

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
November 15, 2012**

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: J. Thomas Constantine
Timothy McCann, Vice-Chair
Kevin Provencher, Clerk
James Crowley
Andrew Schveda
Meagan Mulherin

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 approval of the minutes for September 20, 2012 and for October 18, 2012 were postponed to the next meeting since the Board had not had enough time to review.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. 31 Elizabeth Street (HC-2012-065)

Brian Beriau, contractor from Cabe Roofing and Adam Polletta from Phoenix Management, managing company for the condos, introduced themselves. Mr. Beriau presented a substitute slate to the Commission that he stated was an affordable option for the client. The dimensions of the new tiles are 3” wider than the original slate.

Mr. Polletta stated that the turret where the new synthetic slate tile will be installed is 4 stories above street level. He stated that the dimensional differences wouldn’t be recognizable unless a person is at eye level.

Mr. Crowley asked what the estimates were for the asphalt, the synthetic slate, and the authentic slate. The contractor replied that the asphalt shingles would cost \$15,000, \$20,000 for the synthetic slate, and \$45,000 for the authentic slate due to the staging required.

Mr. Crowley asked when the whole roof will need to be replaced and Mr. Beriau stated that it would likely be within 10-15 years. Mr. Polletta stated that the option of the synthetic slate roof was presented to the condo association at an onsite meeting and they agreed they liked the look and will absorb the cost. Mr. Polletta stated that they cannot absorb the cost of the authentic slate because they have only budgeted for repairs of the slate roof not its entire replacement.

Mr. Provencher asked if the cost will be passed on to the condo owners through the condominium fees. Mr. Polletta stated that the condo association obtained a loan during the summer to make the repairs and that fee had already been passed to the individual condo owners. Switching to the synthetic slate would not result in further fees for the individual condo owners.

Mr. Constantine asked about the condition of the existing slate and Mr. Beriau stated that they are falling from the tower since the nail heads have rotted. Mr. Polletta stated that the turret is over a main entrance so this presents a liability issue. Also of concern is damage done by the water leaking into the property.

Mr. Schveda asked if the applicant plans to keep the copper finials on top of the property. Mr. Beriau stated that they will keep the copper finials and install copper ridges, similar to the rest of the roof.

Mr. Provencher stated that when making the motion the petition needs to be revised to account for the new proposed material.

Jo Hart, Worcester resident, stated she had wished that they applied for some grants in order to replace it with real slate.

Upon a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Mr. McCann, the Board voted 1-4-0 (Mr. McCann, Mr. Provencher, Mr. Crowley, and Mr. Schveda voting no; Ms. Mulherin abstained since she was not present at the first meeting) that the proposed will not be detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the City. The motion failed and therefore it was considered to be detrimental. Next the Commission considered the claim of undue economic hardship.

Upon a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Mr. McCann, the Board voted 5-0-1 to approve the proposed because it would pose undue economic hardship on the applicant. The motion passed and therefore it was considered to be an undue hardship.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application, dated and submitted October 1, 2012.

Exhibit B: Cabe Roofing quote, dated November 1, 2012.

Exhibit C: Picture of turret and aerial picture of building, received November 15, 2012.

OTHER BUSINESS:

2. Crown Hill Update

Mr. Fontane informed the Commission that the state deemed the Crown Hill Study Report complete on October 9, 2012. The state has 60 days to comment on the report after which the Historical Commission can hold a public hearing to formally consider this and allow the property owners of the proposed Local Historic District a chance to voice their opinion.

Mr. Fontane stated that staff sent out letters informing all property owners of the proposal for a Local Historic District and posted the report on the City website. There are also hard copies available for review in the Planning & Regulatory Services office.

Mr. Fontane asked the Commission if they wanted to hold the public hearing after their regularly scheduled meeting on December 13, 2012 or have a Special Meeting on December 20, 2012. The Commission decided to schedule the Crown Hill public hearing to December 13, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Fontane stated that during this public hearing there will be a brief presentation about the Crown Hill Historic district and then a question and answer session will take place. Staff will ensure all impacted parties are notified of the date and time of the meeting.

3. Information Session - re: Worcester Business Development Corporation's renovation plans for 18-20 Franklin Street from Julie Holstrom, WBDC Project Manager; dated October 31, 2012

Julie Holstrom, Project Manager for Worcester Business Development Corporation (WBDC), stated to the Commission that she was before them for informational purposes only. The building in question is located on 18-20 Franklin Street and it is not listed as a historical building but WBDC is pursuing historic designation. They are renovating it and pursuing historic tax credits.

Bob Demens, project architect, stated the original building was built in the 1890s and has been through 9 renovations since then. The building stretches from Franklin to Mechanic Street. The purpose is to preserve the granite and introduce accent metal panels. They will create new store front on both streets. Mr. Demens stated that the proposal adds an aesthetic feature on the Franklin Street façade that raises the visual height of the building and produces depth with a bump out feature that drops from the fourth to the second floor. All the windows will be replaced with high-efficiency thermal windows and the roof will be replaced.

Mr. Demens stated that the plan for the Federal street building is to infill the old loading dock areas with glass, add sun shades to the building; and a new bump out over the entrance to better identify it.

Mr. Constantine stated that they might have an issue pursuing historic designation if they replace all the windows.

Ms. Holstrom stated that she wanted the Historical Commission to be aware of the project in case the state reaches out to them for comments in the future.

4. Received Communication:

- re: Worcester Central Business District Streetscape Improvements from Beta Group, Inc.; dated 10/26/2012

Mr. Schveda stated the only items that the Historical Commission should comment on are the lighting and streetscape amenities (trash cans, benches, bike racks, etc). He would like to see what the designs are for those items before commenting.

Jo Hart, Worcester resident, stated she would like the BETA Group to come in and do a presentation on the proposed project.

Mr. Constantine asked staff to request more information on the streetscape item designs before making comments.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT:

The Commission voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 6:06 PM.