

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
January 10, 2013**

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: J. Thomas Constantine, Chair
Timothy McCann, Vice-Chair
James Crowley
Meagen Mulherin
Erika Dunn
Andrew Schveda

Commission Members Absent: Kevin Provencher, Clerk

Staff Members Present: Joel Fontane, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Marlyn Feliciano, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Constantine called the meeting to order at 5:31 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes for November 1, 2012 were approved with no additional edits.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 332 Main Street (aka 322-332 Main Street) (HC-2012-079)

Gary Brackett, representing 332 Main Street Associates, stated that the request was to obtain permission to demolish the structure at 332 Main Street. He stated that the applicant had originally submitted this petition on September 2011 and had withdrawn it to try to seek a buyer for the property. The applicant has tried to lease or sell the property but has been unsuccessful. Mr. Brackett stated that the building has been vacant for some time since the District Attorney's office relocated. Mr. Brackett stated that the applicant pays \$150,000/year to heat and upkeep the property with no income in return. He also stated that this should be considered an economic hardship case since the building's assessed value has increased from \$1.4 million to \$3 million.

Mr. Brackett stated that the property in question is an eight story building with masonry construction with brick and limestone exterior. The first floor was previously retail and the other floors were office space. Mr. Brackett stated that there is a surplus of office space in the City. He also stated that he believed the applicant has made a good faith effort to either lease or sell the building.

Mr. Schveda asked what the cost of demolition was and if there were any hazardous materials on the inside of the building. Mr. Brackett stated he did not have that information but could provide the information to the Commission at a later date. Mr. Crowley asked if any information was submitted by the applicant to prove this was an economic hardship and regarding their economic condition. Mr. Brackett stated that he could also provide that information if the Commission deemed it necessary. Mr. McCann stated he would like to know what the applicant's plans for the lot are after demolition. He stated he is unsure how an empty lot would be more economically viable than retail/office space.

Mr. Brackett requested a continuance to the February 7, 2013 meeting to provide the supplemental information to the Commission and the constructive grant deadline to March 8, 2013.

Deborah Packard, Executive Director of Preservation Worcester, stated that this is a historic property and that the demolition would have a negative impact on Main Street and on the efforts of the City to revitalize the downtown area. She stated that she believed that the demolition would leave a void in the Main Street streetscape, it would be unsightly, it would discourage walking in the area, and discourage retailers and business owners from coming downtown. Ms. Packard stated that the owner of the building recently sold the Slater Building, 590 Main Street, for approximately \$5 million. She stated that she believed the owner should wait since there is evidence that downtown properties are becoming desirable.

Mr. Fontane stated that he respectfully recommends denial of the Building Demolition Delay Waiver submitted by 332 Main Street Associates for the complete demolition of the building as the demolition of this historically significant structure would be detrimental to the architectural and historical resources of the City of Worcester and because the applicant has not demonstrated undue economic hardship. He stated that the downtown area is in an upswing and that property has the potential for adaptive re-use since the building is well positioned.

Upon a motion by Mr. Crowley and seconded by Mr. McCann, the Commission voted 6-0 to continue the item to February 7, 2013 and to extend the constructive grant deadline to March 8, 2013.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

- Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application; received June 27, 2012; prepared by 332 Main Street Associates.
- Exhibit B: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Historical Commission; re: 332 (aka 322-332) Main Street; dated January 9, 2012.
- Exhibit C: Form B – Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System; re: WORC.454, Central Building, 332 (aka 322-332) Main St; accessed on January 8, 2013.
- Exhibit D: Request for postponement form to January 10, 2013 meeting, dated December 26, 2012.
- Exhibit E: request for continuance form to February 7, 2013 meeting dated January 10, 2013.

2. 16 Delaval Road (HC-2012-080)

David Morin, owner and petitioner, stated that the petition is to remove and replace three vinyl windows with like materials and a steel door with a fiberglass door. He stated that he is doing a kitchen renovation and that is where the windows and door are located. Mr. Morin stated that none of the items are original; they were replaced before he bought the house in 2000.

Upon a motion by Mr. McCann and seconded by Ms. Mulherin, the Commission voted 6-0 to approve the petition.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application; dated and submitted December 6, 2012.

3. 70 Elm Street (HC-2012-81)

Attorney Todd Brodeur, representing the National Association of Government Employees, stated that the petition was to demolish the entire structure. Mr. Brodeur stated that upon a recent inspection the following issues were identified: the building needs a new roof, the chimneys have failed, the vinyl siding is stripped in areas and needs to be replaced, the building is water damaged, the electrical is failing, the floor joist are failing, and the foundation is failing. The property has been marketed by Kelleher and Sadowsky since the spring of 2012 with no interest after people view the state of the inside of the building. Mr. Brodeur stated that the real estate broker believes that in order to attract a buyer for the property the building would have to be razed because it is not economically feasible to renovate it.

Mr. Brodeur stated that in order to understand the architectural significance of the building they consulted with Michelle Tuck from Tuck and Tuck Architects, Harvard, MA. She stated in her letter that “Judging from the exterior massing, the building was built in a diluted Colonial Revival style, although there are no decorative elements of that style that remain to today, possibly due to the deteriorating aluminum siding, which has caused the removal of any architectural detailing that may have been original. There is a wide bay with wide double hung windows on the Elm Street elevation which suggests the Colonial Revival style, but any window trim, bay detailing, front portico or column detailing has since been removed or never existed. There are two eyebrow windows on the third floor and one small "beak" style bay window on a side yard elevation, but there is no remaining trim surrounding it. Any exterior architectural detailing has been removed, but there are no signs that there was considerable architectural detailing originally. There are so few windows on the Elm Street facade that it is hard to imagine the building in its former state. In my professional opinion, this building was not an architecturally significant building when built, then the aluminum siding was installed several decades ago, removing what detailing they may have been. This opinion was formed due to the lack of appropriate massing undulation, the lack of windows on the primary facade and the lack of any surviving architectural detailing, including at the roof, which seems to have its original eaves, rakes and overhangs, all of which are undersized at best.”

Mr. McCann asked what the plans for the property were after demolition. Mr. Brodeur stated that the owners had no plans to develop it because it was more marketable as vacant land. Mr. McCann asked if there were any tenants there and Mr. Brodeur stated that there are two tenants using a small portion of the building.

Mr. Schveda asked if any work has been done to stabilize the property since the inspections. Mr. Brodeur stated that to his knowledge there had not been any work done on to stabilize the property.

Coreen Fusick, resident at 20 West Street and direct abutter, stated that the empty lot would be detrimental to the neighborhood. She was concerned the safety of the neighborhood would be compromised.

Deborah Packard, Executive Director of Preservation Worcester, stated that removing that corner lot building may detract from the streetscape of the neighborhood. She believes that waiting a year is the best course in order to give someone an opportunity to buy the property.

Mr. Constantine stated that if they were going to consider this in terms of the undue economic hardship that they would need to see written estimates of repair, cost of maintaining, etc. Mr. Crowley stated that if he needed more time he could come back to the Commission when he had a plan about what to construct in the area. Mr. Brodeur stated that he preferred the Commission to vote on the matter tonight.

Upon a motion by Mr. Crowley and seconded by Mr. Schveda, the Commission voted 1-5 (Mr. McCann voting yes) that the proposed was not detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City.

Upon a motion by Mr. McCann and seconded by Mr. Schveda, the Commission voted 0-6 to deny the proposed request for a demo delay waiver based on an undue economic hardship to the applicant. The motion failed and the demo delay waiver was not granted.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

- Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application; received December 6, 2012; prepared by National Association of Government.
- Exhibit B: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Worcester Historical Commission; re: 70 Elm Street; dated January 10, 2013.
- Exhibit C: Detail - Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System; re: WOR.546, 70 Elm Street; accessed on December 17, 2012.
- Exhibit D: Form A – Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System; re: WORC.CY: Lincoln Estate – Elm Park Area (pgs. 1-5, 8) ; accessed on January 10, 2013.
- Exhibit E: Letter from Michelle Tuck from Tuck & Tuck Architects dated January 9, 2013.

4. 390 Main Street (HC-2012-082)

Barry Murchie, Vice President of Commerce Bank and of Metro Commerce Real Estate, introduced Brian Thompson, president of Commerce Bank, Richard Hakala, consultant, and Bill Murraw from Modern Manufacturing. Mr. Murchie stated that the petition is to remove and replace the steel entrance. They plan to renovate the lobby and the front entrance. Mr. Murchie stated that there are a few issues that they are seeking to fix with this work: the door is not reliable (sometimes it does not lock or it jams), the appearance has become run down, and the upper part of the structure is showing stress. He stated they are looking to replace that before it becomes a hazard.

Mr. Murchie stated that they are proposing to replace the entrance with an anodized finish, champagne color frame and oil rubbed dark bronze pulls. He explained the existing entrance was replaced in 1994.

Bill Murraw, Project Manager for Modern Manufacturing, stated that what is proposed is a single plane curtain wall type of system with tubes in the champagne color. The doors will be ½” thick tempered glass with a full bottom and top rail. He stated that it should hold up well.

Ms. Dunn asked if the medallion artwork along the upper windows was also replaced in the 90s or if that is original to the building. Richard Hakala stated that the entire entrance was replaced because they were asked to eliminate the existing step in order to make the building handicapped accessible. The medallions is a decorative fypon molded styrofoam, which was painted black.

Deborah Packard, Executive Director of Preservation Worcester, stated that she is supportive of the project.

Upon a motion by Mr. Schveda and seconded by Mr. McCann, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition was not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the petition was approved.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

- Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application; submitted December 11, 2012.
- Exhibit B: Memo from Herb Ingram from Real estate Coordinators, Inc. dated January 4, 2013 and submitted January 9, 2013.
- Exhibit C: Material samples for new doors, submitted January 10, 2013.
- Exhibit D: Email Communications from Mr. Murchie.

5. 41 Wellington Street (HC-2012-083)

Jeff Anges, director of facilities for Community Healthlink, stated that the proposal was to remove and replace the existing asphalt shingled roof with architectural shingles. They will not be touching any of the fascias or scalloped slate on the dormers.

Upon a motion by Mr. McCann and seconded by Ms. Mulherin, the Commission voted 6-0 to approve the petition.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application; dated December 7, 2012 and submitted December 13, 2012.

6. 10 Ormond Street (HC-2012-084)

Robert Dupree, contractor for the property, stated that the property suffered a fire in the spring of 2012. The house is surrounded by 3 parking lots and has suffered water intrusions over the years. The main columns and main carrying beams have decayed. Mr. Dupree stated that due to the assessed value of the house, it was underinsured.

Mr. Fontane stated that the structure has been condemned and is not habitable due to fire damage as further described in the memorandum provided by the Division on Planning of Regulatory Services staff dated January 10, 2013 (Exhibit C). However, “the building is not beyond repair” and does not require demolition. Mr. Dupree stated that once a wall is opened everything has to be brought up to code, which would mean extensive upgrading to this house and would prove to be an undue economic hardship.

Mr. Schveda asked what the intent was for the property after demolition. Mr. Dupree responded that the plan is to use it as parking originally until the economy recovers.

Mr. Fontane asked why the insurance money is not being used towards rehabilitating the property. Spiro Giannopoulos, owner of the property, stated that he does not believe there is a way to rehabilitate the place and there is not enough insurance money to make it worthwhile.

Upon a motion by Mr. Crowley and seconded by Mr. McCann, the Commission voted 0-6 that the proposed is not detrimental to the historical resources of the City. The motion failed.

Upon a motion by Mr. McCann and seconded by Mr. Crowley, the Commission voted 6-0 that denial of the petition would cause an undue economic hardship.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application; received December 13, 2012; prepared by Spiro Giannopolous.

Exhibit B: Site Images; undated; unknown photographer.

Exhibit C: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Worcester Historical Commission; re: 10 Ormond Street; dated January 10, 2013.

Exhibit D: Letter from Amanda Wilson, City of Worcester Department of Inspectional Services, Housing/Health Inspections to Spiro E. Giannopoulous; re: 10 Ormond Street; dated May 21, 2012.

- Exhibit E: Email from Amanda Wilson, City of Worcester Department of Inspectional Services, Housing/Health Inspections to Joel Fontane, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services; re: 10 Ormond Street; dated January 10, 2013.
- Exhibit F: Form B – Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System; re: WORC.2496, John Furness House, 10 Ormond St; accessed on January 10, 2013.
- Exhibit G: Contractor Quote prepared by Troiano Trucking Inc. and submitted January 10, 2013.

7. 56 Dorchester Street (HC-2012-085)

Huy Nguyen, contractor representing the applicant, stated that the purpose of the petition is to remove the existing asphalt siding to replace with new vinyl siding, to remove the existing architectural shingles and remove the double hung vinyl window and replace with like materials.

Mr. McCann asked if any of the windows were still originals and if so, he asked about their current condition. Mr. Nguyen stated that not all the windows were originals but he will be trying to save some of the second and third floor ones, which are in better shape. He will be replacing the rest but will try to match the look.

Mr. McCann asked what the plan was with the flares below the windows. Mr. Nguyen responded that he will re-shingle the flares to maintain the look. Mr. Schveda asked what the plan was with the decorative trim underneath the flares and the cornice brackets, which seem to be the only original architectural feature left to the building. Mr. Nguyen stated that the plan was to wrap it with aluminum but that he would scrape restore it if that's what the Commission wanted.

Olga Gonzalez, resident at 54 Dorchester Street, stated that she supported the project because all the homes in the area have been updated and this one is in disrepair.

Upon a motion by Mr. Schveda and seconded by Mr. McCann, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved with the conditions that the architectural woodworking at the eave line and underneath the flares be restored.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

- Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application; dated and submitted December 19, 2012
- Exhibit B: Site Image of 56 Dorchester and surrounding properties submitted January 10, 2013.

OTHER BUSINESS:

8. Information: re: Worcester Academy - Renovations to Walker Hall from Robert Longden, Bowditch & Dewey, LLP; dated December 27, 2012.

The purpose of this project is to renovate Worcester Academy's Walker Hall and they want to ensure this project gets the appropriate revisions prior to beginning construction in the summer. The building is on the State's Historic Registry. The building is located along Providence Street and is connected to Adams Hall and the Megaron building. Most of the renovations are to the interior of the building such as revised stairs, sprinkler system upgrades, accessibility modifications (elevator), upgrade to mechanical and electrical systems of the building but there are changes to the exterior that the Commission will have to review such as replacing the windows, the entrance, and the change to the dormer.

Mr. Fontane stated that since Worcester Academy has to go to the Massachusetts Historic Commission for approval to the changes they are proposing, the recommendation of the Worcester Historical Commission is needed in regards to the exterior changes.

Joshua Lee Smith stated that they will apply for a Building Demolition Delay Waiver and for the Planning Board in the next few weeks.

9. Citizen Advisory Council Board Member Survey

Mr. Fontane stated that the Citizen Advisory Council has developed a survey and would like all Commission members to take the survey to better understand what to look for in future candidates. He encouraged the Commission members to fill them out and return them to the Planning & Regulatory Services office at their earliest convenience.

10. Communication Received – re: Section 106, Invitation to Comment, EnSite #13085/Worcester DT Alpha Beta, 55 Union Street, from EBI Consulting, dated December 13, 2012.

The Commission had no comment regarding this matter.

11. Communication Received – re: Section 106, Invitation to Comment, 4WL0784A/Highland House Apartments, 5 Suburban Rd, from EBI Consulting, dated December 17, 2012.

The Commission had no comment regarding this matter.

12. Communication Received – re: Section 106, Invitation to Comment, WOR0024B / MICROWAVE, 25 West Chester Street, from EBI Consulting, dated December 21, 2012.

The Commission had no comment regarding this matter.

- 13. Communication Received** – re: Crown Hill Local Historic District Preliminary Study Report recommendations, dated December 17, 2012. MHC recommendations for Crown Hill.

Upon a motion by Mr. Crowley and seconded by Mr. McCann, the Commission voted 6-0 to amend the Crown Hill Local Historic District Preliminary report to include the letter from the Massachusetts Historic Commission.

- 14. Communication Received** – re: MHRTC January Round Support Letter- Osgood Bradley Building, received January 3, 2013.

Upon a motion by Mr. Crowley and seconded by Mr. McCann, the Commission voted 6-0 to send their support for the re-application to the rehabilitation tax credit.

- 15. Election of Officers**

Mr. Constantine nominated Mr. McCann as the new Chair. The nomination was seconded by Mr. Crowley and the Commission vote 5-0-1 (Mr. McCann abstained).

Mr. McCann nominated Erika Dunn as Clerk. The nomination was seconded by Mr. Crowley and the commission vote 5-0-1 (Ms. Dunn abstained).

The nomination for Vice Chair was postponed until Mr. Provencher could be present.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.