

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

November 30, 2017

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Andrew Shveda
Randolph Bloom
Robyn Conroy
Mark Wamback
Devon Kurtz
Courtney Ross Escobar, Alternate

Commission Members Absent: Janet Theerman

Staff Members Present: Stephen Rolle, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Susan Arena, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

Call Commission to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Shveda at 5:30 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Review of the November 9, 2017 minutes.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the minutes of November 9, 2017.

Communications

Taken out of order.

- a. Communication from vhb re: Worcester County Courthouse PNF, received electronically November 9, 2017.

No comment

- b. *Request for updated letters of support from Epsilon Associates re: Abby's House, 52 High Street, and Central Building, 322 Main Street, received electronically November 13, 2017.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy the Commission voted 6-0 to issue updated Letters of Support.

As these projects, like many others in Worcester, rely on the allocation of state and federal tax credits, Chair Shveda took a moment to emphasize the importance of these programs. He referenced the impending federal budget vote, which would potentially eliminate the historic tax credit on that level. Chair Shveda asked other Commissioners for their support in submitting a letter to the City Manager, asking that he use all of his political abilities to maintain the federal tax credit at its current level.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 6-0 to have staff draft a letter to the City Manager.

- c. Communication from Mount Carmel Preservation Society re: Request for creation of a historic district study committee, received electronically November 16, 2017.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy the Commission voted 6-0 to add the request to the January 4, 2018 agenda.

The Commission requested that the petitioner present their request and include the following information: a map of the proposed district; background, including current historic status, of buildings to be included in the proposed district; comment from all parties with direct interest in the properties to be included. Staff are instructed to assist in this preparation.

**Items requiring action*

Old Business

1. 39-41 Irving Street – HC-2017-075 (MBL 03-018-0023A)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver & Certificate of Appropriateness
Petitioner: Chris Valeri
Present Use: Rooming house
Year Built: 1888
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, and within Crown Hill Local Historic District, fka George S. Clough Building

Petition Purpose:

- Replace three entry doors (2 front, 1 rear)

Chris Valeri, owner, appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Valeri stated that his request had changed to just include the replacement of the rear door. He stated that adjustments had been made to the front doors that have made them more functional and secure. Regarding the rear door Mr. Valeri stated that he was planning to meet with a contractor to discuss options, but had not been able to do so as of this meeting. He noted that he had found historic doors online, for a cost range of \$750 to \$1200, which was above his budget considering the traffic and use on that entrance.

Chair Shveda agreed that the rear door is not salvageable, but that the replacement options Mr. Valeri had presented were not appropriate for the local historic district. Namely, they were looking for a half light door with horizontal panels on the bottom to more closely mimic the existing unit. Additionally, the Commission was recommending fiberglass, as it's durable and will hide signs of heavy use better than steel.

Mr. Rolle suggested that, as long as the rear door is secure for the time being, that the item be continued to allow Mr. Valeri time to meet with his contractor, and staff, to find a suitable replacement.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Bloom and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 4-0 to continue the item to the December 21, 2017 meeting, and to extend the Constructive Grant deadlines to December 26, 2017.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver and Certificate of Appropriateness Application dated October 19, 2017 and received October 20, 2017.

Exhibit B: Request to Continue form, dated November 30, 2017.

New Business

2. 25 Bowdoin Street – HC-2017-076 (MBL 02-033-00032)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Square Assets, LLC
Present Use: Three-family residence
Year Built: c1867
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka George Cobb House
Petition Purpose:

- Replace siding
- Replace windows
- Repair front and sides of slate roof, replace rear and top sections
- Replace trim and brackets
- Remove rear porches
- Remove chimneys
- Replace front porch

Scott Goddard, Square Assets LLC, and Bill LeMay, contractor, appeared upon behalf of the application.

Mr. Goddard stated that he recently acquired the property and it is in disrepair. Mr. Lemay stated that they intend to save the front doors, as well as the paired brackets where possible. He thought that by removing the brackets from the rear elevation there should be enough to replace and damaged pieces on the front and sides.

They intend to keep the slate just on the front of the Mansard and replace the rest with asphalt. The Commission felt that the mix of slate, or slate looking composite, with asphalt may look odd and would pose a problem at the corners where the materials meet. Asphalt all the way around may be preferable. The chimney to be removed does not currently service any utilities, and Chair Shveda commented that this example is utilitarian in design and not of particular note aesthetically.

Mr. Lemay noted that the siding, fascia and soffit throughout is rotted and missing in places. Siding will be replaced with vinyl and trim in PVC. Chair Shveda observed that the soffit appeared to have been previously wrapped in aluminum which likely contributed to the deterioration of the wood.

Windows will be replaced with vinyl replacement units in a matching 6-over-1 grid pattern. Mr. LeMay noted that asbestos had been detected in the window glazing.

It was agreed that the upper pitch of the roof and the rear porches were not visible from a public way, so neither item fell under the purview of the Commission.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated October 26, 2017 and received October 27, 2017.

3. 6 Chatham Street – HC-2017-077 (MBL 03-20A-00036)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Emengini Educational Trust LLC
Present Use: Commercial building
Year Built: 1915 and 1924
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka Young Women’s Christian Association
Petition Purpose:

- Create new window openings
- Replace windows
- Install exterior handicapped accessible lift

Alex Hondros, Menkiti Group, and Albert Rex, MacRostie Historic Advisors, appeared upon behalf of the application.

Mr. Hondros stated that the Menkiti Group has extensive experience with adaptive reuse and historical preservation. This project will use state and federal tax credits to create 19 market rate residential units and about 5000 square feet of assembly and office space for the Emengini Cultural Institute.

Mr. Rex stated that the property has previously been allocated tax credits under a previous developer and that those will be transferable to this project. In addition, the applicants will be seeking National Register listing. Regarding the scope of work, Mr. Rex stated that the existing windows are relatively new replacements that are in good conditions. Two story arched windows on the southeast elevation that are currently bricked in will be reopened and windows installed. Several new window openings will be added to the northwest elevation, as well as an exterior handicapped lift. Additional exterior work will consist of masonry cleaning and repointing.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Wamback, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver dated November 1, 2017 and received November 3, 2017.

4. 28 Tatman Street – HC-2017-078 (MBL 10-027-00014)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Joseph Zemaitis
Present Use: Two-family residence
Year Built: c1930
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka Godfred Moberg House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace porch footings
- Replace siding in-kind as needed
- Replace columns

Joseph Zemaitis, owner, and Mark Casey, contractor, appeared upon behalf of the application.

Mr. Zemaitis stated that he'd like to replace the footings, columns and siding on the two story front porches. Mr. Casey stated that they will remove the siding to access the footings, which will be replaced with concrete, then the siding replaced in-kind. The columns would be replaced with pressure treated 6"x6" posts to be wrapped in Azek.

The Commission noted that the second floor columns are round, and the first floor has square columns that are decoratively trimmed. They expressed concern about losing these details and suggested that the upper columns be retained if possible, as the plinths seemed to be the biggest issue structurally. If they can't be saved, the contractor agreed to replace them with wood columns to match existing. The lower columns will be replaced with a structural post to be wrapped with composite material to match the existing columns.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, with the following conditions:

- *Lower square columns will be rebuilt to match existing design*
- *Upper round columns will be retained if possible, or replaced to match.*

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver dated November 8, 2017 and received November 9, 2017.

5. 15 (aka 19) Chatham Street – HC-2017-079 (MBL 13-19A-00007)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: R.C. Bishop Sole (Diocese of Worcester)
Present Use: Church
Year Built: 1869
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, and National Register listed, fka Cathedral of Saint Paul
Petition Purpose:

- Replace lower roof and flashing
- Replace gutters as needed

Jordan O'Connor, architect, and John Ford, Saint Paul's Cathedral finance committee, appeared upon behalf of the application.

Mr. O'Connor stated that the lower roofs are currently batten seam metal and have outlived their usefulness. The applicant included historic photos of the church showing those sections appeared to be slate originally. Mr. O'Connor explained that likely, snow coming off the steeply pitched upper roofs

quickly damaged the slate on the lower roofs, leading to the replacement with metal. The age of the current roof is unknown, but it is no longer repairable. The applicant included cost estimates for batten seam metal, standing seam metal, and composite slate. The cost of metal is approximately four times that of the composite slate \$63,100, which the applicant claimed to be an economic hardship.

Public comment: Jo Hart, asked about the siting of the church, finding it odd that it's on a side street. Mr. O'Connor and Commissioner Bloom stated that it was common for Protestant churches to be on Main Street, and Catholic churches to be relegated to side streets.

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 5-0 to recess.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver dated November 8, 2017 and received November 9, 2017.

Commissioner Ross Escobar left before the last item.

6. 15 Randolph Road – HC-2017-080 (MBL 22-019-00003)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Bernice Evans
Present Use: Single-family residence and garage
Year Built: 1869, garage date unknown
Historic Status: MACRIS Listed, fka William T. Brown House
Petition Purpose:

- Demolish garage

Tim and George Evans, power of attorney for owner, appeared upon behalf of the application.

Mr. Evans stated that the roof was not original to the property based on its construction. It is concrete block with a flat wood roof that has rotted and collapsed. Chair Shveda observed that the garage is not particularly notable architectural, in addition to being in very poor condition.

No public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition is not detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city and voted to approve the Building Demolition Delay Waiver application.

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver dated November 11, 2017 and received November 13, 2017.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Chair Shveda and seconded by Commissioner Wamback, the Commission voted 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.