

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
February 6, 2014**

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Kevin Provencher, Chair
Timothy McCann, Clerk
Karl Bjork
Randolph Bloom

Commission Members Absent:
Andrew Shveda
Erika Dunn

Staff Members Present: Stephen Rolle, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Deborah Steele, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Provencher called the meeting to order at 5:41 p.m.

Chair Provencher took a moment to welcome Randolph Bloom as a new member of the Historical Commission.

Old Business

1. 220 Salisbury Street (HC-2013-070):

Erjona Irene Mehillaj appeared on behalf of the application for Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver on a petition for:

- (1) Installation of white vinyl fence
- 2) Front window replacement

Chair Provencher stated this property is part of the Montvale District and a white vinyl fence has been erected on the property and a picture window has been replaced on the home and from his understanding that permits were not obtain from Inspectional Services to do the work.

Ms. Mehillaj stated that was correct as her and her husband were unaware that they needed to obtain permits to do the work.

Chair Provencher asked if a contractor had done the work. Ms. Mehillaj stated they did it privately.

Chair Provencher stated they would take the application in two parts and would begin with the window portion and in his opinion that this property is not a contributing property but still part of the District and Commission still needs to review the work.

Commissioner McCann stated that no matter where a property is located you need to obtain a building permit to do window replacement and his question to the applicant was how was the window going to be trimmed out as currently the window is not done. Ms. Mehillaj stated her and her husband travel a lot and have not been able to complete the work but they are working with contractor to finish the work,

Ms. Mehillaj stated the windows was over 50 years and old and National Grid had done an assessment and said window needed to be replaced

Commissioner McCann asked for clarification on who was actually performing the work. Ms. Mehillaj stated it was a contractor but a family member.

Commissioner McCann stated he agreed with the Chair the property is not a contributing property but the Commission needs to look at design review and whether the changes would take away from the District.

Ms. Mehillaj stated there is not a big difference with the window but the cost for a smaller window was more cost efficient. Commissioner McCann stated that the Commission does look at economic hardship and if she had applied for a building permit she would have come before the Commission and the Commission could have looked at that.

Chair Provencher stated he doesn't believe the window replaced had any historic value but the issue is whether the replacement window detracts from the district and he has viewed the property and the work looks incomplete. He stated he believes the choice of the window is fine but the quality of the installation is not good.

Commissioner McCann stated he agrees with Chair Provencher and wants to know when the detail of the window will be complete as right now it looks bad as it looks unfinished and until it is finished it will detract from the neighborhood.

Commissioner Bjork asked if appropriate to ask for a date when window installation it will be completed. Chair Provencher stated when Commission votes they could vote a condition on a time line at that time.

Chair Provencher stated that the fence was installed without a permit and Commission would need to vote on a Certificate of Appropriateness on the fence and the issue is whether the fence is appropriate for the Montvale District and in his opinion he did not feel the applicant made a great choice in type of fence as there is no other fence in the District similar to one she installed and the white vinyl is not the right choice for the District and a wood fence would have been an more appropriate choice.

Commissioner McCann stated the fence is completely not in keeping with the District and doesn't believe a hardship could be considered as it a small fence and would be easy enough to replace.

Commissioner Bjork stated he agrees with the Chair and Commissioner McCann.

Jeanice Sherman, an abutter, stated she agrees that house is non contributing but still a part of the neighborhood so material on the exterior of the house should remain in keeping with the neighborhood and the use of vinyl replacement window and the vinyl fence are quite jarring when you see it and style of the fence is not appropriate. She also questioned the fact that the property owner has two sheds on property and not sure if that is allowed.

Bruce Bunke, 3 Montvale Road, stated he was a former chair of the Historical Commission stated he had no concerns with the window and his comments were directed toward the fence and doesn't believe a white vinyl fence would fit in any of the historical district and the proper solution for this property would be to plant some shrubbery that would grow in in lieu of the fence and it not an acceptable excuse that work was done as without obtaining a building permit.

Chair Provencher stated some good comments were made and there is a good system in place and it wasn't followed and stated a vote would be taken in two parts.

Commissioner McCann stated that the possible acceptance of a vinyl replacement window is not based on an economic hardship and the decision is being made only due to fact that the home is a non contributing property.

Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 4-0 that the Building Demolition Delay Waiver is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved with the condition that the window be completed within thirty days.

The Commission voted on the Certificate of Appropriateness. Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 0-4 that the retroactive approval for installation of a white vinyl fence is appropriate for the district. The motion failed, therefore the Certificate of Appropriateness petition was denied.

Exhibit A: Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application received November 13, 2013; prepared by Erjona Mehillaj.

Exhibit B: Letter from Jeanice Sherman to the Worcester Historical Commission re: 220 Salisbury Street; dated October 10, 2013 and received October 16, 2013.

Exhibit C: Letter from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to Erjona Mehillaj; re: Notice-Montvale Historic Design Review Process; dated October 23, 2013.

Exhibit D: Letter from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to Erjona Mehillaj; re: Notice-Installation of the fence and the front window required Montvale Local Historic District Design Review Process; dated October 28, 2013.

Exhibit E: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Worcester Historical Commission; re: 220 Salisbury Street; dated January 9, 2014.

New Business:

2. 14 Gage Street (HC-2014-001):

Steven West appeared on behalf of the petition for a Building Demolition Delay Waiver for retroactive approval for removal/replacement of the front porch, side deck and railings.

Mr. West stated in October 2013, he hired a contractor to replace an old and unsafe worn out lower front deck and side deck on property he owns at 14 Gage Street and did not find out until the contractor was finished that the contractor had not applied for the proper building permits and he was advised by Inspectional Services that he would need to come before the Commission for retroactive approval for the work done.

Chair Provencher stated this was a fairly straightforward application and unfortunate the contractor did not do his due diligence and house is 113 years old and nothing was changed and the work being done was just being replaced in kind.

Chair Provencher asked about the walkway on the side of house and asked what was the construction was. Mr. West stated it was plywood.

Chair Provencher asked where it led to. Mr. West stated it was rear egress.

Chair Provencher asked if rear egress was original. Mr. West responded it was original.

Commissioner McCann stated he did not believe it was original feature of the house.

Chair Provencher stated he had no issue with what was done.

Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 4-0 that the Building Demolition Delay Waiver is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application received January 9, 2104 and dated January 9, 2014.

3. 363 Plantation Street (HC-2014-003):

Doug Kelleher from Epsilon Associates appeared on behalf of the petitioner, Sedler Corporation on a request for Building Demolition Delay Waiver to:

- Petition Purpose:
- (1) Repair/repoint brick masonry and chimneys;
 - (2) Remove/replace wood windows with new wood windows to replicate existing;
 - (3) Remove/replace wood and metal doors with wood;
 - (4) Repair porches and replace with in-kind as necessary;
 - (5) Repair slate roof, replace with in-kind as necessary;
 - (6) Remove/replace porch slate roof & replace with standing steam copper;
 - (7) Replace flashing and fasteners with copper

Mr. Kelleher stated the proposed plan is to convert the building from current office use to an extended stay hotel associated with the Beechwood Hotel.

Mr. Kelleher stated there will be minimal exterior renovations.

Chair Provencher asked if it would be insulated glass for the windows. Mr. Kelleher responded yes.

Mr. Kelleher stated they did receive state historic tax credits and have applied for federal credits which is under review by the Parks Service.

Chair Provencher asked whether the Parks Service standards are the ones applicant would need to adhere to. Mr. Kelleher stated yes.

Chair Provencher stated those are very rigorous standards so this would be a very solid application.

Chair Provencher stated there is a lot of work but most is being replaced in kind except the porch roof on the south elevation and the slate roof is being replaced with copper and he asked to know why. Mr. Kelleher stated if replaced with slate snow would come from upper roof and cause damage.

Chair Provencher stated that will most likely will happen anyways as there are no gutters and there is a long term maintenance problem that will be need to address and suggested the applicant should review that.

Chair Provencher stated that there are much more materials that are more durable that could be used for porches and would ask that the applicant look into that and that the applicant look into snow guards for the roof. Mr. Kelleher stated there are snow guards but they are not working as well as they should.

Chair Provencher stated that the property owner should look at drainage at the northwest corner porch entrance and the property may want to look at drainage improvements in that area.

Chair Provencher asked if the storm sashes and widows would be removed and replaced with wood divided light with insulated glass. Mr. Kelleher stated that would be correct.

Chair Provencher and Commissioner McCann stated the report presented to the Commission was very detailed.

Commissioner Bloom asked what color the windows would be. Mr. Kelleher stated it had not been decided at this time.

Mr. Kelleher stated they would also be looking for a letter of support for the Commission. Chair Provencher stated Mr. Kelleher could send request to staff and they would vote on item at the next meeting.

Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 4-0 that the Building Demolition Delay Waiver is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved.

Other Business

3. Communications Received:

Letter from the Massachusetts Historical Commission re: 55 Salisbury Street; dated January 23, 2014 and received January 16, 2014. No comment

Letter from Preservation Worcester re: Hale Building at Worcester State Hospital; dated January 8, 2014 and received January 17, 2014. No comment

Electronic Communication from Heather Gould re: Fire Alarm Building; dated January 29, 2014. No comment

Request for a Letter of Support for Nomination of Susan Ceccacci for 2014 Massachusetts Historical Commission Preservation Award for Individual Achievement.

The Commission voted 4-0 to provide Letter of Support for Nomination

949 Main Street – Notification from Building Commissioner regarding requested demolition of historic building per Revised Ordinance Chapter 9, § 13 (l)”

Mr. Rolle stated this was a communication from Inspectional Services that the building needed to be demolished due to unsafe conditions.

Commission Provencher asked that staff take some photos of the building before it is torn down.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon a motion the Commission adjourned the meeting at 7:16 p.m.