

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

MAY 14, 2020

LEVI LINCOLN ROOM, ROOM 309 – CITY HALL

Commission Members Participating: Mark Wamback, Chair
Devon Kurtz, Vice-Chair
Diane Long
Randolph Bloom
Tomi Stefani
Janet Theerman
Erika Helnarski, Alternate

Commission Members Absent: Cathryn E. Jerome-Mezynski, Alternate

Staff Members Participating: Stephen Rolle, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services
Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services

Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor’s March 23, 2020 Order, as amended, imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting was conducted through remote participation. The meeting was livestreamed from the City of Worcester website and via the local cable access channel and is available for streaming online. Public participation was facilitated through a call-in number, 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 730323290#), which was publicized on the posted meeting agenda and during the video broadcast.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES –

April 30, 2020 – Upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the April 30, 2020 meeting minutes, with Commissioners Long and Helnarski not voting due to their absence at the April 30, 2020 meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Certificate of Appropriateness

1. 4 Congress Street – HC-2020-025 (MBL 03-026-00032)

Petitioner: Emilio Mendez
Year Built: 1850
Historic Status: MACRIS listed; Crown Hill Local Historic District (LHD); State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register of Historic Places District (NRDIS); National Register Multiple Resources Area (MRA), FKA James and Persis H. Andrews/Freeman Brown – Louis Lewisson House

Petition Purpose:

- Paint house
- Pave driveway
- Replace windows
- Rebuild 30 feet of concrete walkway
- Erect fallen column next to driveway
- Replace wood fence

The applicant for 4 Congress Street was not present on the call. The item was held until the end of the meeting. During the meeting, Ms. Johnstone tried to get ahold of the applicant via phone and email without success. The item was postponed to the May 28, 2020 meeting.

Certificate of Non-Applicability

2. 12 Crown Street – HC-2020-032 (03-026-00039)

Petitioner: Aly Abayazeed
Year Built: 1854
Historic Status: MACRIS listed; Crown Hill Local Historic District (LHD); State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register of Historic Places District (NRDIS); National Register Determination of Eligibility (DOE); Preservation Restriction

Petition Purpose:

- Replace sliding windows on rear of house with new sliding windows
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Aly Abayazeed, owner of 12 Crown Street, spoke of behalf of the item. He stated that the window glass in the second floor sunroom windows needs to be replaced. However, he found that just replacing the glass was not cost effective, and that all the windows need to be replaced. He stated that he contacted Home Depot, who provided him with several options for new windows. He chose Andersen 100 100 Series 1 Panel Slider windows in a black finish, similar to the existing windows, as replacements.

Commissioner Wamback stated that he appreciated the applicant coming forward to have the work reviewed. Ms. Johnstone stated that the rear of the house, which is where the windows in question are located, is not visible at all from the street. She also noted that the house does have a preservation restriction, however the restriction does not extend to include work on the rear of the house.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Long, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public hearing.

Mr. Abayazeed asked for clarification on what he would need to go to the Commission with regarding work going forward, because he is new to the process. Ms. Johnstone stated that since his house is located in a Local Historic District, he would need to come before the Commission with any work proposed to the exterior of the house or to the parcel.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed changes consisting of replacement of rear windows as described at 12 Crown Street is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission and is therefore not applicable due to the fact it (the windows) is in the rear of the building and not visible from the street, and approved the Certificate of Non-Applicability.

List of Exhibits

1. Certificate of Non-Applicability Application, dated May 4, 2020, received May 5, 2020.
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COMMUNICATIONS (TAKEN OUT OF ORDER)

C Letter from the MBTA re: request for concurrence of findings in historical technical memo of no adverse effects within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) related to proposed work at Union Station, 2 Washington Square.

Holly Palmgren from the MBTA spoke on behalf of this communication. She stated that the MBTA, in association with the Worcester Redevelopment Authority, came before the Commission at the last meeting regarding the Union Station project. After that meeting, she submitted a request for concurrence of findings of no adverse effects for the project.

Ms. Palmgren went on to clarify that at the last meeting, they presented to the Commission regarding demolition delay. At this meeting, the MBTA is requesting that the Commission concur with the MBTA's findings of no adverse effects as part of the Section 106 process, which is required because the project is receiving funding from the FTA.

Commissioner Wamback stated he has no issue with the work, and that it is needed to upgrade what is currently failing. Commissioner Long stated that she agreed that there are no adverse effects and that the project should be supported. Commissioner Bloom agreed, saying that buildings of this nature need to be functional.

Upon a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 that there are no adverse effects to historical resources in concurrence with the technical memorandum submitted by the MBTA.

B Letter from Craig Blais at the WBDC re: follow-up information on the Hale Building, including a list of developers provided with the Hale Building RFP; the Hale Building Architectural Code Review, prepared by Gregory J. O'Connor Associates, Inc.; and the Hale Building Structural Code Review, prepared by Johnson Structural Engineering, Inc.

Mr. Rolle stated that he WBDC reached out to staff after failing to get a demolition delay waiver on the building. They said that they were considering once again issuing the RFP to try to find someone to redevelop the building. Worcester's demolition delay ordinance actually calls for the Commission to support efforts to redevelop a property once the delay period is in effect. Mr. Rolle stated that this is an effort by the WBDC to reach back out to the Commission to try to find a way that the City and the Commission can support another run at the RFP. The WBDC has compiled a long list of potential developers that they plan to issue the RFP to, and they have also asked the Commission whether they have any suggestions on who the RFP should be issued to. The Commission cannot offer recommendations for developers. However, Mr. Rolle suggested that the Commission might consider issuing a statement in response to the letter supporting the intent to reissue the RFP, and suggesting that the RFP be opened to all qualified developers rather than a pre-screened list, and suggesting that the City's Office of Economic Development assist the WBDC in any way that they can in terms of publicizing and supporting the RFP.

Chair Wamback stated that he thinks that the suggested statement seems like a great way to handle it, and stated that it would be great if the Economic Development office could work with them to find a solution. He stated that he looked at the whole breakdown of everything, and noted that although there were many structural and other issues, he is not a contractor and doesn't know how easy those fixes would be.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he has no knowledge of contracting, but the building is significant enough that it needed to have the demolition delay, but he also thinks that the Commission needs to find ways to be supportive of maintaining some sort of semblance of what this building looks like on the exterior. Maybe that means broadening the way the Commission looks at particularly challenging buildings in finding a new use.

Commissioner Stefani agreed with Mr. Rolle's suggestions of providing full support of finding a new use of the building. He also stated that the reports were quite detailed, but you can't put a dollar sign on the restoration of the building based on those reports. Commissioner Wamback agreed, stating that he isn't sure if what was presented in the reports is common for a building of that age.

Commissioner Long stated that she went through the reports submitted and didn't see anything that was much different than what was discussed when the applicant came before the Commission. She stated that she was impressed with the list of developers provided and that she was glad that they plan to reopen the RFP. She agreed that the RFP should be open to all developers. She stated that she thinks the Commission should give the WBDC their support.

Mr. Rolle stated that opening up the RFP would allow any qualified developer to respond to it. He read a potential statement that the Commission could issue into the record: "The Worcester Historical Commission is pleased to learn that the WBDC intends to issue an RFP seeking potential developers who are interested

in the preservation and adaptive reuse of the Hale Building. We encourage the WBDC to open the RFP process to all qualified development teams, and recommend that the city's Office of Economic Development publicize and support the WBDC's efforts."

Upon a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to forward a communication in favor of the WBDC's efforts thus far and to offer support in the future.

A-1 Communication from the MHC re: Project Notification Form for the demolition of the Hale Building (AKA Nurse's Building) at the former Worcester State Hospital Campus at 305 Belmont Street; invitation to comment

A-2 Project Notification Form received by the MHC re: the demolition of the Hale Building (AKA Nurse's Building) at the former Worcester State Hospital Campus at 305 Belmont Street

Upon a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 6-0 to not issue comment to the MHC.

D Request for a new letter of support from MacRostie Historic Advisors for the Washburn & Moen North Works Cotton Mill, 90 Grove Street.

Ms. Johnstone stated that this is a new tax credit project, and that MacRostie is looking for a letter of support in favor of the rehabilitation of the exterior and interior of the building in preparation for future commercial, retail, and office use.

Upon a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to issue a letter of support to MacRostie Historic Advisors in favor of the project.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 PM.