

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER**

November 12, 2015

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Kevin Provencher, Chair
Andrew Shveda, Vice-Chair
Timothy McCann, Clerk
Robyn Conroy
Randolph Bloom
Devon Kurtz
Karl Bjork, Alternate

Commission Members Absent: Cheryll Holley, Alternate

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

Approval of the Minutes:

8/6/2015 – Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Commissioner Bjork the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of August 6, 2015.

10/29/2015 – Not available.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Worcester County Courthouse, 2 Main Street - Presentation of the Proposed Redevelopment**
- 1a. Letter from Epsilon Associates, Inc., re: Letter of Support, Worcester County Courthouse, 2 Main Street received November 4, 2015 and dated November 3, 2015.**

Brian Lever from Epsilon Associates appeared on behalf of the item along with Chris Lewis.

Mr. Lever stated that they are looking to have the 1954 addition to the former Worcester County Courthouse building included on the National Register of Historic Places. He stated that the designation is important for the redevelopment of the courthouse because it would enable the developer, Brady Sullivan Properties LLC, to apply for state and federal historic tax credits for the entire building. He stated that currently only parts of the former courthouse are included on the National Register Historic Places and are eligible for historic tax credits but because the 1954 addition is not on the register it is not eligible for tax credits.

He stated that the courthouse property consists of 4.28 acres on the north end of Main Street and the main building was constructed in 1843 and addition was built in 1880. Both of the sections of the courthouse are listed on the National Register of Historic Places because they are included as part of the Worcester Institutional District which was created in 1980.

Mr. Lever stated that in addition to the old courthouse, other buildings include the Worcester Memorial Auditorium, the Worcester Art Museum, the former Lincoln Square Boys Club building, the National Guard Armory, the old Worcester Vocational High School and the old North High School but the 1954 addition which fronts Harvard Street is not listed on the register. It was not eligible for inclusion in the Worcester Institutional District because of its age at the time the district was created. For a building to be included on the National Register of Historic Places it must be at least 50 years old. As a result the 1954 addition is classified as a non-contributing property within the district. The developer wants to have that designation changed to a contributing property so it can also become eligible for historic tax credits.

Mr. Lever stated that Brady Sullivan bought the courthouse property from the city earlier this year for \$1.2 million and intends to renovate it into 115 market rate apartments and 3,000 square feet of retail space and stated that several apartments and retail space are planned for the 1954 addition.

Secretary McCann stated that he was glad to see that the 1954 addition is being saved and is not going to become a parking lot as the courthouse addition is an example of mid-20th century architecture.

Chair Provencher stated that it would be hard to imagine that the courthouse redevelopment project would be viable without the inclusion of the addition and stated he thought that the addition even though it is not the best example of mid-century architecture it is good enough for the Historical Commission to support and acknowledge that this is an important project for the city.

Mr. Rolle stated that once Massachusetts Historical responds to Epsilon Associates' request for eligibility that staff will determine whether they need to prepare an eligibility form for the Worcester Historical Commission to review.

Rob Parrar from Preservation Worcester stated he is interested in the re-adaptive use of the property and will be reviewing the property.

Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Commissioner Bjork the Commission voted 7-0 to support the addition of the 1954 structure to the Worcester Institutional District as a contributing resource and support the project for historical tax credits.

2. 52 High Street (HC-2015-079)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver

Petitioner: Abby Kelly Foster House, Inc.

Present Use: Multi family residence
Year Built: 1924
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, (fka) Saint Joseph's Home for Working Girls

Petition Purpose:

- Replacement of windows and doors
- Construction of new handicapped accessible entrance and elevator
- Masonry repairs

Brian Lever from Epsilon Associates along with Stephanie Page, Tim Smith and Mara Kamaski appeared on behalf of the item.

Ms. Page gave a brief history of the mission of Abby Kelly Foster House.

Ms. Kamaski stated that they did a review of the property last year and a large scale renovation needs to be done in order for them to continue with their mission.

Mr. Lever stated that the back portion was built first and the front portion which has the ornate façade was built second and interior has a great deal of detail but over the years the building has seen some deterioration. He stated that the original wood windows are in rough shape, the masonry needs to be repaired and they need to replace the front entrance.

Mr. Smith stated that they had to scale back on what they wanted to do originally due to cost. Mr. Smith stated that the project went through the Architectural Board and received some variances and some were denied and one part of their project is the front door which they plan to make just decorative and they may need to add a couple of railings.

Mr. Smith stated that they will also be adding an elevator to the building.

Secretary McCann asked if they planned to pull out all the windows and replace them to make a more uniform look.

Mr. Smith stated yes and stated that there are large existing wood windows and they had a wood window expert come in to give estimate of cost and the long term maintenance on them and showed on plans where some windows had already been replaced with vinyl windows about 15 years ago and will be replaced with new vinyl window. Mr. Smith provided some window details and stated that they will adhere to them.

Chair Provencher asked Mr. Smith to identify on the elevations where the original wood windows remain. Mr. Smith reviewed the locations of where the wood windows and vinyl windows were located.

Chair Provencher asked whether the applicant's intention with regard to the doors was to fabricate new wood doors. Mr. Smith stated that was the intent and they would be putting back to wood and put in a matching profile.

Chair Provencher asked what would be the extent of the masonry repairs. Mr. Smith stated there was some repointing and rebuilding of the brick masonry but the cast stone needs repair and that is the most experience.

Chair Provencher asked what would be the method used to repair the cast stone. Mr. Smith stated that they were unsure at this point and need to bring in an expert to advise them and come up with some options.

Chair Provencher asked if they need to penetrate the roof for the elevator shaft.

Mr. Smith stated that they would but it would only go above the roofline about three feet.

Mr. Smith stated that with regard to the accessible entrance they plan to regrade the parking to provide an outdoor space and showed where the new vestibule entrance would be and the ramp proposed would cover a few of the basement windows.

Chair Provencher stated that the biggest renovation seems to be the windows and the wood windows seem to have storm sashes and probably with the original building they would not have had storm sashes and if you replace with insulated windows the storm sash would go away and the building would look more like it did originally. He stated that the wood windows are historic but believes it important to have some consistency to the building as believes it adds value and he supports the removal of the storm sashes.

Chair Provencher asked with regard to comments made about the cost to repair versus replace the windows he asked if that information was available.

Mr. Smith stated that he had a window person come and they told it would be about the same cost but it was the long term maintenance cost that was the biggest concern.

Chair Provencher stated that they have approved applications like this in the past and the applicant is asking for removal of original material so they need to discuss that and with other applicants the Commission has required applicants to provide economic data and asked the other Commissioners whether they would require this applicant to provide.

Commissioner Bloom stated that anything Abby's House does to continue its mission is important to the community and he would be in favor of what they are proposing with regard to the windows.

Commissioner Conroy asked how would the Commission do an economic hardship for the life cycle of a window.

Chair Provencher stated that with regard to windows there are first costs and then there a life cycle costs and they could ask applicant to provide an annual maintenance cost.

Secretary McCann stated that the Commission is very sensitive to non-profits and churches when they come before Commission but with that being said he does like the building and the High Street façade seems to be intact and likes the windows on the first floor but he can think of few examples of where the Commission has reviewed whether consistency of design would be more important to the project while still maintaining the look of the building and they understand the maintenance cost which could affect Abby's House and considering the quality of the replacement he would support the replacement of the original windows with the models suggested tonight.

Chair Provencher stated that the would agree with Secretary McCann and the product being considered is the Universal and the Commission has seen that in the past and the questions they would ask is about the site lines and they would expect to see some reduction in the daylight opening and asked Mr. Smith if there would be a significant difference with the replacement windows.

Mr. Smith reviewed on the plans and stated that there would be some difference but the brick mold profile would remain and the site line would remain.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bjork the Commission voted 7-0 to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver received on October 15, 2015 and dated October 15, 2015.

2a. Letter from Epsilon Associates, re: Letter of Support, 52 High Street, received October 15, 2015 and dated October 15, 2015.

Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Secretary McCann the Commission voted 7-0 to issue a letter of support.

3. 230 Pleasant Street (HC-2015-081)

Petition:	Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness
Petitioner:	United Cornerstone, LLC
Present Use:	Multi family residence
Year Built:	1965
Historic Status:	MACRIS-listed, (fka) James S. Southgate-Dr. Orlando Mixter House and part of the Crown Hill Local Historic District

Petition Purpose: Retroactive approval for roof replacement

Commissioner Bloom recused himself and left the meeting room.

Tai Chen and Klei appeared upon behalf of the item.

Mr. Chen stated that a tree fell on the roof and they need to repair the roof and stated that they had provided photos to the Commission.

Chair Provencher asked if they had repaired the whole roof.

Mr. Chen stated only front as that where the damage was.

Mr. Chen stated only the front portion.

Chair Provencher asked if the dental molding remained. Mr. Chen stated that he did not touch that and they just did roof as it was an emergency situation.

Mr. Rolle asked if any other work had been done to the property as the Commission had receiving some emails regarding that and wanted to remind the applicant that any work down to the exterior of the property needs to come before the Historical Commission.

Mr. Chen stated that they did some plumbing inside, finished the floors and on the exterior they took the railings out and put in new rail system.

Mr. Rolle stated that the railings would need to be approved by the Commission.

Chair Provencher stated that the Commission would need to approve the rail system so the applicant would need to come back before the Commission with an application for that work.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed retroactive 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 Secretary McCann and seconded by Chair Provencher, the Commission voted 6-0 to continue the Certificate of Appropriateness portion of the application to the December 10, 2015 Historical Commission meeting and to extend the constructive grant deadline until December 12, 2015.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver and Certificate of Appropriateness received on October 19, 2015 and dated October 19, 2015.

RECESS

7:40 p.m. - Commission recessed for five minutes

7:45 p.m.-Commissioner resumed meeting and Commissioner Bloom returned to the meeting.

4. 80 Pleasant Street (HC-2015-080)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Spiro Giannopoulos
Present Use: Mixed Used building
Year Built: 1870
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, (fka) the Ripley Block
Petition Purpose: Installation of temporary wall

Spirio Giannopoulos appeared on behalf of the item.

Mr. Giannopoulos stated that he had received permission from Inspectional Services to install a temporary wall to stabilize the building to keep it safe.

Secretary McCann asked Mr. Rolle if Inspectional Services had provided a letter regarding the installation of the wall.

Mr. Rolle stated that staff would need to follow up with Inspectional Services as they had not received one as of today's date.

Mr. Giannopoulos stated that work was done was to secure the building in order to maintain the property.

Mr. Rolle stated that the proposal is the removal of the rear wall in order to install the temporary wall.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Shveda, the Commission voted 7-0 that the proposed retroactive 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 received on October 19, 2015 and dated October 19, 2015.

OTHER BUSINESS

5. Preservation Plan Update

Mr. Rolle stated that staff and the consultant will meet the following week to begin to review the scope of work.

6. Local Historic District Design Guidelines.

Mr. Rolle stated that a presentation will be made at the December meeting on the design guidelines.

7. Clarification of Decision – 904 Main Street

Mr. Rolle stated that at last meeting the Commissioner had discussed the dormer portion of the request but it did not make into the decision and requested the Commission revoke the item so that be included.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bjork the Commission voted 7-0 to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver as amended.

9. Letter from FCC, re: Section 106 filing-620 West Boylston Street, received November 2, 2015 and dated October 28, 2015.

No comment.

10. Letter from Massachusetts Historical Commission re: Stearns Tavern Relocation, 651 Park Avenue received July 8, 2015 and dated July 13, 2015.

Mr. Rolle stated that this item will be continued to a future meeting.

11. Letter from Epsilon Associates, Inc., re: Letter of Support, Central Building, 322-332 Main Street, received November 4, 2015 and dated November 3, 2015.

Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Commissioner Bjork the Commission voted 7-0 to provide a Letter of Support.

12. Letter from Epsilon Associates., Inc. re: Letter of Support, Wellington Community, 714 Main Street, received November 4, 2015 and dated November 3, 2015.

Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Secretary McCann the Commission voted 7-0 to provide a Letter of Support.

14. Electronic Communication from VHB, re: Letter of Support, Bancroft Hotel, 50 Franklin Street, received November 4, 2015.

Upon a motion by Chair Provencher and seconded by Vice-Chair Shveda the Commission voted 7-0 to provide a Letter of Support.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion the Commission voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m.