

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

**June 24, 2010
LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL**

Commission Members Present: Peter Schneider, Chair
Thomas Constantine
Timothy McCann
Janet Merrill

Staff Present: Edgar Luna, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER

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

MINUTES

The Historical Commission accepted the minutes from the May 27, 2010 meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. 66 Hitchcock Road (HC-2010-028) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Kevin Quek, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Quek stated that he was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to make the following changes to the residential building on site: (a) insulate and install vinyl siding, (b) remove the existing aluminum storm windows and replace them with double-hung windows, (c) enclose the front porches, (d) remove the existing front stairs and replace them with pre-cast concrete stairs and (e), install a canopy. Mr. Quek stated that the proposed work was being done in conjunction with lead-paint abatement programs of the City. Chair Schneider stated that wood siding was an important architectural feature of historic homes, and indicated that, in his opinion, the wood siding in place added significance to the structure. Mr. Quek stated that several homes in the area have been sided with vinyl; therefore, he indicated that the proposed siding would blend well with other buildings in the neighborhood and increase the value to the property. Chair Schneider stated that utilizing original materials to restore exterior architectural details was what added value to historic properties, and indicated that in this case, the proposed vinyl siding would change the exterior appearance of the house significantly. He also asked the petitioner if he had considered

utilizing wood siding to restore the structure instead. Mr. Quek stated that he had not considered using wood siding because vinyl siding was maintenance free, less expensive, and because in his opinion, most of the historic architectural features of the house had already been removed. Chair Schneider stated that if the Demolition Waiver petition was denied, the petitioner could ask the Commission to consider the Demolition Waiver based on undue economic hardship. Chair Schneider also indicated that should the petition be denied, Mr. Quek would have to wait twelve (12) months before he could remove the wooden siding and replace it with vinyl siding. Mr. Quek stated that based on the comments received, he would like to propose an alternative plan that included a combination of vinyl and wood siding; however, he indicated that that in order to do that, he would need additional time to consult different contractors and suppliers in order to obtain accurate cost estimates, and provide the Commission with a definitive alternate plan. Therefore, he requested continuation of the hearing to July 8, 2010. Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Merrill, the Commission voted 4-0 to continue the hearing to July 8, 2010.

- 2. 904 Main Street (HC-2010-029) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Chung Tong, petitioner, presented the petition. Ms. Tong stated that she was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to remove seventeen (17) wood windows and replace them with vinyl windows. Ms. Tong stated that the wooden windows currently in place had deteriorated beyond repair due to poor maintenance and age. She also indicated that while the windows proposed were made of vinyl, they had decorative details that, in her opinion, would enhance the overall appearance of the house. Chair Schneider asked Ms. Tong if she had considered repairing the windows in place. Ms. Tong stated that the current windows had deteriorated beyond repair, and indicated that even if they could be repaired, it would be so expensive that she would not be able to afford it. Commissioner Constantine stated that, in his opinion, the proposed windows had decorative details that would convey a historic appearance to the house while at the same time would be energy-efficient. Chair Schneider stated that vinyl windows were not the only alternative to restoring architecturally significant and/or historic buildings. Upon a motion by Commissioner Constantine and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 3-1 (Commissioner Merrill voted no), that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester; therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.
- 3. 900 Main Street (HC-2010-030) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** John Coyle and Jeffrey Pace representatives for the petitioner and Winifred MacShawson, petitioner, presented the petition. Ms. MacShawson stated that she was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to remove the asbestos roofing tiles currently in place, and replace them with architectural shingles. Mr. Coyle stated that currently, the roof had several layers of roofing materials that had deteriorated over the years. He further added that the roof in place contained asbestos components. Mr. Pace indicated that the proposed roofing material would preserve and enhance the architectural significance of the building without the hazardous materials currently in place. Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or

historical resources of the City of Worcester; therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.

4. **41 Lancaster Street (HC-2010-031) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Todd Brodeur, representative for Epiphany Vera, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Brodeur stated that the petitioner was seeking to reduce the twelve (12) month period, which would end on August 3, 2010, due to the fact that the petitioner had exhausted all alternative means to preserve, restore or rehabilitate the structure on site. He also added that along with the petition, he submitted a letter dated May 19, 2010 addressed to the Chair Schneider, informing the Commission of the efforts and steps taken by the petitioner in seeking to sell the property or means to preserve, rehabilitate and/or restore the building which would be financially feasible for the petitioner, but indicated that all efforts had failed. Mr. Brodeur also stated that Preservation Worcester had written a letter dated June 18, 2010 in support for the reduction of time, indicating that Mr. Vera gave the prospect of restoration serious consideration, and that he worked diligently to create an appropriate alternative plan for the site. Mr. Brodeur further indicated that the petitioner was planning to demolish the building and construct a new structure with architectural features that would blend harmoniously with other buildings in the neighborhood, and which had taken into consideration comments received from Preservation Worcester staff. In addition, Mr. Brodeur showed the Commission an elevation of the proposed building design. Chair Schneider stated that while the Commission had no jurisdiction on the design of new structures, he personally, liked the proposed design. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, the Worcester Historical Commission determined that all reasonable alternative means to preserving, restoring, and/or rehabilitating the structure on site had been explored and exhausted, and voted 4-0 to reduce the twelve (12) month delay period. Therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chair Schneider asked Mr. Luna if staff from the Division of Planning and Regulatory Services (DPRS) had received notifications from Commissioner Gibley regarding his many absences. Mr. Luna responded that DPRS had not received letters, email messages or telephone calls informing staff that he would not be able to attend any of the meetings he has missed. He also informed the Commission that staff has been delivering his meeting packets regularly; therefore, he concluded that Mr. Gibley is aware that Historical Commission meetings are taken place every two weeks, and what petitions have been submitted. Chair Schneider asked Mr. Luna send a letter to Mr. Gibley requesting a response as to whether or not he intends to attend meetings regularly or wished to resign from the Commission. Mr. Luna agreed to send a letter to that effect.

Adjournment: Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.