



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

Thursday, December 21, 2023

Remote participation only – <https://cityofworchester.webex.com/meet/historicalcommissionwebex> and
call-in number 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1608081191).

Commissioners Present: Diane Long, Chair
Janet Theerman, Vice-Chair
Erika Helnarski
Devon Kurtz
Donald Northway
Tomi Stefani
Vanessa Andre, Alternate

Commissioners Absent: Devon Kurtz
Steven Taylor

Staff Present: Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)

Call Commission to Order – 5:30 PM

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six in favor and zero opposed to approve the minutes of May 4, 2023.

On a motion by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six in favor and zero opposed to approve the minutes of November 30, 2023.

Old Business

Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver

1. 42 Somerset Street (02-041-00075) – COA-23-25

Petition purpose: Replace roof (retroactive)

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to continue the public hearing for 42 Somerset Street to January 4, 2024, and to extend the constructive grant deadline to January 19, 2024.

New Business

Certificate of Non-Applicability

2. 32 Oxford Street (03-017-0001A) – CNA-23-31

Petition purpose: Replace roof

Diego Calle, the owner, participated in the meeting. He stated the purpose for his petition, which was to replace the existing flat roof on the building, which is not visible from the street.

The Commission had no questions for the applicant.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed work at 32 Oxford Street is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission. Having gained a majority affirmative vote, the request for a Certificate of Non-Applicability was approved.

3. 51 Cedar Street (02-046-0053B) – CNA-23-32

Petition purpose: Replace roof

Robert O’Neil, an owner, participated in the meeting. He stated the purpose for his petition, which was to replace the asphalt shingle roof at the property with a new architectural asphalt shingle roof of a similar color to the existing. The Commission had no questions for the applicant.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed work at 51 (AKA 51A) Cedar Street is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission. Having gained a majority affirmative vote, the request for a Certificate of Non-Applicability was approved.

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

4. 3 Harvard Place (02-027-04+05) – BDDW-23-59

Petition purpose: Replace windows & doors, repair brick as needed

Mark Schulman of Lexington Holdings, LLC, on behalf of the owner, Steven Taylor, participated in the meeting. He reviewed the scope of work, consisting of general masonry repairs and non-historic window and door replacements, noting that the work had previously been approved but that the decision had expired.

Commissioner Stefani asked what the treatment would be for an opening at the front that is currently covered with plywood. Mr. Schulman stated that the goal would be to restore it to its historic appearance, of which a historic photo was shared.

Public comment

None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed work at 3 Harvard Place, consisting of replacing windows and doors and selectively restoring and replacing masonry would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a majority affirmative vote, the request for a Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

5. 92 Jaques Avenue (06-015-00035) – BDDW-23-60

Petition purpose: On the rear elevation, remove non-compliant railings and vinyl siding, close in existing porches, add two windows, and install new vinyl siding

Michael Bonnette, the contractor, on behalf of Yarock Memorial Housing, participated in the meeting. He reviewed the scope of work, consisting of closing up rear porches, covering with vinyl siding, and inserting windows in existing openings.

Chair Long reviewed the scope of work, noting that the work was on the rear of the building.

Commissioner Stefani asked for clarification on the scope of work, which Mr. Bonnette provided.

Public comment

None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed work at 92 Jaques Avenue, consisting of removing non-compliant railings and vinyl siding, closing in existing porches, adding two windows, and installing new vinyl siding on the rear elevation, would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a majority affirmative vote, the request for a Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

6. 25 Frothingham Road (22-031-00003) – BDDW-23-61

Petition purpose: Replace windows

Richard Prunier of Northeast Home & Energy, on behalf of the owner, Alex Hoppe, who Mr. Prunier stated was out of the country.

Mr. Prunier described the scope of work, which would be to replace nine existing wood windows, which he said were rotted, with vinyl replacement windows that would match the grid pattern of the existing windows.

Ms. Johnstone asked Mr. Prunier if the windows would be simulated divided light windows or if the grids would be between the glass. Mr. Prunier stated that the proposed windows would have grids between the glass.

Chair Long stated that the Commission does not generally approve vinyl windows, especially with the grids between the glass. Ms. Johnstone noted that he spoke with the contractor at the time the application was submitted and let him know that the window proposed would almost certainly be denied.

Mr. Prunier said that due to the location of the property, in one year, the work would be approved. Chair Long notes that the work would not be approved, but that the year delay would be enforced to allow for time for other options to be explored.

Commissioner Andre asked if the owner had investigated repairing the windows, to which Mr. Prunier replied that he had been hired to install vinyl windows for energy efficiency. Commissioner Andre noted that most energy loss in homes is generally through the walls, that only a small amount of energy is lost through windows, and that if good storms were installed, the energy efficiency of the historic windows would be comparable to that of a new window.

Chair Long asked if the contractor would like to continue to a later date so that the owner could attend the meeting, noting that if a vote was to be taken, it would likely not be positive. Mr. Prunier stated that the Commission might as well take the vote.

Public comment

None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted zero (0) in favor and six (6) opposed that the proposed work at 25 Frothingham Road, consisting of replacing existing wood windows with grids between the glass vinyl replacement windows, would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having failed to have gained a majority affirmative vote, the request for a Building Demolition Delay Waiver was denied, and the twelve (12) month delay was upheld.

7. 282 Highland Street (11-010-00010) – BDDW-23-62

Petition purpose: Remove and replace all siding and trim

Janelle Wilson of Jeremiah’s Inn, accompanied by Zack Kirdulis of Remodel or Renew Home Improvement, participated in the meeting.

Ms. Wilson described the scope of work, consisting of replacing existing non-historic aluminum siding with vinyl siding, and replacing existing wood trim elements with PVC replicas. She also stated that she was hoping to correct the half-timbering in the façade gable peaks, which is asymmetrical, and to make the window profiles in the second story of the façade match.

Members of the Commission expressed concern over the former historic double house, which was likely designed to be intentionally asymmetrical. Ms. Wilson stated that she would be fine with it being designed to match the existing.

Public comment

None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed work at 282 Highland Street, consisting of replacing all siding and trim, but retaining the window shapes and design of the half-timbering on the façade, would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a majority affirmative vote, the request for a Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

Communications

- A. Request from Epsilon Associates for updated letters of support for Walker Shoe Factory – 28 Water Street, Second State Mutual Company – 340 Main Street, Ransom Taylor Block – 526 Main Street, Kane Building – 204 Main Street, Sargent Card Clothing Company – 300 Southbridge Street.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six in favor and zero opposed to issue updated letters of support.

- B. Request from Epsilon Associates for new letters of support for Worcester Five Cents Savings Bank – 316 Main Street and Clark Block (former Shack’s Building) – 401–409 Main Street.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six in favor and zero opposed to issue a new letter of support.

Communications

- A. Request from Ryan, Inc., for updated letters of support for Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit allocations for 35, 42, 47 & 50 Lagrange Street, 90 Grove Street, 98 Beacon Street, 660 Main Street, 55 Salisbury Street, 2 Ionic Avenue, 1 Exchange Place, 134 Gold Street.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to issue updated letters of support.

- B. Request from The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., for updated letters of support for Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit allocations for 205 Summer Street, 21 Cedar Street, 16 Salisbury Street (Lincoln Square), 17 Hermon Street.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to issue updated letters of support.

- C. Solicitation of comments from the City of Worcester regarding 11 Wall Street, 116 Harrison Street, 123 Rodney Street, 22 Sigel Street, 28 Courtland Street, 29 Stoneland Road, 305 Cambridge Street, 34 Granby Road, Gardner Street.

No comment.

Other Business

None

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long, the Commission voted six (6) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m.