

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
May 3, 2012**

ROOM 401 – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Timothy McCann, Vice-Chair (Acting Chair)
Kevin Provencher, Clerk
James Crowley
Peter Schneider
Meagen Mulherin

Staff Members Present: Joel Fontane, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Nancy Tran, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair McCann called the meeting to order at 5:41 P.M.

MINUTES:

The Historical Commission held the minutes from the April 5, 2012 and April 19, 2012 meetings.

REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES, EXTENSIONS OF TIME, POSTPONEMENTS, WITHDRAWALS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. 72 (aka 66-67) Shrewsbury Street (HC-2012-004) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver

Robert Barranca and Matthew Doyle represented the applicant, J&M Batista Family Limited Partnership, for its petition to remove and replace 12 mullioned “Buick” logo windows with mullioned glass insulated windows in parapet. Mr. Doyle said he planned to retain the Buick logos and incorporate them into energy-efficient commercial storefront windows. He said there were various ways to integrate the logo into the windows. He proposed to combine three windows into one by inserting the Buick logo, supported by a U channel between custom windows. Mr. Doyle said this option will use cross-hatched zinc strips to imitate original mullioned breaks. He added that the stained glass will be repaired and can be put in front of the Buick logo.

Commissioner Provencher asked for clarification on the zinc strips. Mr. Doyle replied that the strips will be adhered to both sides of a window. However, he said it was also possible to make a low profile window by glazing the logo within the window.

Commissioner Provencher was amenable to the proposed approach presented to the Commission.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Schneider and seconded by Commissioner Crowley, the Commission voted 5-0 to grant the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for the removal and replacement of 12 mullioned “Buick” logo windows with mullioned glass insulated windows in parapet.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by J&M Batista Family, dated January 18, 2012 and received January 19, 2012.

2. 31 Heroult Road (HC-2012-015) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver

Robert Case, partner of Pickoff Properties LLC and owner of 31 Heroult Road, presented estimates for slate roof replacement, asphalt roof replacement and window repair. The petitioner is seeking a Building Demolition Delay Waiver for the following: 1) Replace the roof with 30-year black architectural shingles (seeking retroactive approval); 2) Remove and replace siding with vinyl siding; and 3) Remove and replace 16 windows with vinyl replacement windows.

Commissioner Crowley said that the submitted application images do not indicate that the slate roof was in poor condition. He asked for the comparison between slate repair and whole roof replacement with asphalt. Mr. Case said asphalt replacement cost \$5,000 but he had no estimate on slate repair because many pieces were broken or missing. He only brought an estimate for whole roof slate replacement ~\$25,000.

Commissioner McCann asked when the submitted pictures were taken. Mr. Case said they were taken three years prior during an ice-storm before his purchase. He added that he proposes replacing the building’s shingle siding (fair condition) and wood windows with vinyl. Ten of nineteen windows are original (4 front, 3 side, 3 rear).

Commissioner Schneider asked the total cost to repair the four front windows. Commissioner McCann stated that based on the estimate, the total wood window repair costs \$6,500 (\$342 per unit) and removal/replacement with vinyl costs \$3,300 (\$173 per unit). Commissioners Crowley, Provencher and McCann expressed their preference that all front wood windows be repaired. Mr. Case was amenable to repairing that. Commissioner Schneider commented that the additional repair of three side windows would not be a significant cost increase.

Commissioner Crowley expressed his concern over the slate removal. He said the estimate for slate repair was necessary for the Board to make a decision. Commissioner McCann added that the Commission may have considered roof repair an economic hardship. Because the roof has already been replaced with asphalt, the Commission cannot consider window repair an economic hardship.

Commissioner Schneider asked about the siding. Mr. Case said he proposes to replace the asbestos with vinyl and wrap eaves with aluminum. Commissioner McCann preferred that the structure's rafter tails remain exposed and suggested that Mr. Case try to paint and avoid wrapping them. Mr. Case said he was amenable to the suggestion.

Commissioner Provencher clarified that there would be no issue with the vinyl siding, if rafter tails remain in place and if seven wood windows were repaired (4 front, 3 side).

Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Mulherin, the Commission voted 0-5 that the slate roof replacement with 30-year black architectural shingles (seeking retroactive approval) would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester. The motion failed and the Worcester Historical Commission considered the Building Demolition Delay Waiver with respect to the petitioner's evidence related to undue economic hardship.

Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 5-0 that the petitioner had demonstrated undue economic hardship and retroactively approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for roof demolition and replacement with architectural shingles.

Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 5-0 that the siding removal and replacement with vinyl; restoration of four front and three left-side original wooden windows (seven total), removal and vinyl replacement of the remaining windows and maintaining unwrapped rafter tails would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester; therefore the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this item was approved.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Pickoff Properties LLC, dated February 23, 2012 and received March 9, 2012.

3. Request for Letter of Support:

- 2 Grove Street – Worcester Voke – Mass. Historic rehabilitation tax credit application
- 49-57 Hermon Street, 51-59 Jackson Street, 62-74 Beacon Street – Worcester Junction Shops – Mass. Historic rehabilitation tax credit application

Upon a motion by Commissioner Schneider and seconded by Commissioner Provencher, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the Letter of Support requests for Worcester Voke and Worcester Junction Shops.

4. Discussion of Demolition Delay Waiver Ordinance

Joel Fontane, Director of Division of Planning and Regulatory Services, stressed the need to revise the City's current Building Demolition Delay Waiver (BDDW) Ordinance. He stated that there is a significant gap in historic surveys (Form B). Another issue is the excessive scrutiny over simple home repairs¹ for properties registered with the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS). The current ordinance requires Commission's review for any

¹ e.g., asphalt-to-asphalt roof replacement

proposed demolition work to a MACRIS-listed property before building permit issuance. He recommended reducing the Commission's purview by limiting the definition of 'demolition' and determining what project types can be administratively reviewed. Mr. Fontane also discussed the possibility to protect non-MACRIS registered properties based on age – where buildings of at least 75 to 100 years would likely be accepted as having historical significance. Mr. Fontane emphasized the need to clearly codify the BDDW validity period as one year and that approvals are tied to the property, not the owner.

Commissioner Provencher supported the administrative review process only if DPRS were to oversee it, not the Building Department.

Mr. Fontane said assessing data and the Registry of Deeds can be used to determine a building's age.

Susan Ceccacci from Preservation Worcester stressed the need to continue conducting surveys of old buildings.

Mr. Fontane said survey work is an eligible use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). However, Federal funding of CDBGs have been significantly reduced for all programs in the recent past.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT:

Upon a motion by Commissioner Provencher and seconded by Commissioner Schneider, the Commission voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 PM.