

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

**August 6, 2020**

**CITY HALL\***

**Commission Members Participating:** Mark Wamback, Chair  
Devon Kurtz, Vice-Chair  
Randolph Bloom  
Diane Long  
Tomi Stefani  
Janet Theerman  
Erika Helnarski, Alternate

**Commission Members Not Participating:** Cathryn E. Jerome-Mezynski, Alternate

**Staff Members Participating:** Stephen Rolle, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services  
Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services

\*Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 23, 2020 Order, as amended, imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting was conducted through remote participation. The meeting was livestreamed from the City of Worcester website and via the local cable access channel and is available for streaming online. Public participation was facilitated through a call-in number, 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1608081191#), which was publicized on the posted meeting agenda and during the video broadcast.

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**July 9, 2020:** Commissioner Long noted an error in the minutes. Ms. Johnstone stated that she would correct it. On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the July 9, 2020 meeting minutes.

**July 23, 2020:** On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the July 23, 2020 meeting minutes.

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**OLD BUSINESS**

**Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver**

**1. 9 Oxford Street – HC-2019-071 (MBL 03-025-00004)**

Petitioner: Helen & Dom Pham

Year Built: 1891

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; National Register Determination of Eligibility (DOE); National Register District (NRDIS); Local Historic District (LHD); State Register (SR), FKA Salem Griggs House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace windows (retroactive)

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Don Pham, building owner and petitioner, spoke on behalf of the application. He gave a brief overview of what had been requested of him by the Commission, which was to prepare quotes and samples for windows, which he submitted to Ms. Johnstone.

Ms. Johnstone stated that the quotes were on paged 5 and 6 of the slide deck. She also stated that the applicant is amenable to replacing the windows on the front of the building.

Commissioner Kurtz stated that replacing the windows on the front of the building would be a good compromise

Commissioner Stefani asked why the windows proposed show a grid pattern of six-over-six, where the windows removed were two-over-two. He asked if the intent was to install two-over-two or six-over-six windows. Ms. Johnstone stated that the quote provided by the manufacturer shows six-over-six windows, but the Commission could certainly talk about different grid patterns.

Commissioner Stefani asked what grid pattern would be appropriate. Ms. Johnstone stated that for a building of this age, you would typically see six-over-six, two-over-two, or two-over-one windows. She noted that given that the Commission doesn't have any historical photographs of the building, there is no way to know for certain if the windows removed were original or historic replacements.

Mr. Rolle stated that the Commission should think about what makes sense for the front of the house and what is appropriate for its vintage, but also keeping in mind the window patterns on the side of the house.

Commissioner Wamback stated that if it doesn't make a difference cost-wise, he is of the opinion that two-over-two windows should be installed as that is what was taken out. Mr. Pham stated that he didn't care whether the replacement windows are two-over-two or six-over-six.

Mr. Rolle suggested that if the Commission is amenable to it, they could make the motion such that the windows be replaced to match the grid pattern of the windows that were removed if available from the distributor, and if not available, an appropriate alternate grid pattern reviewed by staff be installed. Commissioner Wamback agreed.

Ms. Johnstone stated that the Commission should discuss the two options proposed by the applicant; the wood windows and the vinyl windows with raised exterior grids. She stated that staff would recommend wood. Mr. Rolle added that the windows are an aluminum-clad wood product, which have been approved before in historic districts.

Mr. Pham stated that there is a big price different between the vinyl and wood windows so he wonders if the Commission was considering the cost.

Commissioner Wamback asked how the window replacement became retroactive. Ms. Johnstone stated that in August of last year (2019), the applicant replaced the windows without a building permit or a Certificate of Applicability. Mr. Pham stated he did not know he needed permission to replace the windows and also didn't know the house was in the historical district.

#### *Public Comment*

Commissioner Bloom stated that there is a letter from Preservation Worcester that addresses this property.

Commissioner Wamback read a letter from Deborah Packard of Preservation Worcester, which stated that Preservation Worcester recommends that the Commission develop and institute consequences for property owners who do not comply with the rules of the Commission. It also stated that the replacement of windows in a local historic district without approval is a serious violation.

Commissioner Helnarski agreed that there needs to be consequences. She wants the Commission to be taken more seriously, while still being understanding of the homeowner.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public hearing.

Mr. Rolle clarified the intent of the Commission with the applicant. Mr. Pham stated that he would do whatever the Commission wants and that he doesn't want to attend meetings anymore.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed changes including the replacement of the windows on the front elevation with raised-grid wood replacement windows with a two-over-two grid pattern, and the retroactive replacement of all windows on the sides and rear of the house with vinyl sash, would be appropriate for the Crown Hill Local Historic District, and approved a Certificate of Appropriateness.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted 6-0 that the demolition at 9 Oxford Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City and approved a Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

*Exhibits*

Exhibit A. Certificate of Appropriateness and Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application, dated 9/11/2019, received 9/12/2020

Exhibit B. Continuance Form, received 1/23/2020.

Exhibit C. Continuance Form, received 1/31/2020.

Exhibit D. Continuance Form, received 3/12/2020.

Exhibit E. Postponement Form, received 4/15/2020.

**2. 220 Salisbury Street – HC-2020-038 (MBL 20-007-0030A)**

Petitioner: Erjona Mehillaj

Year Built: 1952

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; Local Historic District (LHD); State Register (SR)

Petition Purpose:

- Redesign front exterior concrete stairs and front walkway (retroactive)

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The item was continued until the next meeting.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to postpone the item to the August 20, 2020 meeting.

**Building Demolition Delay Waiver**

**3. 12 Westland Street – HC-2020-035 (MBL 11-008-00019)**

Petitioner: Jonathan Rigali

Year Built: 1897

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; National Register District (NRDIS); National Register Multiples Resource Area (NRMRA); State Register of Historic Places (SR), FKA C.A. Chandler House

Petition Purpose:

- Remove existing slate roof and replace with architectural shingles

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The item was continued until the next meeting.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted 6-0 to postpone the item to the August 20, 2020 meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Building Demolition Delay Waiver**

**4. 31 Louise Street – HC-2020-054 (MBL 10-005-00020)**

Petitioner: Chris Collette o/b/o Florine Collette

Year Built: ca. 1918

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register of Historic Places (NRIND); National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA), fka the John and Edward Johnson Three-Decker

Petition Purpose:

- Replace existing cedar siding with vinyl siding.

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Chris and Florine Collette spoke on behalf of the application. He stated the intent of the project, which is to replace the existing wood siding with vinyl. He stated that in 2018, a previous owner got approval from the Historical Commission to rebuild the porches and install vinyl siding. He stated that he house has a mix of clapboard and shingle cedar siding.

Commissioner Wamback asked if the applicant if the intent is to install the same type of vinyl siding around the entire building or if the intent is to match the textures that exist. Mr. Collette stated that impression vinyl shake is about four times more expensive that regular vinyl siding, so ideally the entire house would be sided in vinyl clapboard siding.

Commissioner Long stated that when the siding was approved in 2018, the approval specified that there would be impression vinyl shakes used where there are existing cedar shakes around the entire house, and asked if it would be possible to keep that look on the front of the house.

The applicant stated that the front and about half of the southerly side are the only sides that have shakes, except for the gable peaks, which all have shakes.

Commissioner Wamback stated that he would like to see a continuity in texture.

Mr. Collette stated that the entirety of the porches had shakes, so that is a lot of square footage to cover.

Commissioner Long suggested maybe just keeping the shakes just in the peak. Mr. Collette stated that those shakes are in slightly better condition than those on the rest of the house, so he thinks that if he just paints those, which would be a good compromise.

The Commission stated that it would be okay if the porches were clad in clapboard-style vinyl siding, and the bays and peaks be clad in imitation vinyl shake.

Commissioner Theerman stated that she would like assurance that the corbels under the cornice be kept and not encased. Mr. Collette stated that the corbels will be painted.

*No public comment.*

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 that the demolition at 31 Louise Street consisting of the replacement of cedar siding with clapboard-style vinyl siding where there are clapboards and vinyl impression shakes where there are cedar shakes, except for on the porches, which will be clad in clapboard-style vinyl siding, and in the gable peak on the front of the house where the wood shakes will be retained if possible, on the condition that the corbels will be retained, is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City, and approved a Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, dated 7/6/2020, received 7/7/2020.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Letter from the MHC to K. Russell Adams, Assistant Director of Engineering & Architectural Services for the City of Worcester, requesting more information on the Doherty Memorial High School project.

The Commission did not have comment on this item.

- B. Notice from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) of a new Section 106 filing by AT&T Mobility, LLC, for collocation of a cell tower at 21 Heywood Street.

On a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 6-0 to not issue comments.

- C. Request for updated letters of support for the following properties for MacRostie Historic Advisors:
- a. Worcester WYCA, 6–10 Chatham Street
  - b. Whitcomb Manufacturing Company Factory, 134 Gold Street
  - c. Worcester Boys' Club, 2 Ionic Avenue
  - d. Paul Revere Life Insurance Company Building, 18 Chestnut Street
  - e. Elwood Adams Hardware Store, 156 Main Street
  - f. 98 Beacon Street
  - g. Washburn & Moen North Works Cotton Mill, 90 Grove Street
  - h. Waldo Street Police Station, District Court & Insurance Fire Patrol, 1 Exchange Place

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to issue update letters of support for the above listed projects.

- D. Request for and updated letter of support for Worcester WYCA, 1 Salem Square

On a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to issue an updated letter of support for the Worcester WYCA at 1 Salem Square.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- A. Discussion regarding Demolition Delay Ordinance Revisions and Commission Regulations, Policies & Procedures.

This item was held.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Chair Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.