

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
February 10, 2011**

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: J. Thomas Constantine, Chair
Timothy McCann, Vice-Chair
Peter Schneider
Janet Merrill
Kevin Provencher

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

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Constantine called the meeting to order at 5:36 P.M.

NEW MEMBER:

Chair Constantine informed the Commission that Kevin Provencher had already been sworn-in as member of the Worcester Historical Commission; therefore, he stated that Commissioner Provencher had voting privileges going forward.

MINUTES:

The Commission accepted the minutes from the January 13, 2011 meeting with revisions. Chair Constantine requested that the January 27, 2011 minutes be held for revisions until the February 10, 2011 meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Note: Commissioner Provencher recused himself from voting on this petition because he was not present at the previous meetings where the petition was considered.

- 1. 10 Institute Road (HC-2010-091) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Chair Constantine asked if George Sullivan, petitioner, or a representative of the petitioner was present in the audience but no one responded. He asked Mr. Luna if he had been contacted by the petitioner regarding his absence from the meeting, and he responded that he had not been contacted by the petitioner and/or, a representative. Mr. Luna informed the Commission that this petition was originally advertised for the December 30, 2010 meeting; however, it was continued to the January 13, 2011 meeting at the request of the

petitioner. He also indicated that at the January 13, 2011 meeting, the Commission did not make a final determination regarding one portion of the original petition which pertained to the removal and replacement of eleven (11) windows; therefore, the hearing for this portion of the petition was continued to the January 27, 2011 meeting. In addition, Mr. Luna stated that at the January 27, 2011 meeting, the Commission voted to postpone the hearing to the February 10, 2011 meeting due to a lack of quorum. Chair Constantine stated that the eleven (11) windows being discussed had already been removed and replaced with vinyl windows; therefore, the approval or denial would be retroactive. He also indicated at the January 13, 2011 meeting, the petitioner was not able to provide definitive information as to when the windows had been replaced. In addition, he indicated that the petitioner's representative had indicated that the removal and replacement of windows did not require a Building Permit. Mr. Luna informed the Commission that Inspectional Services staff had confirmed that, in fact, the removal and replacement of windows does require a Building Permit. Therefore, he stated that in this case, the petitioner had not followed proper procedure by not requesting approvals from Inspectional Services and the Historical Commission prior to the removal and replacement of such windows. Chair Constantine stated that without receiving accurate information from the petitioner regarding the dates when the windows were replaced, the Commission could not consider granting approval based on undue economic hardship. Susan Ceccacci from Preservation Worcester stated that she has an appointment to meet with the petitioner in March of 2011 to discuss historic building matters, and stated that she would emphasize the importance of adhering to the City's processes regarding historic buildings at such meeting. Upon a motion by Commissioner Schneider and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 0-4 (Commissioners Constantine, Schneider, McCann and Merrill voting 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 was denied for the eleven (11) windows part of the petition.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Application submitted by Gregory Sullivan, Jr., dated November 24, 2010 and received January 3, 2011.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- 2. 2011 Citizens Planner Training Collaborative:** Mr. Luna provided the Commission with information regarding the upcoming Citizens Planner Training Collaborative, and encouraged them to consider attending.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: 2011 Citizens Planner Training Collaborative application.

- 3. Resolution Regarding Commission Member Status:** Chair Constantine informed the Commission that Commissioner Duaiye Gibli had not participated in regularly scheduled

meetings since May 13, 2010; therefore, he requested a vote from the Commission to send a letter addressed to the City Manager requesting that he remove Commissioner Gibli and fill his vacancy. Upon a motion by Commissioner Merrill and seconded by Commissioner Schneider, the Commission voted 5-0 to send a letter to the City Manager requesting him to remove Commissioner Gibli and fill his vacancy. Chair Constantine requested Mr. Luna to forward the signed letter to the City Manager, and Mr. Luna agreed to do so.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Letter to the City Manager dated February 10, 2011, stating the vote of the Commission and signed by Chair Constantine

4. **Clock Tower at Worcester Stated Hospital:** Commissioner Schneider informed the Commission that he had attended a recent meeting where the future of the clock tower at the former Worcester State Lunatic Hospital was discussed. He stated that there was a strong possibility that the tower would be demolished because most of the surrounding structures that integrated the former Worcester State Hospital Campus had already been demolished, and the clock tower alone would not qualify for historic tax credits, which would have been the only viable incentive for developers to reuse it. He also indicated that at such meeting, it was discussed that the clock tower would be difficult to integrate as an architectural feature of a new psychiatric hospital. Mr. Luna stated that the clock tower was located in the Main Hospital Building, which was built from 1874 to 1877, and was the most prominent of the thirteen (13) structures that integrated the former hospital. He also indicated that these thirteen (13) were registered in the National Register of Historic Places since 1980 as a District (NRDIS) and as a Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA), and emphasized that of these, only the clock tower remains. Mr. Luna also stated that in 1991 a severe fire destroyed most of the buildings surrounding the clock tower, and indicated that the remaining buildings were demolished recently as part of the new psychiatric facility being built on site. Susan Ceccacci from Preservation Worcester stated that the clock tower was the most prominent and important building of the former Worcester State Lunatic Hospital. She also indicated that the National Park Service had denied a trial request for historic tax credit funding due to the fact that it was no longer an “intact complex”. Chair Constantine suggested sending a letter to Governor Deval Patrick and Lieutenant-Governor Timothy Murray urging them to intervene to save the clock tower building and request that any future funding, and/or, development of the site include integration the structure as part of the overall design of any future building or project on site. Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Schneider, the Commission voted 5-0 to send a letter to Governor Deval Patrick and Lieutenant-Governor Timothy Murray urging them to intervene to save the Clock Tower and consider requesting that any future development of the site include integrating the Clock Tower as part of the overall design.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM.