

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
November 7, 2013**

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Timothy McCann, Chair
Kevin Provencher, Vice-Chair
Meagen Donoghue
Andrew Shveda
Erika Dunn
Karl Bjork

Commission Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Deborah Steele, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Amanda Gregoire, Economic Development Department

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

Chair McCann called the meeting to order at 5:36 pm.

The Commission voted 6-0 to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2013 Historical Commission meeting.

New Business:

1. 100 Institute Road (HC-2013-62):

Chair McCann stated that the petitioner requested a postponement until the next meeting.

Commissioner Shveda asked if the Commission could communicate with the petitioner prior to the next meeting. Ms. Steele said the Commission can communicate with the petitioner through her. Commissioner Shveda stated he would like further information regarding possible lead contamination in the paint's glazing compounds and whether its test results will be provided.

Chair McCann inquired about whether the petitioner is going to pursue a hardship waiver because the application made no mention of cost. Ms. Steele indicated she would relay the information to the petitioner.

2. 27-29 West Street (HC-2013-061):

Felicio Flana of NE Properties appeared on behalf of the applicant, Spectrum Health Systems. Mr. Flana stated he would like to install 15 vinyl windows to match the other windows in the building. Mr. Flana noted that all but 15 of the 86 total windows have been replaced.

Chair McCann noted that the application submitted by the petitioner only accounted for 10 windows. Mr. Flana explained that he failed to account for an additional five interior windows facing the courtyard in the rear of the building.

Chair McCann said the Historical Commission could only make a decision on the 10 specified windows and that the petition will need to be re-advertised for the remaining five windows.

Mr. Flana indicated that of the 10 windows he is seeking to replace, two are located on the first floor along West Street and the remaining eight windows are located along Elm Street.

Chair McCann stated that due to the fact that the majority of the windows have already been replaced, he would recommend the replacement of the remaining windows for cohesion.

When asked whether permission had previously been granted for the windows that were already replaced, the petitioner indicated that the changes were made prior to his purchase of the building, most likely without the proper permits. When asked about whether the surrounding properties are condominiums, Mr. Flana stated in the affirmative and noted he did not intend to convert the property to condominiums.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Provencher, the Commission voted 6-0 that the Building Demolition Delay Waiver is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated August 13, 2013 and submitted August 19, 2013.

Exhibit B: Photos of windows received at the November 7, 2013 Historical Commission meeting

Other Business

3. Crown Hill Local Historic District Signs

Chair McCann noted the proposed sign design is similar to other Historic Districts located within the City of Worcester.

Commissioner Bjork asked who chose the signage for the City. Ms. Steele stated it was Planning staff, DPW, and Traffic and Engineering.

Chair McCann noted the signs are primarily located at major points of entrance and exit for the district.

4. Communication Received:

- Letter from Jordan O'Connor & Associates re: Notre Dame Academy, 425B Renovation; dated October 21, 2013 and received October 22, 2013

Chair McCann noted that there is no issue with the course of action because it was determined that the doors were not original.

- Letter to property owner of 220 Salisbury Street re: fence & window, dated October 28, 2013

Chair McCann noted that Planning staff sent a letter to the property owner at 220 Salisbury Street, which falls into the Montvale Historic District. Though the property is non-contributing, the property owner has installed a fence which Mr. McCann noted could affect the historic character of the district.

Ms. Steele stated that the property owner has yet to file an application with the Planning Department.

- Letter from the MHC re: Fiscal Year 2014 survey & Planning Grant; dated September 25, 2013 and received September 27, 2013

Ms. Steele stated that after internal review, it was determined that there is inadequate resources and staff to pursue this grant opportunity currently but asked that the Commissioners provide staff with their recommendations for next year in the event that an application is more feasible. Chair McCann recommended that staff hold off in providing recommendations until next year.

- Massachusetts Historic Preservation Conference

Commissioner Shveda stated that he and Commissioner Bjork attended the Massachusetts Historic Preservation Conference and provided the Commissioners with a synopsis of key topics from the conference. Commissioner Shveda highlighted key themes presented over the workshops which were: communication among preservation agencies, use of neighborhood conservation districts and Historic Commissions as instruments of education. Commissioner Shveda recommended that a meaningful website be created for the commission with basic information such as maps and FAQ's, and also that the Commission alerts people who purchase homes within historic districts. He also recommended that staff join a state wide listserv to ask questions about issues that come before the Commission.

A discussion about open meeting laws ensued and Ms. Steele noted she would consult with the Law Department on the matter.

Chair McCann recommended that the Historical Commission take the issue back up at the next meeting with a discussion about an overhaul of the municipal website. Chair McCann recommended that the Commission website start with basic information. Commissioner Dunn noted that it would be a good opportunity to involve the history departments of local colleges and college students.

Commissioner Shveda noted that on other boards members are assigned properties to oversee until the completion of a project to ensure compliance and City involvement.

Commissioner Donoghue suggested the creation of a publication highlighting successes with the demolition delay waivers such as the Palladium.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Ms. Donoghue and seconded by Chair McCann the Commission voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:17 pm.