

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

**DECEMBER 28, 2006
44 FRONT STREET, ROOM 300**

Commission Members Present: Peter Schneider
Thomas Conroy
Michael Theerman
Thomas Constantine
Sally Jablonski

Staff Present: Ruth Gentile, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Joel Fontane, 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 Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, it was voted 5-0 to approve the December 14, 2006 minutes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Fontane informed the Commission that Lara Bold was working on the guidelines and the rules and regulations for the Commission which would be sent to the Law Department for review. Chair Schneider stated that it seemed as though the rules and regulations were administrative, while the guidelines were more about the historic concerns of the Commission. Mr. Fontane stated that the Law Department would clarify all of the concerns and that a draft would be presented to the Commission for its review in February and then the process would proceed with the Commission's comments and edits.

Mr. Fontane informed the Commission that he had not met with Dennis Hennessy regarding the Commission's request for matching grant money for the MPPF Grant and that he would report back at the Commission's next meeting. Chair Schneider asked if the money must be used for a survey or if the Commission could chose another project. Commissioner Theerman stated that the grant is due February 21, 2007.

23 Oxford Street – (HC-06-35) - Building Demolition Delay Waiver and Preservation Restriction: Jonathan Finkelstein, representative for Ian Gow, presented the Commission with a document that Massachusetts Historical and Preservation Worcester are willing to sign. He

stated that this document is the instrument that would be recorded on the property. He, also, stated that in order to improve the process and procedure on these restrictions that the recording takes place after the changes are granted. He stated that this is a new process for Preservation Worcester and Worcester Historic Commission and that Massachusetts Historical Commission would be removing themselves from the process. He stated that the property at 23 Oxford Street was formerly owned by the Society of Friends and that in 1972 the Society wanted to relocate and that they made an agreement with a bank, so the bank could take the building down and use the lot for parking. The property was then purchased by Worcester Heritage Society and they put the preservation restrictions on it. In the 1980's, Preservation Worcester and the City of Worcester signed off and allowed it to be used as an office and later it became a church. Mr. Finkelstein stated that Mr. Gow plans to make the building a residential use. He stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals has granted a special permit for 6 units and parking for 12 cars, but that the project will be for 5 units and 10 parking spaces. He stated that Preservation Worcester facilitated a meeting with the neighbors in the Crown Hill area and that the scope of the project was presented to them. Mr. Finkelstein presented the scope of the project as follows: 1) All the basement windows will be changed, some with slider windows, some will be in four foot wells and will be 4 over 1 with the wells being stone based and a granite cap; 2) Argon-filled windows will be put on the outside over the stained glass windows that will remain and will be able to move up and down and the trim will be replicated with wood and painted; 3) Basement entrance will have synthetic brick and simulated slate roof; 4) air conditioning compressors will be moved to a concrete pad and granite monuments will be used for screening; 5) There will be no dumpster and Preservation Worcester has requested that this remain as a restriction; 6) Parking lot will be paved approximated 12-1/2 feet from the base of the tree; 7) Retaining wall between 23 Oxford Street and 66 Chatham Street will be retained along with its vegetation; 8) Gas lines on the Chatham Street side will be moved and the window above them will be fixed; 9) Chatham Street exit will be replaced with a metal door with metal cladding; 10) Basement bulkhead will be removed and replaced with a well window; and 11) Landscape plan. Commissioner Theerman was concerned about whether the windows were being changed for aesthetic purposes and asked if Preservation Worcester had signed off on the basement windows. Ms. Packard stated that an architect from Preservation Worcester had given the applicant some suggestions and many of them are in the scope of work. Upon a motion by Commission Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission found that the demolition associated with the proposed exterior work as presented would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City and approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver 5-0, excluding items 5, 6, 7 and 11, because they are not under the purview of the Board.

Commissioner Theerman stated that the restriction on the property says that no more than 20% of the lot can be paved and this plan is calling for 32% to be paved. Mr. Finkelstein replied that the lot is currently gravel and that their plan is going to pave for only 10 parking spaces as requested by Preservation Worcester and that they are using the City of Worcester's standards for parking lot with a concrete perimeter. Chair Schneider was concerned with catch basins in the parking lot. Mr. Finkelstein stated that the preservation restrictions should be conditioned on the Law Department and City Council review and then would be amended and restated. He stated that the purpose of the request to the Worcester Historic Commission is to allow relief for the proposed residential use and then substitute the new restrictions and this is done by using the template from Mass Historic and then adding the exhibit which in this case is the scope of work.

Deb Packard stated that Preservation Worcester and an attorney have reviewed the document and they have no problem with it and that the attorney is willing to work with the City of Worcester on the restrictions, similar to the GAR Hall situation. Commissioners Schneider and Conroy were concerned that they did not have the finished document and that it was premature to vote on it. Commissioner Theerman stated that the Commission agrees with the scope of work and is setting aside restrictions to get the scope of work done. Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the project and alterations to restrictions in accordance with the scope of work subject to the revised, amended, restated document from the Law Department.

NEW BUSINESS

292 Lincoln Street (HC-06-35): Patricia Gates, representative for James Charcharone, the petitioner submitted a letter requesting a continuance of the Building Demolition Delay. Upon a motion by Commission Conroy and seconded by Commission Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to continue the Demolition Delay Waiver to January 11, 2007.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Gentile presented an update on the geocoding of the MACRIS list. She stated that there were 415 properties that had addresses that were not in the City of Worcester's address list database and that there were another 600 properties on the list that did not have street addresses and were listed by a common name. Ms. Gentile presented a map of the City of Worcester with the MACRIS listed properties plotted. The Commission discussed using the map to help in deciding where the next survey would be done and focused on the Quinsigamond Village area as a possibility.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.