

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

**December 30, 2010  
WORCESTER CITY HALL - LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER**

**Commission Members Present:** Peter Schneider, Chair  
Thomas Constantine, Vice-Chair  
Timothy McCann, Clerk  
James Crowley

**Staff Present:** Edgar Luna, Planning Analyst, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services  
Lara Bold, Chief Planner, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

**REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)**

**COMMISSION SITE VIEWS**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

**MINUTES**

The Commission accepted the December 16, 2010 Historical Commission meeting minutes.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. 15 Putnam Lane (a.k.a. 17 Putnam Lane) (HC-2010-088) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Atty. Robert Longden and Matthew Taylor, environmental consultant, representatives for CSX Transportation, Inc., petitioner, presented the petition. Chair Schneider noted that the supporting application materials included information stating that in November 2010 the Massachusetts Historic Commission had released a conservation restriction for the parcel previously granted in 2002. He stated that he did not follow the logic of MHC's granting of the conservation restriction along with \$75,000 and their subsequent release of the restriction and declaration of the property as not historically significant. Chair Schneider continued, however, that under the context of the BDDW ordinance, in his opinion, the building is in a strange location where it is not visible and is derelict. He stated he felt that the removal of the building would, therefore, not be detrimental to the architectural or historic resources of the City. Atty. Longden indicated he was not aware of how the previously granted \$75,000 was spent as it did not appear that the building was rehabilitated in any way. He also reiterated the building was surveyed in 1996 as was the nearby Putnam Lane Bridge and it was determined, at that time, that neither structure was eligible to be included in the National Register of Historic Places. Atty. Longden stated that a letter was included with the BDDW application from Brona Simon, Executive Director of MHC, dated December 13, 2010, which stated in response to the MEPA application filed by CSX, that the two properties: the Putnam Lane Bridge and the building at 15 Putnam Lane are not historically significant and are not eligible for listing; proposed project. The letter concluded that the proposed CSX project, as proposed will not affect historic or archeological resources. Ms. Bold expressed support on behalf of the administration for the

proposed waiver. Commissioner Crowley noted that no members of the audience were present and agreed with Chair Schneider that while he supported the requested waiver, he also did not follow the logic of the Massachusetts Historic Commission's conservation restriction in 2002 and funding and subsequent determination that the building was no longer historically significant. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 4-0, that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester, therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Application submitted by CSX Transportation, Inc., dated November 19, 2010 and received November 19, 2010.

Exhibit B: Memorandum: Joel Fontane to Historical Commission Members, dated December 22, 2010.

2. **10 Institute Road (HC-2010-091) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Chair Schneider noted that staff had informed him that the applicant was seeking a continuance to the January 13, 2011 meeting and will amend the application to include information regarding the windows. Commissioner Crowley recused himself from the vote. Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 3-0 to continue the hearing to the January 13, 2011 Historical Commission meeting.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Application submitted by George Sullivan; dated November 19, 2010 and received November 29, 2010; revised January 3, 2011.

3. **12 Jackson Street (HC-2010-092) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Chair Schneider asked if Robert Crawford, petitioner, or a representative was present in the audience but no one responded. The Commission held the item until the end of the meeting.
4. **10 Sycamore Street (HC-2010-093) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Jim Levin, owner and petitioner for 10 Sycamore Street, presented the petition. Mr. Levin stated that he was a new owner of the building having purchased it from the bank after it had been foreclosed. He indicated that he was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to implement the following changes: (a) remove and replace the rotted wood trim, soffit and moldings with like-materials and design, (b) remove, repair and/or replace the deteriorated slate tiles on the mansard roof: the rear, right and left sides will be replaced with synthetic slate-like tiles, and the front side original slate tiles will be repaired and retained, (c) replace and re-flash missing gutter/scupper elements, down spouts and leaders, (d) remove the third floor egress stair system, and replace it with a new pressure-treated wood stairs system that meets building code requirements, (e) fill-in the ground level gaps located on the foundation of the barn structure to seal and protect the building from the elements. Mr. Levin stated that the roof is approximately 100 years old and, in his opinion, 45 years past its useful life. He stated that the plan to repair the roof includes harvesting slate from the sides and rear of the building to maintain front façade along Sycamore St. He stated there is not enough slate to do the entire roof. He also indicated that the slate is “fishscale” like but is an angular shape and is not made anymore. Chair Schneider asked if there was enough slate to be harvested for the east side of the roof as well which is also partially visible from the street. Mr. Levin stated his contractor had indicated that it will be a challenge to harvest enough slate for the front of the building along Sycamore Street. He further indicated that the tin

in the scupper system has failed and has to be reflashed under the slate. He stated that the soffit is porous and that he hopes to save the brackets and replace the scupper system as is and that the remaining roofing materials will be a synthetic slate as closely matched as possible. He stated that the brackets will be reinstalled; some of which will be taken from the rear if needed. He also stated the rear egress will be replaced with a similar pressure treated but code-compliant egress. Chair Schneider asked Mr. Levin for a cost comparison of complete replacement of the slate mansard roof. Mr. Levin stated that the cost of replacing the slate mansard roof would be \$100,000 versus \$26,000 to harvest the slate from the sides and rear and retain the front façade only. He indicated that the cost of repairing the roof would be significantly less (\$11,000) if he did not replace the slate along the front façade and reiterated that he is investing \$15,000 to retain the building's historic character. Chair Schneider expressed support for the investment in harvesting the slate for the front façade. Mr. Levin clarified that the lead paint repairs referenced in the application will only be interior with the possible exception of the brackets which he stated would be dealt with if needed. Chair Crowley asked if the roof was functioning properly; Mr. Levin stated that it was not and was leaking. Chair Crowley asked for clarification on the proposed synthetic slate. Mr. Levin clarified that synthetic slate will be used for sides and rear and it will be a slate look. Mr. Crowley stated that he was satisfied with the information presented to vote on the waiver based on economic hardship and commended the applicant on his investment. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 2-2 (Commissioners Crowley and Schneider voting no) that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester, therefore, the Commission considered approval of the Building Demolition Delay Waiver based on the finding of undue economic hardship. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 4-0 that the petitioner had demonstrated undue economic hardship and approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project based on economic hardship with the condition that proposed roofing materials for the sides and rear be slate look alike.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Application prepared by James Taylor, dated December 7, 2010 and received on December 8, 2010.

5. **12 Jackson Street (HC-2010-092) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** No one was present for the meeting. Chair Schneider asked Mr. Luna if Mr. Crawford or a representative had informed him that the petitioner or a representative would not be able to attend the meeting. Mr. Luna responded that he had not been contacted by anyone. He also clarified, when asked, that it was his understanding that only the porch would be removed and that the proposed change was minor in nature. Commissioner Constantine expressed concern that this was the third meeting in a row when a petitioner had not been able to attend and stated that there was not much information provided. Commissioner Crowley also stated that the application was vague. The Commission considered whether to continue or deny the application. Mr. Luna clarified that if the petition is denied, the petitioner would have to reapply. He informed the Commission that the constructive grant deadline for the application is January 22, 2011. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 4-0 to postpone the hearing on this matter to the January 13, 2011 Historical Commission meeting. Mr. Luna stated that staff will contact the applicant to remind him to attend the meeting.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Application submitted by Robert Crawford; dated December 3, 2010 and received December 3, 2010.

## **OTHER BUSINESS:**

### **6. Requested Letters of Support**

Chair Schneider indicated his support for signing a letter of support for the rehabilitation project proposed at 2 Grove Street, formerly known as Worcester Industrial Technical Institute (Worcester Voke). He stated that he would like additional information regarding 16 Salisbury Street (former Boy's Club). Chair Schneider clarified that the applicant was seeking support for financing at this stage. Commissioner Constantine asked if a Building Demolition Delay Waiver filing had been submitted yet for 16 Salisbury Street. Ms. Bold clarified that both parcels (2 Grove Street & 16 Salisbury Street) are located in the City's Gateway Park Priority Development Site and as such would be exempt from the Building Demolition Delay Ordinance (a General Ordinance amendment passed by City Council two (2) years ago). Chair Schneider asked for a copy of the ordinance from staff and stated that he would still like additional information from the applicant on 16 Salisbury Street project.

7. Mr. Luna informed the Commission that he will be on vacation from January 3, 2011 to January 21, 2011. He indicated that during his absence, Ms. Luba Zhaurova will be staffing the Historical Commission.

## **MEETING ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM.