

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

**August 28, 2008**

**CHASE BUILDING, 44 FRONT STREET, WORCESTER  
SUITE 300 – CONFERENCE ROOM**

**Commission Members Present:** Peter Schneider, Chair  
Michael Theerman  
Janet Merrill  
James Crowley  
Timothy McCann

**Staff Present:** Joel Fontane, Planning and Regulatory Services  
Ruth Gentile, Planning and Regulatory Services  
Edgar Luna, Planning and Regulatory Services

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The minutes from the July 31, 2008 meeting were accepted and the minutes from the August 14, 2008 meeting were accepted as amended.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- 1. 17 Hermon Street (HC-2008-057) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Carl Benander, petitioner, is seeking to replace existing wood siding with vinyl siding and remove and replace all windows. He stated that the front design will match the soffit with vinyl crown window coverings and an awing will be added. Chair Schneider noted that the front of the building was not original and Commissioner Theerman asked if the cornice brackets on the rear of the building would remain. Mr. Benander stated that brick was to be re-pointed and left natural. He also stated that he wanted to proceed with this work and then come back to the Commission for advice on the front of the building. Upon reviewing the petition submitted to replace existing wood siding with vinyl siding and remove and replace all windows and all evidence provided and upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Theerman the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

2. **50 Franklin Street (HC-2008-058) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Edward O'Donnell, representing The Mayo Group, said a Demolition Delay Waiver is being sought to replace second floor windows and replicate sills. He stated that the project was being done in three phases, the first phase having been completed, phase two being the second floor which includes windows and sills and phase three that will add units on Portland Street. He stated that the windows are the same width, but 16 inches deeper and the new sills are made of sandstone. Chair Schneider and Commissioner Theerman stated that the windows fit with the architecture of the building. Upon reviewing the petition submitted to replace second floor windows and replicate sills and all evidence provided and upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**84 Malvern Road:** A letter was presented from Joseph Mikielian, Commissioner of Inspectional Services, to inform the Commission that he had issued an emergency order for the repair of the front porch that has been damaged by a fallen trim limb.

**Mission Chapel – 205 Summer Street:** Roberta Bryan and Julie Holstrom, representatives for the Worcester Business Development Corporation presented a letter to the Commission requesting its support for the work being done to the exterior of the building with regard to the stabilization and installation of new windows and doors. Ms. Bryan informed the Commission that research is being done in order to restore the building so that it more closely matches its original appearance. The Commission voted 5-0 to authorize Chair Schneider to sign the letter of support.

**Thule Building – 184 Main Street:** Winn Development is seeking a letter of support for their application for tax credits for the project to repoint brick and replace the windows. The Commission voted 5-0 to authorize Chair Schneider to sign the letter of support.

**Certified Local Government Annual Report:** The Commission voted 5-0 to authorize Chair Schneider to sign the Annual Report.

**Training – Local Government Programs:** Christopher Skelley from the Massachusetts Historic Commission conducted the training. He stated that there are two kinds of historic districts: National Register Historic District and Local Historic District. The difference is that the National Register districts are under the auspices of the National Parks Service and are only considered honorary and, therefore, are not very effective. Local Historic districts require a vote of 2/3 majority of Town Council or Town Meeting Members to enact and are considered regulatory.

Local Historic Districts (LHD) are for guiding appropriate changes and regulating against bad changes. They are designed to protect buildings, structures and cohesive streetscapes and are regulated by Chapter 40C of the M.G.L. The regulatory piece for an LHD is a bylaw or ordinance; stone walls and fences are reviewable; trees and shrubs are not reviewable.

He enumerated the following steps to establish a Local Historic District:

1. Appoint a LHD study committee.
2. Investigate historic resources.
3. Prepare the preliminary study report.
4. Submit the preliminary study report to Mass Historical Commission.
5. Conduct a public hearing.
6. Prepare the final report.
7. Vote by town meeting or city council
8. Notify the attorney general
9. Record the map at the Registry of Deeds
10. Notify Mass Historical Commission

In clarifying further some of the above points, Mr. Skelley stated that you do not need permission from the property owner to include them within the boundaries of the LHD. Further, he stated that it is not always a question as to whether it is historic, but if the structure is significant and that is why the section on significance is important on the inventory forms. He stated that the review from Mass Historical Commission is advisory. To further clarify the public process, Mr. Skelley included the following, neighborhood meetings, informational material, and distribution of a property owner opinion survey.

Some questions that were addressed during the session include:

**Are Form B's required for all properties to fulfill the requirement of determining historic resources?**

The answer was no but digital photos can be a substitute for many of the details.

**Is there a limit to the number of LHD's that a community is allowed?**

The answer was that there was no limit, but that some communities create LHD commissions that oversee LHD's and also have a Historical Commission that oversees other historical matters.

**Should the Demolition Delay Waiver include all of the MACRIS listed properties?**

Mr. Skelley stated that, in his opinion, the Demolition Delay Waiver should be used only when there is a substantial demolition of the building and that the review that he

observed at this meeting regarding windows and facades should only be advisory. He also opined that the MACRIS was too broad a list and that some other criteria should be developed for historic review.

Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 8:05 P.M.