



Massachusetts Senior Action Chapter Vice President Joan Noble, surrounded by fellow members, thanks all of those involved for keeping the Lynn VA Clinic open. (Spenser Hasak)

Lynn VA Clinic wins fight to stay home

Sidnee Short

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LYNN — After a fight that seemed like it would never end, the Veterans Affairs Clinic was officially granted a lease extension. To celebrate, elected officials and representatives from local organizations gathered at the clinic’s parking lot Thursday.

“Last year, this building behind me was for sale and I got a call at my office that said a developer wanted to tear it down and put residential development

here,” Jim Cowdell, the executive director of the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation of Lynn, said. “I immediately met with Mayor (Jared) Nicholson, and I’ll always remember what he said to me. He said, ‘We cannot allow that to happen.’”

Cowdell told the crowd that the EDIC/Lynn board held an emergency meeting, in which its members allowed him to negotiate for the sale of the property.



EDIC/Lynn Executive Director Jim Cowdell speaks during the celebration of the lease extension on the Veterans Affairs Clinic in Lynn on Thursday.

“So today, let me quote the great Stevie Wonder. We have a lease that is ‘signed, sealed, and delivered,’” Cowdell said.

Cowdell, who emceed the event, invited Nicholson to the podium to make a few remarks.

“There are thousands of veterans who use these services for primary care, mental health care, physical therapy, lab work, and their care is all of our responsibility. We take that seriously,” Nicholson said. “When you make decisions with the most vulnerable in mind, prioritizing help for the people that need it most, you make decisions that make the entire system better off.”

Nicholson thanked everyone who was involved in the lease extension and said that the city has “immense” and “enduring” gratitude toward its veterans and seniors for their sacrifices.

U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton, a veteran of the Iraq War, took the mic, saying that when he was elected to Congress, he made a promise that he would continue receiving his health-care services at the VA.

“I did that because I said, ‘I want to experience what every other veteran experiences. I don’t want to get privileged special care because I’m a member of Congress,’” Moulton said.

As he went to the VA throughout the years in many states, Moulton said he saw both good and bad, and sometimes even a “bit of ugly.”



U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton speaks to the crowd gathered to celebrate the Lynn VA Clinic receiving an extension on its lease.

“I’ll tell you what the ugly was in (Washington D.C.), it wasn’t here,” Moulton said. “But the bottom line for any veteran is that you can’t get good care at the VA if you can’t get to the VA.”

He thanked everyone who made the lease extension possible and described it as a momentous occasion for not just Lynn, but the entire region.

Veterans Services Director Mike Sweeney spoke as well, telling the crowd that the clinic is the single biggest investment EDIC/Lynn has made in its history.

Sweeney said veterans deserve not only great health care, but proximity and access to that care.

“That’s why we celebrate today. Not just because of a piece of paper or a lease, but today we celebrate the tangible commitment to the idea that veterans deserve real access to quality health care in their community. I’m proud to say that the Lynn VA clinic has been a lifeline for more than a quarter-century,” Sweeney said to applause.



Members of the Lynn English Marine Corps JROTC present the colors during the celebration of the lease extension on the Veterans Affairs Clinic in Lynn on Thursday.

Joan Noble, the vice president of the Massachusetts Senior Action Council’s local chapter, said that she volunteered at the clinic for many years. As a result, she said, she has a firsthand understanding of what it means to the veterans who use it.

“Those in service sacrifice so much,” Noble said. “We don’t know and we will never know what they have given up to ensure that we have (rights).”



The Lynn All-City Band plays the national anthem during the celebration of the lease extension on the Veterans Affairs Clinic in Lynn on Thursday.

Throughout the event, the Lynn All-City Band performed pieces such as “The Star-Spangled Banner,” the “Patriotic Medley,” and the “Service Medley.”

The event concluded with state Rep. Peter Capano being awarded for his “outstanding advocacy for veterans.”

“The best part of this thing is... it’s the way everybody came together. It just proves when you come together how much you can accomplish. This is a big deal,” Capano said. “If we all stick together, and continue talking to each other... we can start a conversation on how we can expand services to make this... a model.”



Sidnee Short

Sidnee Short is the Item's Lynn reporter. She graduated from Boise State University with a Bachelor's degree in Media Arts with an emphasis in Journalism and Media Studies. Originally from the Black Hills in South Dakota, she went home after college to write for the region's local paper, The Black Hills Pioneer. Sidnee moved to Massachusetts in September 2023. She enjoys going to concerts, reading, crocheting, and going to the movies in her free time.