

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
September 4, 2014**

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Kevin Provencher, Chair
Andrew Shveda, Vice Chair
Timothy McCann, Clerk
Erika Dunn
Randolph Bloom
Robyn Conroy
Karl Bjork

Commission Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Stephen S. Rolle, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Deborah Steele, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

8/7/14 – Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 7-0 to approve the minutes with one edit.

8/21/2014 – Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 6-0 to approve the minutes with one edit.

Item Was taken out of order of agenda

1. 533 Massasoit Road (HC-2014-050):

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Suzette Macaruso
Present Use: Single Family residence
Year Built: 1840
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, formerly known as the Ebenezer Flagg House
Petition Purpose: (1) Install vinyl siding over existing clapboard
(2) Remove/replace front door and shutters

Suzette & Mark Macaruso appeared on behalf of the application. She requested to install vinyl siding on the house due to financial reasons. Ms. Macaruso stated that it would be easier and cheaper to install vinyl siding so the home would not have to be painted every few years. She also requested to replace the front door with a more energy efficient door.

Ms. Macaruso stated that the house is chipping badly and peeling and the shutters are in bad shape and she doesn't want to have to repaint every five years.

Chair Provencher asked what the plans are for the shutters. Ms. Macaruso stated that some of the shutters are wood and some are vinyl.

Chair Provencher asked if the shutters are operable. Ms. Macaruso stated that they are not functional.

Ms. Macaruso stated that the front door is very old and doesn't close tight and they need a new front door. Chair Provencher asked what materials the door was made of. Ms. Macaruso stated that it was wood and doesn't believe it was the original door to the home.

Secretary McCann asked if vinyl would go across the attached barn. Ms. Macaruso stated that they would go right across and make it uniform with the house.

Chair Provencher asked how Ms. Macaruso planned to treat the corners and the eaves. Ms. Macaruso stated that it will be all plain.

Mr. Macaruso stated that they will keep the corners the way they are and they are going with a four inch vinyl covering. Chair Provencher asked if eaves would be covered with vinyl. Mr. Macaruso stated that it would be encapsulated with metal and then he would apply a 4 over 4 vinyl design.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if that would be over the existing clapboard. Mr. Macaruso stated that it would and the windows would be wrapped in aluminum.

Mr. Macaruso stated that none of the trim around the windows would be removed and no work would be done on the front porch roof or the columns.

Chair Provencher asked if shutters would be left. Mr. Macaruso stated that they plan to put new shutters as the current shutters are totally ruined.

Commissioner Bloom stated that the properties that he has seen that have vinyl siding installed does alter the property a great deal.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair Shveda and seconded by Secretary McCann, the Commission voted 6-1 (Commissioner Bloom voting against) that the proposed 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.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver; dated June 5, 2014 and received June 4, 2014

OLD BUSINESS:

2. 421 (aka 425) Grove Street (HC-2014-046):

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Six Realty, LLC
Present Use: Commercial Use Building
Year Built: 1923-1933
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed property
Petition Purpose: Complete demolition of building

Steven Venincasa, Edward Leonard and Bob Murphy appeared on behalf of the item.

Mr. Venincasa stated at the last meeting the Commission had requested some more financial information and they had emailed that information to staff that afternoon. The financial information was as follows:

LAND:	\$450,000
Site Work:	\$165,000
Renovate Existing Building:	\$190,000
TOTAL:	\$805,000

Debt Service: (\$805,000 at 5%)	\$4,025 per month
Lease: (1156 sq. ft. at \$24 per sq. ft.)	\$27,744 or \$2,312 per month

Mr. Leonard stated that the existing building presents several challenges that cannot be overcome. The proposal for the location is an AT&T store which requires a minimum of 1200 square feet of showroom in addition to lavatories and back room space. After building out compliant lavatories and backroom space they would only have about 850 square feet of showroom which falls well below the minimum of 1200 square feet. The lack of retail window space and the L shaped configuration of the building are also impediments that seem to disqualify the option of utilizing the existing building. The number of parking spaces afforded by the current placement of the building on the lot is insufficient to support customers and a staff of 3-5 employees at any given time.

The potential retail property can have excellent retail value if an appropriately sized building, with appropriate parking and roadside exposure is constructed.

Mr. Leonard stated that if this project doesn't happen then most likely the building will just continue to deteriorate.

Mr. Venincasa stated that the area around this building has been built up but this building hasn't been kept up and the parking for the building doesn't work.

Secretary McCann asked how cost would change if they were to build a new structure instead of renovating the existing building.

Mr. Leonard stated that you need a certain number of square feet for a property and 1100 square feet would not work to support the cost of the property and no business is going to come in and pay \$5,000 a month for that property.

Secretary McCann stated that the rent would be \$4,000 and current debt service would be \$4,000. Mr. Venincasa stated that the building would be twice as big.

Secretary McCann asked what would be the debt service cost on the fixed cost of the site work, the land and the new building. Mr. Venincasa stated that he believed it was 10%.

Secretary McCann stated that the Commission needs to know the financials if they are going to consider economic hardship.

Mr. Venincasa stated that they are losing with the existing building and they would break even if the demolished and built new.

Mr. Leonard stated that there are very few businesses that could go in location and pay what is required.

Secretary McCann stated that it would depend on the type of business as a smaller business could go in and not have same amount of debt service.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked what the existing square footage of building was. Mr. Venincasa stated 1156.

Chair Provencher asked what square footage AT&T needed to make it work. Mr. Leonard stated the range is between 1600 and 2200 SF.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that the renovation number provided seems high. Mr. Venincasa stated that he struggled to get that number but when he does renovation work the price usually doubles and on a building like this the only thing that could be saved is the brick.

Chair Provencher asked if an addition was thought about to expand the current building. Mr. Venincasa stated that was not considered.

Mr. Leonard stated that the problem is they cannot get enough entrances and exits for the building and due to the condition of the building it cannot be moved.

Chair Provencher stated that the questions for the Commission is whether the building is historically significant and the Commission agrees it is so it doesn't seem like the Commission would approve a Building Demolition Delay Waiver. Therefore the Commission would have to look at whether a vote not to demolish the building would cause an economic hardship for the applicant and cost data has been provided which demonstrates that restoring, adding or moving the building does not work for the AT&T store but Mr. Provencher believes it could work for some other use and is not convinced that there is no hope for this building and there may be another tenant out there who could make the building work.

Mr. Venincasa stated that he and Mr. Leonard had discussed it and they could not think of another business that could pay the rent AT&T could and if the property is not approved the building will just continue to deteriorate and they could either demolish it in a year or let it sit as is for several years but, on the other hand, if AT&T takes the property they can be a viable taxpayer to the City of Worcester.

Chair Provencher stated that the applicant has submitted a summary which shows costs for renovation. AT&T can pay \$24/SF but based on the cost of acquiring the land, doing the site improvement and renovating the building that generates an additional \$800,000 of debt that they would have to service. To cover that debt the applicant would have to double the rent and that would be \$48/SF which is pretty high.

Mr. Venincasa stated that he understands the Board does not just approve buildings being demolished.

Chair Provencher stated that the Commission has authority to look at economic hardship and that should be discussed as it has been determined that building does have historic value.

Mr. Leonard stated that there is really no other viable alternative for the property. The property would be too small for a restaurant.

Jo Hart, city resident, stated that what the area needs is human activity and believes this location would be terrific for a restaurant mainly for people in the neighborhood.

Chair Provencher asked how many parking spaces would be the minimum required by zoning. Mr. Venicasa stated 8 spaces would be required.

Chair Provencher asked Mr. Rolle what would be the parking requirement for a restaurant use. Mr. Rolle stated that it is based on the number of seats so it is difficult to convert from square feet and even a smaller restaurant at that location would probably require more than 12 spaces.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Vice-Chair Shveda, the Commission voted 0-7 that the proposed Building Demolition Delay Waiver is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion failed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was denied.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Vice-Chair Shveda, the Commission voted 5-2 (Commissioner Bloom & Commissioner Conroy voting against) that the denial of the petition would cause an unfair economic hardship. The motion passed and the petition was approved.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver; dated July 23, 2014 and received June 23, 2014.

Exhibit B: Memorandum from Division of Planning & Regulatory Services; dated August 20, 2014.

Exhibit C: Request for postponement form; dated August 21, 2014.

Exhibit D: Financial information; dated September 4, 2014; dated September 4, 2014.

New Business:

3. 21-23 Crown Street (HC-2014-051):

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness
Petitioner: Abby Kelly Foster House, Inc.
Present Use: General Residence
Year Built: 1855
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, NRDIS (National Register District), NRMRA (National Multiple Resource Area), Crown Hill Local Historic District, formerly known as the Adelard Harpin House
Petition Purpose: Replace existing three tab roof with architectural shingles

Douglas Kleft, the maintenance manager for Abby's House, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Kleft stated that they are looking to replace the roof that is very difficult to see from the street and the roof is not original to the house.

Chair Provencher stated that you really cannot see the roof from the street and the roof is not original.

Chair Provencher asked if the wood trim needs to be replaced. Mr. Kleft stated that they had come before the Commission few years ago and replaced the fascia and the only work now would be to replace the aluminum drip edge with new aluminum drip edge.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Dunn, the Commission voted 7-0 that the proposed 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.

Upon a motion by Vice-Chair Shveda and seconded by Secretary McCann, the Commission voted 7-0 that the petition was appropriate for the district. The motion passed and the Certificate of Appropriateness was approved

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness; dated August 5, 2014 and received August 6, 2014.

4. 140 Lincoln Street (HC-2014-052):

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Col. Timothy Bigelow Chapter/DAR
Present Use: General Residence
Year Built: 1774
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, NRIND (National Register Individual Property), formerly known as the Oaks
Petition Purpose: Remove/replace sill at rear of building to match existing with associated work to water table and siding

Elizabeth Tiban and Bill Hardmean appeared on behalf of the petition.

Mr. Hardman stated that they are replacing a sill on the back of the building.

Chair Provencher asked how much of the sill was being replaced. Mr. Hardman stated that what is shown in the photo which about sixteen foot sill.

Mr. Hardman stated that also the corner post will need to be replaced.

Chair Provencher asked if the trim board would be applied over the sill. Mr. Hardman stated that he would be reproducing all the trim that is existing to the house.

Chair Provencher asked how high he would have to go with the clapboard in order to do the work. Mr. Hardman stated that the entire side would be replaced as it has rot.

Chair Provencher asked what was the extent of the siding replacement. Mr. Hardman stated that it would go up three feet to the window and from the left side of the window and the bottom of the roof.

Vice-Chair Sveda asked if building was visible from any public way. Mr. Hardman stated that you really can't see this section.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if the clapboards were original. Mr. Hardman stated that they were not.

Chair Provencher stated it looks like everything is being replaced in kind and there is no substitution of material.

Secretary McCann asked if there was water issues. Ms. Tiban stated they had had water issues and they are a non profit.

Secretary McCann stated that this is an important building and the Commission is glad they are keeping up the property.

Chair Provencher stated that he appreciated their approach to the work and to maintaining the building.

Commissioner Bloom stated that the City is fortunate to have the DAR to take on responsibility of such a historic building which is close to downtown Worcester.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Shveda, the Commission voted 7-0 that the proposed 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.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver; dated August 6, 2014 and received August 6, 2014.

5. 18-20 West Street (HC-2014-053):

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Merrill House Condo Association
Present Use: Condominiums
Year Built: 1897
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, NRIND (National Register Individual Property), NRMRA (National Register Multiple Resource Area)
Petition Purpose: Remove/replace extended pyramid structural skylight with a new acrylic extended pyramid skylight

Tim Womer from On Top Roofing appeared on behalf of the application.

Chair Provencher asked if this was an acrylic dome. Mr. Womer stated that it was.

Chair Provencher asked if the roof had a flat section. Mr. Womer stated that it did.

Chair Provencher stated that he had looked at the property and does not know where you could see this from.

Mr. Womer said as you approach Pleasant Street you can see just the top of the vent.

Chair Provencher stated it has been demonstrated that the skylights would be not be visible from the public way.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if roof was still slate. Mr. Womer stated that it was.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 7-0 that the proposed 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.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver; dated August 6, 2014 and received August 6, 2014.

6. 31 Newbury Street (HC-2014-054):

Petition: Certificate of Appropriateness
Petitioner: Henry Kasdon
Present Use: Two Family Residence
Year Built: 1895
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, Crown Hill Local Historic District
Petition Purpose: Paint the structure

Henry Kasdon and Ron Valentine appeared on behalf of the petition.

Mr. Kasdon stated that he is peeling off the navy blue cedar clad and restoring the original cedar shakes and presented some color options.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he had concerns with the color combination as the trim and the base color are almost the same value and he felt it wouldn't work. Mr. Bloom stated that the base color has to be darker than what Mr. Kasdon presented.

The Commission and Mr. Kasdon discussed different color options for the house.

Chair Provencher asked what color the trim would be and what would be the accent on the house. Mr. Kasdon stated that currently on the house there is no accent color and the trim is white.

Chair Provencher asked Mr. Kasdon to identify where the accent color would be. Mr. Kasdon stated that the doors and the dental on the frieze.

Chair Provencher and Vice-Chair Shveda reviewed the California paints historic color palette brochure and provided some recommendations to Mr. Kasdon. Suggestions were that the field color be Lexington Blue, the trim be Jewett White and the accent color be China Aster.

Mr. Kasdon stated that would be acceptable.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Dunn, the Commission voted 7-0 that the petition was appropriate for the district. The motion passed and the Certificate of Appropriateness was approved with the following colors be used according to the California paints historic color palette brochure – Lexington Blue (field), Jewett White (trim) and China Aster (accent).

Exhibit A: Application for Certificate of Appropriateness; dated August 12, 2014 and received August 12, 2014.

OTHER BUSINESS

Communications:

- a. Letter from Mass DOT re: Section 106 Review; dated August 12, 2014; received August 15, 2014. - No comment. – No comment.
- b. Letter from GEI Consultants re: 92 Grand Street; dated August 22, 2014; received August 25, 2014. – No comment.
- c. Letter from EBI Consultants re: 766 Main Street; dated August 19, 2014; received August 25, 2014. - No comment.
- d. Letter from FST re: Main & Maywood Street; dated August 11, 2014; received August 13, 2014. – Mr. Rolle stated that he would follow up on this item or next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion the Commission adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.