

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

**MARCH 23, 2006  
418 MAIN STREET, SUITE 400**

**Commission Members Present:** Peter Schneider, Chair  
Thomas Conroy, Clerk  
J. Thomas Constantine  
Sally Jablonski  
Michael Theerman

**Staff Present:** Joel Fontane, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services  
Edgar Luna, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services

**REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Peter Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- 1. Prioritization of 2006 Goals and Objectives:** Joel Fontane, Director of Planning and Regulatory Services, informed the Commission that the Prioritization of the 2006 goals and objectives is currently under review. Once the review has been completed, a final report will be submitted to the Historical Commission.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- 2. Board Member Status:** Mr. Fontane informed the Commission that Chair Peter Schneider had sent a letter to the City Manager Michael O'Brien, dated March 10, 2006, requesting the permanent removal of Commissioner Brian Batty from the Worcester Historical Commission, and to initiate the required process to fill this vacancy with another person.
- 3. Application Fee Information:** Mr. Fontane informed the Commission that following a review of the \$100.00 fee currently charged to process Demolition Delay Waivers and Certificates of Appropriateness applications, it was determined that such fee had been

arbitrarily set, and that the Commission never voted to adopt it. Therefore, the Division of Planning and Regulatory Services has suspended charging fees for all Historic Commission applications until proper procedures and fees are established. Mr. Fontane indicated that a new fee schedule will be submitted to the Commission in the near future for discussion and adoption. Chair Schneider and Commissioner Conroy expressed concern that a new fee schedule may become an unwarranted burden for applicants, especially if the fee is higher than previously charged. Both Commissioners requested that efforts be made to keep the new fee schedule as minimal as needed.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- 4. Massachusetts Historical Commission Staff Support:** Chair Schneider informed the Commission that Christopher Skelly, a staff member from the Massachusetts Historical Commission had expressed interest in attending one of the Worcester Historical Commission meetings in the near future to discuss strategies to strengthen relationships between both Commissions, and discuss mutual goals and concerns.
- 5. Southgate Place Demolition:** Chair Schneider requested an update on this project and reiterated his request that this item be kept in the agenda under Unfinished Business on a regular basis. Mr. Fontane acknowledged his request, and indicated this item had been inadvertently missed in this meeting's agenda. Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the voted 5-0 to request an update from the City administration regarding the status of the Southgate Place Demolition project.
- 6. Information Request from the Division of Code Enforcement:** Chair Schneider stated that the Worcester Historical Commission is unaware of the process implemented by the Division of Code Enforcement to ensure that all Building Demolition Delays and Certificates of Appropriateness are implemented accurately as issued by the Worcester Historical Commission. Upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Sherman, the Commission voted 5-0 to request the Director of Code Enforcement to respond to the following questions within three months:
  - **What is the standard process implemented by the Division of Code Enforcement to follow up on Building Demolition Delays and Certificates of Appropriateness issued by the Worcester Historical Commission?**
  - **What Process is implemented by the Division of Code Enforcement to ensure that all Building Demolition Delays and Certificates of Appropriateness issued by the Worcester Historical Commission are implemented correctly?**
  - **What process is implemented by the Division of Code Enforcement when a Building Demolition Delay or a Certificate of Appropriateness is not carried out as approved by the Worcester Historical Commission?**

**7. Firemen Memorial Update:** Chair Schneider stated that the Commission has not yet been notified by the Parks and Recreation Division regarding the proposed Firemen Memorial on Grove Street, in particular as it pertains to the proposed bridge that will connect Institute Park with the proposed memorial. He stated that it was within the jurisdiction of the Commission to be informed of the design and status of the memorial, specifically, the bridge design, which will alter the overall landscape of the park. Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 5-0 to request that the Parks and Recreation Division director attend a meeting of the Commission within the next three months to provide information and updates on the following items:

- **An update on the design of the Firemen Memorial**
- **An update on the design of the bridge that will connect Institute Park with the Firemen Memorial on Grove Street**
- **An update on the renovations/alterations to Institute Park**
- **An update on the building status of both.**

**8. Highland Street Firehouse:** Chair Schneider stated that the Highland Street Firehouse appeared to be neglected and in poor condition. He stated that the expertise of the Commission members regarding historic preservation could play a pivotal role in making recommendations to City administration regarding restoration alternatives for this historic site, as well as alternative uses. He also expressed interest in requesting permission from City administration to tour the facility to assess its condition. Upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Jablonski, the Commission voted 5-0 to request that City administration provide the Commission an update regarding plans for this historic site, and to allow the Commission members to tour the facility to assess its current condition.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Peter Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7: 30 pm.