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Downtown group lauds development

By REBECCA LIPCHITZ, Sun Staff

LOWELL A downtown advocacy group recognized several local real estate developers yesterday, saying their contributions helped "change the face of downtown Lowell."

The Center City Committee, a nonprofit that develops and recommends goals, plans and programs to benefit the downtown economy, held its annual meeting yesterday at the Middlesex Community College Federal Building.

The committee touted real estate developers, particularly those who have added high-end housing to previously unoccupied downtown buildings.

"They're changing the face of downtown Lowell," said committee member and City Councilor James Milinazzo, who spoke on behalf of Mayor Armand Mercier, who could not attend.

City Manager John Cox presented the awards.

"These buildings had no life in them not that long ago," said Cox of the more than 396 units of housing which have sprung up in Lowell's redeveloped mill buildings since 2000. According to city records, another 358 units are under construction and another 299 are planned and permitted.

Among those awarded yesterday include Christopher Starr, whose Boston-based company, Winn Development, built the Boott Mills apartments; developers Jeffrey Brooks and Matthew Abrams of the Abrams Group LLC in Boston, which