

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

**JULY 27, 2006
418 MAIN STREET, SUITE 400**

Commission Members Present: Peter Schneider, Chair
Tom Johnson, Vice-Chair
Thomas Conroy, Clerk
Sally Jablonski
Thomas Constantine

Staff Present: Robin Bartness, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Lara Bold, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Commission tabled discussion of the July 13, 2006 minutes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 1. 215 Cambridge Street (HC-06-13):** The Commission members reviewed the Form B for the property at 215 Cambridge Street. Denis Leary, Executive Director of Massachusetts Veterans, Inc., presented the petition. He indicated that the Board members of Massachusetts Veterans, Inc. had decided not to install vinyl siding as part of the proposed renovations and opted, instead, to repair the historical features of the building. In a letter to the Commission dated July 18, 2006, Mr. Leary indicated that the proposed renovations will return the building as much as possible to its original condition and maintain all historic aspects of the building, "carefully repairing the exterior surfaces for paint and repairing damaged wood, trim, doors, and windows." Mr. Leary explained that the current ramp entering the front of the building, which is not original to the building, will be removed as it does not meet current ADA (American Disabilities Act) requirements, and the handicapped entrance will be relocated to the rear of the building. Mr. Leary inquired as to whether the Commission had any color preferences for the building. Commissioner Johnson informed Mr. Leary that the Commission has no purview over color choice and stated that a common misunderstanding is that historic buildings should be painted white. He suggested Mr. Leary discuss ideas for colors with staff at Preservation Worcester. Commissioner Johnson also stated that the renovation of this structure is especially important since most of the architectural features on other residences in the neighborhood have been removed or demolished. Mr. Leary informed

the Commission that the current windows are not original to the structure. Commissioner Johnson stated that rear porch of the building also appears to not be part of the original structure and stated that it also appears unsafe. Mr. Leary added that the current rear porch is not an egress for the building and will be removed. Upon a motion by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, *the Commission found that the proposed demolition associated with the removal of the rear porch, ramp, and general repairs at 215 Cambridge Street, as referenced in a letter to the Commission, dated July 18, 2006, would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage or resources of the City of Worcester* and approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver 4-0 (Sally Jablonski abstained as she was not present for the entire hearing).

Commissioner Jablonski arrived at 6:00 p.m.

2. **21-23 Crown Street (HC-06-16):** Doug Clough, representative for Abby's House, presented the petition. Mr. Clough presented the Commission with a proposed rendering of a black exterior iron railing, measuring 36" high that will replace the current lattice around the front porch. The railing was designed by Ryan Ornamental Iron, Inc. of Worcester, Massachusetts. Mr. Clough indicated that the metal railing is a simple design that will accomplish the safety goals of the organization as well as provide a more aesthetically pleasing railing. In addition, he stated that Abby's House will preserve the existing wooden columns in their current location. Commissioner Conroy clarified that the Commission had already voted on the repair of the damaged fascia board and re-pointing of the brick area at the front of the building, and that the pending vote would be made relative to the front porch. He also requested that the applicant send a photo, if possible, of the completed project to the Division of Planning and Regulatory Services for the file. Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Johnson, the *Commission found that the proposed demolition associated with the addition of a metal railing, as referenced in the rendering submitted on file with the City of Worcester, would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage or resources of the City of Worcester* and approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARINGS

3. **30 Waconah Road (HC-06-17):** Ms. Bold informed the Commission that the petition for 30 Waconah Road had not been properly advertised as a Certificate of Appropriateness and, would, therefore, be heard on August 14, 2006 to allow staff sufficient time to readvertise the petition.

OTHER BUSINESS

4. **Haberlin Hall, College of the Holy Cross:** John Lapomardo, representative for College of the Holy Cross, and Jeremy Oberc, architect for the project, presented a preliminary proposal for updates to the college's science building, Haberlin Hall, in order to receive feedback from the Commission. Mr. Oberc indicated that the renovations would include replacing all the windows with new, energy efficient windows; removing louvers associated with the current

heating units; adding additional windows to the blank northern wall of the building; and constructing an addition to the building. He explained that the three architectural styles currently represented in Haberman Hall and the multiple architectural styles throughout the campus were taken into consideration during the preliminary design of the new addition. Mr. Oberc indicated that the project seeks to maintain a simple design that would not compete with other styles. He also informed the Commission that the art deco style of the windows would be maintained. Mr. Lapomardo informed the Commission that the project will not receive any federal funding. Chair Schneider requested that Mr. Lapomardo inquire as to whether or not the Massachusetts Historical Commission would require a letter of support from the Worcester Historical Commission, and, if so, to let the Commission know as soon as possible. He also requested when the project officially comes before the Commission that the architect provide more detailed information regarding the window treatment as well as closure of the louvers.

5. **James Street Complex– Wireless Telecommunications Facility:** Chair Schneider stated that the proposal had come before the Commission due to proximity of the proposed wireless communications facility to the Heard Street School. He also stated that the area is quite industrial and that he has no objections to the proposed tower. Upon a motion by Commission Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed wireless telecommunications facility would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage or resources of the City of Worcester.
6. **Chapter 139 Hearings:** Commissioner Johnson indicated that he has been attending the Chapter 139 hearings. He stated that a few of the owners and/or developers present at the meetings were not aware that their properties are listed on MACRIS and a few had completed exterior work on their structures without appearing before the Commission. Commissioner Johnson stated that the overriding issue is that owners of buildings on the MACRIS list have never been notified that their properties are listed. He also indicated that knowledge of MACRIS listing may be important for determining insurance needs. Commissioner Johnson suggested that staff also check the City Treasurer's Foreclosed Tax Title Properties list for MACRIS listed properties.
7. **Worcester State Hospital:** Chair Schneider stated that he and Deborah Packard, Executive Director of Preservation Worcester, had attended a meeting regarding historic preservation efforts for the new Worcester State Hospital. He indicated that the Massachusetts Historical Commission may have some influence over what preservation efforts are undertaken and may be able to create a Memorandum of Understanding, but that the Worcester Historical Commission's influence would be limited to expressing concerns through the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Chair Schneider expressed hope that the state government would vote in favor of supplementary funding to preserve and restore the clock tower. He also stated that preservation efforts of other historical structures on site will be challenging due to the project's low-rise, spread out design which is recommended by the Department of Mental Health to improve conditions for staff and to create a more community, cluster-based feel.
8. **Tour of Worcester Center for the Performing Arts:** Commissioner Constantine stated that three members had toured the Worcester Center for Performing Arts. He indicated that the

northern elevation of the building where the applicants had proposed aluminum siding should not be of concern to the Commission since the wall already has the imprint of a previous building on it.

9. **July 13, 2006 meeting minutes:** Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the July 13, 2006 minutes as amended.
10. **Appointments:** Sally Jablonski indicated that she had been appointed a full member. She also informed staff that she had not received a letter from the City Clerk or City Manager's office, only congratulatory letters from the City Councilors. Commissioner Johnson informed her that she should be sworn in at the City Clerk's office.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.