



## Middlesex Canal Association

P.O. Box 333 Billerica MA 01821

November 28, 2023

Dear Fellow Canal Enthusiasts,

The work by the Association since the gift in 2014 of the 1870 storehouse is nearing completion: electricity, water, and a 300' sewer have been connected to 2 Old Elm Street; a 5" reinforced concrete 1st floor has been poured and much of the woodwork on 2½ floors is done awaiting sprinklers and ductwork. While more than \$600,000 in government support has been received, the greater support has been private donations.

The Association took advantage of the long time between plans and today to replace the planned gas heat with a modern heat pump. The heat pump contract is \$143,000 less an NGrid rebate of \$40,000 after construction. The architect and engineers have yet to decide what the change will mean to the rest of the building's systems, part of a delay in construction.

John Hancock, John Quincy Adams, and thirty-one of their compatriots, including one woman, signed on as proprietors of the Middlesex Canal in 1793 for a ten-year project to build 27 miles. It is amazing to realize it will be 10 years in March of 2024 since we started this project. It would not have been possible without the extraordinary help and continued support from our members. Be generous in support now, please.

Bill Gerber, past president of the Association and former Chelmsford member of the MC Commission, had many years ago proposed a bike path be built on the shoulder of I-495 as part of a connection between the Freeman Rail Trail and the towpath at Canal St, Chelmsford. Recently, a 250,000 sq.ft. warehouse has been proposed at the location of the bike path on the I-495 shoulder, and Doug Chandler, a MC proprietor and successor to Bill on the Commission, began an examination of the possibility of the warehouse developer building the bike path on his property. The examination has blossomed into a report on the feasibility of using the Thoreau Towpath of the historic Middlesex Canal as the connecting link for bike paths between the Minuteman Bike Trail at Bedford, the Bruce Feeman at Lowell, and further north over the Rourke Bridge. Doug is assisted in his work by the ad hoc Billerica trails committee.

At the Association winter meeting, Sunday, February 18, 2024, 1pm, Doug will give a talk, "Towpath to Bike Path", on using the historic Middlesex Canal as a bike path. The possibility of a Lowell Middlesex Canal Heritage Park at 1,800' of existing watered canal south of Mt. Pleasant Golf Club will be considered.

Very truly yours,

  
President