

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER**

**April 22, 2010
LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL**

Commission Members Present: Peter Schneider, Chair
Timothy McCann
James Crowley
Janet Merrill
Duaiye Gibli

Staff Present: Edgar Luna, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:33 P.M.

MINUTES

Mr. Luna informed the Commission that the April 4, 2010 minutes would be submitted for review prior to the May 13, 2010 meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **20 Whitman Road (HC-2010-005) – Certificate of Appropriateness and Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Chair Schneider asked the audience if the petitioner was present, but no one came forward. Mr. Luna informed the Commission that he had not received any notification from Jeanice Sherman, petitioner, stating the she would not be present, and/or that she was requesting a continuation of the hearing. Chair Schneider stated that the hearing on this petition would be tabled to the end of the meeting to allow additional time in case the petitioner was not able to be present on time.
2. **127 Austin Street (HC-2010-008) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Chair Schneider asked the audience if the petitioner was present, but no one came forward. Mr. Luna informed the Commission that he had not received any notification from Michael Razzo, petitioner, stating the he would not attend the meeting and/or requesting a continuation of the hearing. Chair Schneider stated that the hearing on this petition would be tabled to the end of the meeting to allow additional time in case the petitioner was not able to be present on time.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 3. 950 Main Street (HC-2010-014) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Robert Longden, representative for Clark University, petitioner, and Paul Bottis, Physical Plant Director at Clark University, presented the petition. Mr. Longden stated that the petitioner was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to replace two-hundred and forty (240) wood windows in the Jefferson Academic Center with aluminum windows; however, he stressed that the nine (9) stained-glass windows on site would not be replaced. He also indicated that the proposed replacements would match the original windows in shape and color. Mr. Longden further indicated that the majority of the existing windows are single glazed, do not contain weather stripping, most are inoperable and have been compromised from the effects of bee infestation. In addition, Mr. Longden stated that due to these deficiencies, the existing windows had become a source of air infiltration and corresponding heat loss, as well as energy consumption. Mr. Bottis indicated that Clark University was proposing to install energy efficient multi-panel aluminum windows that would resemble the existing windows as closely as possible, and indicated that the new windows would assist in improving ventilation of the building and reduce outside noise significantly. Chair Schneider requested clarification regarding the removal and replacement of the arched windows as to whether or not the replacements would look like the original windows. Mr. Bottis stated that the proposed arch windows would be of the same dimensions as the original windows, and would include the arch in the upper section. Chair Schneider stated that, in his opinion, the replacement of the square windows would have the same look as the original windows; however, he indicated that the arch windows included architectural details that were historically significant to the building. Consequently, he indicated that he would like to see additional renderings of the proposed windows detailing the arch section. Mr. Bottis indicated that another alternative would be to bring a partial sample of the proposed arch windows to allow Commission members an opportunity to have a close inspection of the type of windows proposed. Chair Schneider asked Mr. Longden if Clark University had considered window restoration versus window replacements. Mr. Longden indicated that the existing windows could not be restored due to the extensive rotting and deterioration, and the fact that the majority of the existing windows had become inoperable. Mr. Longden indicated that such condition constituted undue economic hardship for the applicant. Chair Schneider stated that in order to consider undue economic hardship, the petitioner would need to submit a written estimate comparing the cost of window restoration versus the cost of window replacement. Mr. Bottis stated that he understood the concerns expressed by Commission and indicated that he would be able to provide written cost estimates at a future meeting. He also added that Clark University does not have as much money as people perceive them to have. Mr. Longden stated that in order to provide the information requested by the Commission, additional time was necessary; therefore, he requested a continuation of the hearing to June 10, 2010 and an extension of the constructive grant deadline to June 14, 2010. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 5-0 to continue the hearing to June 10, 2010. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 5-0 to extend the constructive grant to June 14, 2010.

- 4. 64 Beacon Street (HC-2010-015) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Robert Longden, representative for Beacon Herman LLC, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr Longden stated that the petitioner was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to demolish the entire building complex on site. Mr. Longden stated that as indicated by Mr. Luna’s memorandum dated April 12, 2010, the correct address for this petition was 64 Beacon Street, and not 64-79 Beacon Street as indicated in the application. He also indicated that the structure formerly located at 79 Beacon Street had already been demolished; therefore, the current petition only pertained to the building complex located at 64 Beacon Street. Mr. Longden further stated that the petitioner was seeking complete demolition of the structures on site due to the fact that the buildings had been abandoned for many years and were in an advanced state of disrepair. He also indicated that in addition to the state of disrepair, the buildings had structural deficiencies which could not be corrected; consequently, he indicated that demolition was the only alternative to reviving the site for the construction of multi-family dwellings. In addition, Mr. Longden stated that the parcel of land on which the buildings are located is critical for the development of residential dwellings on site, and added that without razing the buildings it would not be feasible to restore and redevelop the site, which in turn constituted undue economic hardship for the petitioner. Councilor Barbara Haller stated that she had always admired the existence of the Historical Commission; however, when she heard of the proposed demolition petition, she celebrated their existence. She also indicated that she strongly opposed the demolition of the structures on site, as she believes buildings can be restored and reused for residential uses. Ms. Haller further stated that during the previous week she had participated in discussions with the City Manager regarding a private investor’s interest in redeveloping the buildings on site for residential uses. In addition, Ms. Haller pledged to the Commission that she would work her hardest in conjunction with the City Manager to find a new owner for the site. Deborah Packard, Executive Director of Preservation Worcester (PW), expressed opposition to the proposed demolition indicating that 64 Beacon Street had been in the “Most Endangered Structures List” of PW. She also added that the buildings on site had significant historic value for the City of Worcester, as they played a pivotal role as incubators for emerging manufacturing businesses such as the steel industry, and as one of the largest manufacturing centers of the City. Mr. Luna informed the Commission that Joel Fontane, Director of Planning and Regulatory Services was not able to attend the meeting and asked him to convey his apologies. Mr. Luna stated the 64 Beacon Street parcel is listed in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), and in the National Register of Historic Places as NRDIS (National Register District), and NRMRA (National Register Multiple Resource Area). Mr. Luna further indicated that on December 16, 2003, City Council ordained an amendment to the Worcester Zoning Ordinance to create an Adaptive Reuse Overlay District (AROD) in the area of Beacon Street where this parcel is located, which allows for the reuse and redevelopment of the vacant industrial buildings to include a variety of uses including residential uses. He also said that on October 13, 2004, the petitioner received three (3) approvals from the Planning Board to convert the former manufacturing buildings into a 181 dwelling unit multi-family structure (a) Definitive Site Plan, (b) More Than One Building on a Lot and (3) Special Permit for Adaptive Reuse Overlay District. Mr. Luna also informed the Commission that 64 Beacon Street was one of the few remaining factory buildings of the

5. **3 Maywood Street (HC-2010-016) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Michael Pagano, representative for Clark University, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Pagano stated that the petitioner was seeking to remove and replace the existing asphalt shingles on the roof with like materials and make alterations to the egress to the addition on the original structure. Mr. Pagano also indicated that the proposed alteration to the non-original section of the house would improve wheel chair accessibility to building. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crawley and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed changes would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester; therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.

6. **20 Whitman Road (HC-2010-005) – Certificate of Appropriateness and Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Chair Schneider asked the audience if the petitioner was present, but no one came forward. Upon reviewing the petition submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner McCann, and seconded by Commissioner Gibley, it was determined that the proposed restoration and replacement of the slate tiles on the roof, and replacement of tiles along the edge of the roof with flat-seam copper was not appropriate and compatible with the preservation and protection of

7. **127 Austin Street (HC-2010-008) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Chair Schneider asked the audience if the petitioner was present, but no one came forward. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crawley and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 0-5 that the proposed changes would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester; therefore, the motion failed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was not approved.

OTHER BUSINESS:

8. **Crown Hill Local Historic District Committee Update:** Mr. Luna informed the Commission that there was no new information regarding the Crown Hill Local Historic District Committee.
9. **Section 106 Review Requests:** Mr. Luna informed the Commission that DPRS had received 2 Invitations to Comment regarding the installation of personal wireless service facilities at St. Christopher’s Church located at 950 West Boylston Street, and at 100 Front Street. Chair Schneider stated that he had read the information and felt there was no need to send any comments on behalf of the Commission regarding the installation of telephone wireless equipment on both structures.
10. **2 Southbridge Street – Poli’s Palace (aka Hannover Theatre) – National Register Nomination.** Mr. Luna stated that Leslie Donovan, representative for the Hanover Theatre had sent a letter to DPRS to inform the Commission that she had submitted a National Register Registration form for the former Poli’s Palace Theatre (a.k.a. Hanover Theatre).
11. **Requests for Letters of Support:** Mr. Luna informed the Commission that the Planning Division received five (5) Letters of Support requests pertaining to the following MACRIS-listed properties: (a) 48 Water Street, (b) 26-34 Grove Street, (c) 140 Eastern Avenue, (d) 29 High Street and (e) 44 Portland Street. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crawley and seconded by Commissioner Merrill the Commission voted 5-0 to issue the Letters of Support requested.

ADJORNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 PM.