

\$9 Million State Grant Brings Harbor Place Expansion, Restaurant, Housing



Rep. Brian S. Dempsey presents Gov. Charlie Baker with a commemorative Harbor Place jacket following the announcement Haverhill has received another \$9 million grant from the state. (WHAV News photograph.)

The state upped its commitment to downtown Haverhill Wednesday with another \$9 million grant that will lead to a second phase of Harbor Place, a riverfront restaurant and market rate housing.

Gov. Charlie Baker made the announcement on the new boardwalk overlooking the Merrimack River. The state MassWorks grant brings to nearly \$45 million the Commonwealth has invested in downtown Haverhill. Flanked by Rep. Brian S. Dempsey, Mayor James J. Fiorentini and other officials, Baker explained what Haverhill is doing right to win the state's support.

"It's the right vision, and it's the right place and it's the right set of projects and initiatives. We're enormously proud to be here and be part of this."

As WHAV reported early last month, the next phase of Merrimack Street growth involves restaurateur and real estate developer Salvatore Lupoli. The Lupoli Companies of Lawrence bid \$700,000 to buy the city parking lot between Haverhill Bank and Rent-A-Center. Lupoli said specifics of his plan are forthcoming.

"Hopefully, we'll be able to make an announcement very shortly. We're certainly going to tell you that we're going to put a restaurant right on this boardwalk a little further down as a result of the MassWorks grant."

Dempsey, whom Fiorentini referred to as "Santa Claus" for his work in bringing state investment to Haverhill, said the grant expands the downtown development footprint.

"Part of today's MassWorks grant will allow for further development this side of Merrimack Street." Dempsey, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, is widely credited for the city's downtown "renaissance." The MassWorks program was created in the Economic Development bill of 2012 championed by Dempsey and other members of the city's legislative delegation. "The program gives communities a single point of entry, a clear set of requirements and a streamlined decision making process that increases access for municipalities to state economic development, housing and infrastructure



Developer Salvatore Lupoli confirms plans for a restaurant along the downtown riverfront boardwalk. (WHAV News photograph.)

funds," a statement said.

Lupoli said he hopes to add market rate housing to his plan. His company had recently circulated a drawing of a 10-story commercial building for nearby 192 Merrimack St. Lupoli is the founder of Sal's Pizza and has redeveloped Riverwalk, near I-495 in Lawrence, among other sites.

"This project today, right now, governor. I have purchased real estate on Merrimack Street. I am committed to a project. I am excited about building restaurants on this boardwalk. I am excited about job creation," Lupoli added.

Fiorentini said some of the state money will further expand the riverfront boardwalk.

With substantial completion of the Harbor Place commercial building and 80 apartments, a consortium of the Greater Haverhill Foundation and the Boston Archdiocese's Planning Office for Urban Affairs is looking ahead to a second phase. Commercial space and up to 35 market rate housing units are slated to replace properties once home to Angel Care Kids Therapy Center and Lahey Behavioral Health Services.

The Foundation's Ronald Trombley welcomed guests to, what he called the "Port of Haverhill."



State Rep. Brian S. Dempsey welcomes Gov. Charlie Baker to downtown Haverhill as Mayor James J. Fiorentini looks on. (WHAV News photograph.)

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