Duschene said much of discussion is opinion. Lower than what is allowed in the residential zone height-wise. A lot of neighbors concerns about pre-existing conditions. All legitimate concerns. Question is whether our facility will exacerbate these conditions. Whether we are there or not, problems will exist. We are proposing to re-do sidewalk along facility which will be used by our residents. Helping to address poor sidewalks. Check - there will be only one tree this would impact. Would be improving sidewalk conditions. I don't disagree that that is a busy intersection, however - we have to rely on city's traffic engineer. Had she said there were concerns and require road improvement - we would do. Truth is - our facility is not going to be a large generator of traffic. There will certainly be an occasional delivery of materials. Whether our facility makes problem work. Project is not salvation to problems. Not a big generator of traffic - talk with clear path and get traffic information from other facilities. Look at numbers. Our project is not going to make traffic worse.

We have to get a stormwater permit that shows that we don't increase rate of water runoff. Accounts for snow. Crosswalk is an important issue to us. We have committed to crosswalk and seeking approvals to do so. Sees this as an educational facility with a housing component.

Kathy Price

K. Price asked what the programs would be. D. Duschene responded with information about programs. List was provided to the city.

Dorren Botelho

D. Botelho said that an ADA path needed.

Jay Dolan, 37 Jean Ave

Jay Dolan said that there would be 9 cars vs. 2 cars for a single-family house. Neighborhood is very busy currently. Will make a neighborhood busier.

Discussion:

C. Cheng asked about snow storage. Asked if owners were willing to pull it out. M. Hamor said snow would be removed if full. C. Cheng asked about glare control. Arborvitae might help. Acknowledge abutter concerns about headlight lights. Adding landscape to help mitigate that. M. Hamor said yes could add. C. Cheng said he concurs with the turnaround area and thinks they should add. M. Hamor said could add loading area and could be utilized for turnaround area. C. Cheng asked if there would be a point of contact for neighbors. D. Jenkins said he wants to manage place until everything is all set. Have done a lot of work in the city. I put my name on it. Want to stay in a manner that respects the neighbors. Property will be monitored 24/7 - clear path will have someone on-site at all times. C. Cheng said to keep neighbors updated on who to contact.

A. Dolan-Wilson thanked residents for coming and voicing their concerns.

T. Linnehan said every time something like this is added in a single family zone zone, the Dover Amendment gives them the right to do so. D. Fuller said it does. We're limited to look at just the site plan. I agree the building looks a lot bigger than other houses in the neighborhood. T. Linnehan asked if there were any thoughts about reducing # of units. D. Duschene said in light of all the questions and new information we provided, we're asking to continue hearing to do those additional changes and provide additional information. D. Duschene said yes has been discussion about reducing units and character in entirety. D. Duschene said he has considered that. That is still a consideration. Lot is large enough to be split into two legally conforming lots in district. Would be limited to SF homes only unless there was a use that met with Dover or variance. Splitting lot and then doing one sf home and then with other lot do a much smaller project that would meet Dover Amendment. D. Jenkins would like to do veteran's facility. Could do something half the size. Build on one lot under the Dover Amendment that is 1/2 the size, half the units. The other lot developed conventionally. D. Jenkins really wants to do a veterans thing. Could make more money doing other things with the lot. D. Jenkins would like to do something with the veterans. We would consider a much-reduced project. Would like to come back to continue.

Motion:

T. Linnehan motioned and C. Cheng seconded the motion to continue the item to October 16. The motion passed unanimously, (3-0).

Definitive Subdivision – 330 Princeton Boulevard, 01851

The Lowell Planning Board will hold a public hearing to hear all interested persons relative to an application by Edson Dos Santos for the property at 330 Princeton Boulevard. The subject property is located in the Traditional Two-Family (TTF) zoning district. The applicant is seeking to subdivide the existing lot, and construct a two-family dwelling on the newly created lot. The newly created lot will not meet the minimum frontage requirement pursuant Section 5.1 of the Lowell Zoning Ordinance. The project requires Definitive Subdivision approval from the Lowell Planning Board under Lowell's Subdivision of Land Regulations.

On Behalf:

None

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

T. Linnehan said that there was an issue with the abutter notice and the item needs to be continued.

Motion:

T. Linnehan motioned to continue the item to October 16, 2023. The motion was seconded by C. Cheng and passed unanimously, (3-0).

**III. New Business**

Definitive Subdivision – 175 Dalton Street 01850

The applicant is seeking Definitive Subdivision approval to split the existing lot at 175 Dalton Street into two lots and construct a new single-family home on the newly created lot. The subject property is located in the Traditional Single-Family (TSF) zoning district. The project received Variance approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals in September 2022. The proposal requires Definitive Subdivision approval from the Lowell Planning Board per the City of Lowell Subdivision of Land Regulations.

On Behalf:

Ken Lania, Applicant's Engineer

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

T. Linnehan asked about utility connections. T. Linnehan said that he had talked to neighbors and they did not have concerns.

C. Cheng said that the new house would fit in well with the neighborhood. IT is a similar scale to current residences.

A. Dolan-Wilson asked what the new address would be. K. Lania said Gason Terrace.

Motion:

T. Linnehan motioned to approve the subdivision approval with the following conditions:

1. The sewer line shall be private and shall connect through Dalton Street; and
2. The applicant shall obtain a stormwater permit.

The motion was seconded by C. Cheng and passed unanimously, (3-0).

IV. **Notices**

V. **Further Comments from Planning Board Members**

VI. **Adjournment**

C. Cheng motioned and A. Dolan-Wilson seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, (3-0). The time was 9:15PM.