

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

**OCTOBER 12, 2006  
418 MAIN STREET, SUITE 400**

**Commission Members Present:** Peter Schneider, Chair  
Michael Theerman  
Thomas Constantine  
Jeanice Sherman  
Thomas Conroy  
Nicholas Plante

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

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Sherman, it was voted 4-0 by Commissioners Conroy, Sherman, Schneider, and Plante to approve the August 10, 2006 minutes. The Commission tabled discussion of the September 14, 2006 and September 28, 2006 minutes.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- 1. 17 Southgate Place/Armory Building:** Lara Bold informed the Commission that Timothy McGourthy, Director of Economic Development, would give an update on the Armory Building at the October 26, 2006 meeting.
  
- 2. Fire Alarm Telegraph Building:** Ms. Bold presented the Commission with a written update from Robert Antonelli, Acting Parks Commissioner, relative to securing the Fire Alarm Telegraph Building. Mr. Antonelli's letter indicated that the Parks department has addressed all openings within the building, secured them and installed an alarm system for the facility. Furthermore, they have completed the necessary roof repair and are exploring temporary fixes for the gutters and other items that were brought up at the meeting. The items, such as the slides and maps that are in the facility will remain on site in the building. Commissioner Schneider indicated that the Commission was also interested in the flashing on the uppermost ridgeline.

2. **Law Department Requests:** Ms. Bold informed the Commission that there were no new updates from the Law Department regarding the draft guidelines or special assessments.
3. **MACRIS listed Properties:** Ms. Bold informed the Commission that there were approximately 15 properties on the MACRIS list, whose addresses had changed as a result of name changes for Millbury and Ballard Streets, associated with the Route 146 work. Ms. Bold also informed the Commission that she would provide those address changes to the MACRIS Coordinator at the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
4. **Building Permit Triggers:** Ms. Bold presented brochures from the Division of Code Enforcement indicating what events trigger the building permit process and, thus, a historic building status check.

## NEW BUSINESS

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

1. **31 Louise Street (HC-06-25):** Steven McEwell, petitioner and owner of property at 31 Louise Street, presented the petition. Mr. McEwell informed the Commission that the structure is a three-family dwelling built in 1918. He indicated that the building has sagging porches due to cracked and rotted roof trusses. He stated that he plans to remove the trusses and re-locate the second and third floor porches and porch roofs to their appropriate location. Mr. McEwell also indicated that the proposed exterior work will be behind the existing sheathing. Commissioner Sherman inquired as to whether or not shingles would have to be removed in the process. Mr. McEwell stated that the shingles are not in contact with the area he will be repairing but that he may, at a later date, replace some of the damaged shingles with new shingles. *Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Sherman, the Commission found that the proposed demolition associated with the porch repair, as referenced in the site plan 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 4-0.*

Commissioner Theerman arrived at 5:45 p.m. and indicated that the downstairs door was locked.

2. **427 Main Street (HC-06-26):** Robert Branca and Matt Doyle, representatives for the petitioner and owner, Jill Cheng, presented the petition. Commissioner Schneider stated that the Form B for the property indicates that the first floor of the proposed Dunkin Donuts structure had already undergone substantial renovations in the 1970s. Mr. Branca stated that the building needs a second means of egress to meet ADA requirements and that due to lease restrictions, including the lack of permission to use the northerly entrance on Main Street, the best option was to create a new entrance near the existing vestibule. Mr. Doyle stated that the handicapped ramp will be located inside the building. He also informed the Commission that the rounded step had already been replaced with new granite. Mr. Branca stated that it would be extremely difficult to locate the second entrance and handicapped ramp on the Front Street side of the building because of lack of access to the basement which would be necessary to create the appropriate slope. He stated that the lease did not include access to the basement.

Mr. Branca indicated that the Dunkin Donuts would have gooseneck lighting, gold leaf lettering, and that the inside would have granite and cherry wood cabinetry. He also indicated that the project includes removing and replacing the windows to provide additional sun protection. Mr. Branca and Mr. Doyle informed the Commission that they preferred not to place the second means of egress so close to the existing vestibule, but because the landlord had security concerns and concerns about the cost of having to update additional sections of the office building to meet ADA requirements, the proposed location was the most feasible. Commissioner Theerman stated that buildings like the structure at Harrington Corner are crucial to defining the character of the City. He suggested the Commission consider denying the petition and require the owner or the City to reevaluate the options. Mr. Branca stated that several other entities had tried and failed to negotiate a deal with the current landlord and that they had acquired a 40 year lease after eight months of negotiating. Commissioner Constantine stated that allowing an external ramp onto Front Street would be just as unaesthetic as placing the second egress in the currently proposed location. Additionally, he stated that it would take up space on the public sidewalk. Mr. Doyle indicated that the ramp would have to be five feet long and would have to follow the side of the building on Front Street. He also stated that the slope of that section of the sidewalk would be an issue. Mr. Branca indicated that the developers are eager to receive approval because the mechanical systems of the current Dunkin Donuts building are failing and they have 90 days to construct and leave that building. Commissioner Schneider stated that building's first floor already underwent substantial changes in 1972 and stated that he did not feel the proposed door would be detrimental to the historical value of the building. Commissioner Sherman suggested that the applicants consider adding some additional architectural features to the second entrance to compliment the existing features of the vestibule. Commissioner Schneider stated that the Commission is not an architectural design review board. Commissioner Conroy stated that buildings like the one at 427 Main Street were traditionally designed for commercial uses on the first floor, and because of that, important architectural features were generally placed on the second and third floors of the building. He also stated that the pilasters and the door are the only significant architectural features on the first floor. *Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission found that the proposed demolition associated with the removal and replacement of the storefront windows and the addition of the second entrance, as referenced in the site plan 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 4-2 (Commissioners Theerman and Sherman opposed).*

- 3. 26 Portland Street (HC-06-27):** Edward C. O'Donnell, representative for the Mayo Group, petitioner and owner, presented the petition. Mr. O'Donnell stated that the building is a 1-1 ½ story building known as the Glick Dealership. He stated that the proposal seeks to remove a portion of the building facing Portland Street to provide parking for a proposed Asian supermarket and restaurant. He also stated that the Mayo Group seeks to replace the windows with similar heat-insulated windows and that the rounded window that are currently existing, will be maintained for the restaurant above. Mr. O'Donnell also stated that the doorway will be removed. *Upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Sherman, the Commission determined that the proposed demolition of a*

*portion of the building as indicated in the site plan dated July 2006, submitted on file with the City of Worcester, was not detrimental to the architectural and historical resources or heritage of the City of Worcester and approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver hearing 5-0.*

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1. James Street Complex – Revised Telecommunications Facility** – Upon a motion by Commissioner Sherman and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 4-0 (Commissioner Theerman was not present for the vote) that the revised plans for the Telecommunications Facility would not be detrimental to the architectural and historical resources or heritage of the City of Worcester.
- 2. Minutes:** Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Sherman, the Commission approved the September 14, 2006 minutes and the September 28, 2006 minutes with corrections.
- 3. Hadley Building 651 Main Street:** Scott Hayman on behalf of the developers for the Hadley/Burwick building stated that after four years, the developers have achieved the necessary \$15 million dollar of funds from State/Federal tax credits, Mass Housing Funds, local HOME funds, CDBG funds to complete the residential development. Mr. Hayman also stated that in order to complete the redevelopment, the building known as the Sears Caravan Building would require demolition. He stated that the Worcester Historical Commission had approved the proposed demolition in 2002. Commissioner Sherman indicated that she remembered the hearing. Mr. Hayman indicated that there are several other meetings, deadlines and public processes that must be undertaken in order to release funds and requested that the Commission hold a special meeting on November 2, 2006 in order to hear the petition on an earlier date.
- 4. Meeting Schedule Change:** Several of the Commissioners indicated that the November 2, 2006 meeting would work with their schedules. Upon a motion by Commissioner Sherman and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 5-0 to cancel the November 9th and November 30th Historical Commission meetings. The Commission voted 5-0 to hold meetings on November 2nd and November 16, 2006, instead.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.