

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

August 20, 2020

CITY HALL*

Commission Members Participating: Mark Wamback, Chair
Diane Long
Tomi Stefani
Janet Theerman
Erika Helnarski, Alternate

Commission Members Not Participating: Devon Kurtz, Vice-Chair
Randolph Bloom
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: 1608081191#), which was publicized on the posted meeting agenda and during the video broadcast.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 6, 2020: On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the August 6, 2020 meeting minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

1. 12 Westland Street – HC-2020-035 (MBL 11-008-00019)

Petitioner: Jonathan Rigali

Year Built: 1897

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; National Register District (NRDIS); National Register Multiples Resource Area (NRMRA); State Register of Historic Places (SR), FKA C.A. Chandler House

Petition Purpose:

- Remove existing slate roof and replace with architectural shingles

Jonathan Rigali of Rigali Roofing and Lisa Brennan of the Genesis Club participated on behalf of the item. Mr. Rigali gave a brief overview of the project. He stated several options that had been considered, and presented estimates requested by the Commission at prior meetings. He stated that financial hardship is still being claimed.

Chair Wamback stated that he believes there is a financial hardship in replacing and eventually maintaining the slate. He asked for clarification on the proposed replacement materials. Mr. Rigali stated that he is recommending either an architectural shingle or the Slate Line shingle. He stated that the Genesis Club would like to install architectural shingles. Ms. Brennan agreed.

Ms. Brennan stated that the Genesis Club would prefer the architectural shingle, stating that they like the appearance and are happy with the warranty. She stated that the Genesis club would be willing to make the concession and select the Slate Line shingle if it was something the Commission felt strongly about.

Chair Wamback stated that he thought the Slate Line looked more like what was being replaced, but that he could be convinced to approve an architectural shingle given the financial constraints of the organization.

Mr. Rigali noted that additionally, many construction plants have shut down and he believes it would be harder to acquire the Slate Line shingle, and it would likely be more expensive than the original quoted cost. Chair Wamback stated that he understands that given the circumstances, he understands the difficulties explained by Mr. Rigali.

Commissioner Stefani expressed that he believes the Commission should not be looking at only the subject property, but that the Commission should be looking at the history of the entire neighborhood. He stated that he leans more toward the Slate Line product.

Commissioner Long asked for a clarification on the cost estimates for the repair of the slate versus the replacement of the slate with Slate Line. Mr. Rolle and Ms. Johnstone explained.

Commissioner Theerman stated that she feels that the slate roof should be maintained, and by agreeing to the Slate Line, the Commission is already compromising. She stated, also, that an architectural shingle will not look anything like the original.

Commissioner Long stated that she supposes it really doesn't matter whether the Slate Line product or an architectural shingle roof is to be used if the Commission is looking at it from a financial hardship standpoint, as the removal of the slate will be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City regardless of which replacement product is used.

Mr. Rigali stated that he noticed that many other houses in the neighborhood have architectural shingle rooves that have been installed within the last five years and would have had to have been approved by the Commission, and asked why the Genesis Club is being made to jump through hoops to do the same thing. Ms. Johnstone noted that at the time the National Register Nomination was written, many houses already had asphalt shingle rooves, and as such any subsequent replacements would have been approved administratively and not by the Commission.

Mr. Rigali again noted that he feels there is a financial hardship.

Public Comment

Chair Wamback read a letter submitted by Deborah Packard of Preservation Worcester. Ms. Packard stated that she believes that the slate roof at 12 Westland Street significant to the structure and its residential neighborhood, and that Preservation Worcester opposes waiving demolition delay.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 4-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 0-4 that the proposed demolition at 12 Westland Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester, and voted to deny the Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 2-2, with Commissioners Long and Stefani being the yeas and Commissioners Theerman and Helnarski being the nays, that the issuance of a Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 12 Westland Street is necessary to avoid an undue economic hardship to the property owner, and voted to deny the Certificate of Hardship.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A. Building Demolition Delay Waiver, dated May 11, 2020, and received May 13, 2020

Exhibit B. Quote sheet prepared by Rigali Roofing, received August 6, 2020.

Exhibit C. Quote prepared by Global Slate, received August 20, 2020

Exhibit D. Repair quote prepared by Quality Contracting, dated December 19, 2019, received August 20, 2020.

Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver

2. 220 Salisbury Street – HC-2020-038 (MBL 20-007-0030A)

Petitioner: Erjona Mehillaj

Year Built: 1952

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR), within the Montvale Local Historic District (LHD)

Petition Purpose:

- Redesign front exterior concrete stairs and front walkway (retroactive)

The applicant requested a continuance.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted 5-0 to continue the item to the September 3, 2020 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

3. 9 Germain Street – HC-2020-056 (MBL 11-010-00013)

Petitioner: Lou Amorati

Year Built: 1897

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register of Historic Places District (NRDIS); National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA), FKA S. Goodwin Foster House

Petition Purpose:

- Conversion of window-to-door and infill of existing door at junction of the rear wall of the main block and the side wall of the rear ell
- Create new fenestration opening in the side wall of the rear ell
- Alter the fenestration pattern of the side elevation by turning an existing door into a window
- *All above work is retroactive.*

Lou Amorati of Gilmore Building Company participated on behalf of the item. He gave a synopsis of the work that had been done so far, and stated that it wasn't their intent to circumvent the Commission. He stated that it was an unintentional oversight. He stated that the pictures in the slideshow show all the work that has been done.

Chair Wamback stated that the Commission will take the three items separately, beginning with the conversion of a window to a door and the associated infill. Commissioner Long stated that this work is barely visible from public view. Chair Wamback stated he doesn't think this work was a big issue.

Chair Wamback next addressed the new window on the side of the ell. He stated he thinks that this work changes the look of the home. Commissioner Long asked trim to match the trim on existing windows throughout the home, would be added to the new window. The applicant confirmed.

Chair Wamback next addressed the item concerning turning the existing door into a window. Commissioner Long stated she thinks that this work is an improvement. She stated that she thinks that the changes look fine especially considering that the trim around the windows will be retained.

No public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition at 9 Germain Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A. Building Demolition Delay Waiver application dated July 20, 2020, and received July 21, 2020.

Exhibit B. Additional photographs of area houses with similar changes submitted by the applicant on August 20, 2020.

4. 144 Elm Street – HC-2020-057 (MBL 06-002-00014)

Petitioner: Robert Eyles

Year Built: ca. 1906

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register of Historic Places District (NRDIS); National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA), FKA Rawson Three-Decker

Petition Purpose:

- Remove existing slate roof and install architectural shingle roof

Robert Eyles of Eyles Contracting participated on behalf of the application. He gave an overview of the intent of the application, which is to remove the slate roof and replace it with architectural shingles.

Commissioner Theerman noted that it doesn't appear as though the roof is very visible. Mr. Eyles agreed, stating that this is a three-decker, so you would have to step back several hundred yards to see it.

Commissioner Long stated that in this case, the fact that the roof has slate is not anywhere near as important as it was on the Westland Street property where it was so visible. Chair Wamback agreed, stating that the neighbors have the same types of roofs [architectural shingles], so the change would be consistent.

No public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition at 144 Elm Street would not be detrimental to the historical of architectural resources of the City of Worcester and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

Certificate of Appropriateness

5. 24 Crown Street – HC-2020-058 (MBL 03-024-00021)

Petitioner: Joseph Aquino o/b/o Thomas Aquino

Year Built: 1866

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register of Historic Places District (NRDIS); National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA), within the Crown Hill Local Historic District (LHD), FKA Elijah Flagg Brooks House #2 and the Trinity Hall – First Methodist Church Hall

- Regrade and repave driveway
- Demolish stone wall and install new retaining wall
- Repair garage roof decking and install steel roof
- *All above work is partially retroactive.*

Joseph Aquino participated on behalf of the application. He gave an overview of the application, stating that he was talking on behalf of his father. He stated a new contractor was being sought to finish or redo the work.

He stated that the driveway will be fixed and regraded. He stated that the intent as far as the wall is to take down the existing wall and replace it with a wall similar to one that a neighbor has. The intent for the garage is to repair it and possibly in the future put a steel roof on it.

The applicant stated that there is confusion over the exact boundary line of the parcel, so there is a possibility that the stone wall is actually partially on a neighbor's property. Ms. Johnstone stated that the assessing department or a real estate attorney could be contacted to find out where the property line is. Mr. Rolle stated the only way to find out the true property line would be to have a surveyor come out. He stated that if the wall is partially on a neighbor's property, both parties would need to sign off on the application.

Chair Wamback stated that he doesn't think that the regrading and repaving of the driveway is an issue. He also stated he likes the substitute wall presented.

There was discussion about different ways the approval of the wall portion of the application could be handled, given the confusion over its ownership. The applicant stated he wants everything to be finalized as soon as possible. Mr. Rolle stated that the risk of the Commission taking a vote without the permission of the neighbor, who possibly owns a portion of the wall, is that if they (the neighbor) did not agree with the proposal, the application process would need to be started all over again. Mr. Rolle also stated that that one piece of the application could be held until the next meeting, only delaying that one piece by two weeks to give the applicant an opportunity to speak with the neighbor.

Commissioner Wamback noted that he had no issue with the applicant putting a surface on the garage roof, given that it is flat and barely visible.

Commissioner Theerman noted that the wall being proposed looks nice but doesn't look anything like the wall that is there now. Commissioner Long agreed, stating that she's not sure the proposed wall is appropriate for the Crown Hill Historic District.

Commissioner Stefani stated that he thinks enough stone remains to rebuild the wall.

Chair Wamback noted that the wall proposed is located in the same neighborhood as the subject property.

Ms. Johnstone stated that the proposed wall is granite block and would be appropriate. [This was an erroneous statement. On a subsequent visit to better inspect the wall, it was discovered to be concrete block].

Mr. Aquino gave the reasoning behind why the wall in question is being proposed, including primarily safety and monetary reasons.

No public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

Mr. Rolle asked Ms. Johnstone if, in her opinion, the driveway work is a candidate for a Certificate of Non-Applicability. She stated that give that the driveway is being regraded, she doesn't believe so. There was further discussion among staff regarding the best way to vote on the items on the application.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed changes at 24 Crown Street consisting of the regrading and repaving of the driveway, as well as repairing the garage roof, are appropriate for the Crown Hill Local Historic District, and voted to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition at 24 Crown Street, excluding the demolition of the stone wall which will be considered at the September 3 meeting, would not be detrimental to the historic or architectural resources of the City of Worcester and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to continue the item concerning the proposed changes to the retaining wall to the September 3 meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Response to the MHC from Robert Para Jr., AIA, project architect for the Doherty Memorial High School project, regarding the July 15, 2020 request for more information.

No action was taken on this item.

- B. Request for updated letters of support for the following properties for PAL:

1. Bancroft Hotel, 50 Franklin Street
2. Worcester Boys' Club, Lincoln Square
3. Worcester County Courthouse, 2 Main Street
4. Cheney-Ballard Building, 517 Main Street

On a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to issue updated letters of support for the above listed projects.

- C. Request for an updated letter of support for Whittall Mills (Mill Building #1 and #3), 3–5 Brussels Street, for MJ Whittall, LLC
On a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to issue an updated letter of support for the above listed project.
- D. Request for an updated letter of support for Mission Chapel, 205 Summer Street, for the Traggorth Companies, LLC.
On a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to issue an updated letter of support for the above listed project.
- E. Request for an updated letter of support for Torrey Razor Company Building, 128 Chandler Street, for VHB.
On a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to issue an updated letter of support for the above listed project.

OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Discussion regarding Demolition Delay Ordinance Revisions and Commission Regulations, Policies & Procedures.

This item was held.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.