



News

\$1.2M GRANT FUNDS WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

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ITEM PHOTO BY SPENSER HASAK

Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy addresses the crowd during her annual update to the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce at the Porthole Restaurant on Friday.

By THOMAS GRILLO

LYNN — The city received a \$1.2 million state grant that will create a new entrance to the city’s first waterfront development in decades.

Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy unveiled the award Friday in her annual update to the **Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce**. The cash, under **MassWorks**, a state program that provides funding to support economic development, will be used to build a southbound turn into the former **Beacon Chevrolet** site on the **Lynnway**. The \$80 million project featuring 348 waterfront apartments is expected to break ground in November.

“These dollars have not only assisted the developer in making the project a reality, but those funds will also help to connect the downtown with the waterfront, creating a walkable, livable community with great housing, businesses, and open space,” she said.

Kennedy, who is seeking a third term this year, never mentioned the race or her opponent, state **Sen. Thomas M. McGee (D-Lynn)**.

Instead, the mayor focused on what she called a series of accomplishments to keep the city moving forward.

North Shore Community College's (NSCC) \$21 million expansion project is nearly complete, the mayor said. Staff has moved into the new space and students will take their seats in new classrooms in September.

“The expansion is testimony to how vital NSCC is to Lynn,” she said. “Much like our K-12 public schools, the college is bursting at the seams and the expansion will go a long way to provide an affordable college education to North Shore students.”

On **Washington Street**, construction is underway by the **Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development** on **Gateway Residences**, 69 units of affordable housing and retail space which, she said, will fuel the city's effort to revitalize a gritty section of the city.

“It will act as a catalyst for other development,” Kennedy said.

The only applause in the 15-minute speech came when the mayor hailed **Lynn YMCA's** plans to expand. She said the city has deeded a 35,000-square-foot portion of **Wheeler Street** to the nonprofit to be used for the facility's expansion.

So far, the Y has raised more than \$7 million in tax credits and another \$7 million in donations for what will be a 70,000-square-foot Y, she said.

“A groundbreaking is coming,” she said. “Lynn will surely have the best YMCA on the eastern seaboard. Take that **Peabody, Lynnfield and Marblehead.**”

Other projects she noted include **23 Central St.**, better known as the **Flatiron Building**. Quincy-based **MG2**, formerly the **Mayo Group**, is converting the former office building in the downtown into 49 market rate apartments. Tenants in the \$12 million project are expected to move in this fall, she said.

The mayor and staff have been meeting with the new owners of the former *Item* building where apartments are planned for the upstairs and retail on the ground level.

“They plan to keep the printing press and we have been talking to them about having them open a microbrewery called the **Press Room**,” she said.

Kennedy also mentioned smaller projects such as the makeover of the **Lynn Marketplace**, the strip mall on **State Street**, and **Hacienda Corona**, a family-owned restaurant that features traditional Mexican dishes on the Lynnway, is expanding to the downtown.

The mayor blamed the city's recent financial woes on the growing public school enrollment. When she took office in 2010, the city had 13,625 students and the school budget was \$107

million. This year, there are more than 16,000 students and the budget has swelled to nearly \$144 million, a 30 percent increase.

“At the same time, some of the city departments have been level funded,” she said. “It’s been quite a struggle to try to keep city services at the current level while at the same time making ends meet.”

Kennedy said the **Lynn Auditorium** continues to expand with more shows than ever. **Donny and Marie** are coming this year. The mayor also mentioned the opening of **Market Basket** at the former **General Electric Factory of the Future**.

“We will continue to lead the way and make Lynn, Massachusetts all that it can and should be: a great place to live work and play,” she said.

James Cowdell, executive director of the **Lynn Economic Development and Industrial Corp.**, the city’s development bank, said the city recently received a \$200,000 grant to clean the contaminated 15,000-square-foot **Whyte’s Laundry** site.

That could clear the way for redevelopment of the shuttered **Anthony’s Hawthorne Restaurant** in the downtown, he said.

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