



VETERANS DAY IN MARCH

VA signs lease with EDIC to keep medical clinic on Boston Street

For the Item

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LYNN — When the Economic Development & Industrial Corporation (EDIC/Lynn) bought the medical building at 225 Boston St. last year, the primary motivation was to try to ensure that the Veterans Administration Clinic would stay.

The clinic had been recommended for closure by the VA in 2022, leading to months of protests by area veterans and advocates who were desperate not to lose the medical and mental health services the clinic provides to more than 2,000 veterans.

“It is our hope that there is a much better chance of the VA staying now that we own the building,” said EDIC/Lynn Executive Director James Cowdell at the time. “This provides us with the opportunity to not only keep the VA clinic, but also expand veterans’ healthcare services at this site.”

Mission accomplished.

Last Friday, EDIC received from the VA a signed lease for three years with an option for a 3-year renewal.

“We are extremely pleased with this development,” Cowdell said. “This building was EDIC’s biggest purchase ever and it is gratifying to see the plan come together. We understand how critical it is for our veterans to be able access the services that this clinic offers.”

Now that the lease has been signed, Cowdell said he hopes to discuss with the VA expanding services at the 225 Boston St. site.

The EDIC paid \$3.65 million for the 30,000-square-foot building, located on a 1.94-acre lot at the corner of Boston and Franklin streets, across from the site of the former Lynn Hospital (now the Stop & Shop). The building, which was constructed in 1974, was previously owned by Chatham Light Realty Corporation.

“EDIC buying the building was a clear sign that the City was serious about maintaining healthcare services for veterans,” Mayor Jared C. Nicholson said. “We appreciate the collaborative effort that has been ongoing for the last few years to get to this point. We have so many veterans from Lynn and beyond that rely on this clinic for critical medical services.”

There are 11 units in the building, with tenants including pediatricians, a dentist, orthopedic surgeon, and Bridgewell.

“When the opportunity to buy the building was made available, the board did not hesitate,” said Charles Gaeta, EDIC/Lynn board chair. “Sustaining the operation of the VA clinic was the highest priority, and we are thrilled that the lease has been signed.”

Gaeta said the continuation of medical services for veterans in Lynn will benefit the proposal by Neighborhood Development Associates to create more than 50 units of housing for veterans at the former Lynn Armory building.

Mike Sweeney, Director of Veterans’ Services, who has led the effort to keep the VA clinic in Lynn, called the new lease “a huge win for local veterans.”

“This is what we have been fighting for,” Sweeney said. “When the EDIC first got involved, we were optimistic that we would end up with this result, and we are very happy to get here.”

The outpatient clinic in Lynn is a satellite clinic of the Bedford VA Hospital. In March 2022, a recommendation released by the Department of Veteran Affairs called for a closure of both the Lynn and Gloucester clinics in order to consolidate services and open a new clinic in Salem.

“We have been fighting for a long-term commitment from the VA,” said Sweeney. “We want to take care of the veterans who receive services there now as well as meet the future needs of those who are serving today. The goal has been to not only keep the clinic open, but to expand it. Hopefully, that will be the next step in this process.”

EDIC has helped raise more than \$50,000 for veterans’ groups through its annual Freedom Fish Lynn Fishing Derby it runs in partnership with the mayor’s office, Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development and department of Veterans’ Services.



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This article was submitted to The Item and not produced by its editorial staff.