



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

**Thursday, June 13, 2024**

Remote participation only available via Webex online at  
<https://cityofworchester.webex.com/meet/historicalcommissionwebex> and  
Call 1-844-621-3956 (Access Code: 26326367009)

**Commissioners Present:** Diane Long, Chair  
Janet Theerman, Vice-Chair  
Donald Northway  
Erika Helnarski, Clerk (*Participated Remotely*)  
Vanessa Andre, Alternate

**Commissioners Absent:** Devon Kurtz  
Steven Taylor

**Staff Present:** Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)  
Amy Beth Laythe, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)

**Call Commission to Order** – 5:30 PM

**Old Business**

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

**1. 32 May Street (06-024-00009) – BDDW-24-12**

***Petition purpose: Replace Roof***

*On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to postpone this item until the July 11, 2024, meeting with an extended constructive grant deadline of July 26, 2024.*

**Exhibits**

*Exhibit A - Application submitted by Thanh Co, owner, and received on March 20, 2024*

*Exhibit B – Slides of current conditions and proposed new project shown at meeting.*

**New Business**

**Certificate of Non-Applicability**

**2. 179 Highland Street (02-041-00091) – CNA-24-14**

***Petition purpose: Replace Roof***

Manuel Cunin o/b/o/ Highland Street Realty, LLC participated online and gave an overview of the project to replace the roof. The current roof is asphalt shingle and will be replaced with in-kind material.

*Upon a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the changes to replace the roof with in-kind material at 179 Highland Street are not under the jurisdiction of the Commission. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the request for a Certificate of Non-Applicability was approved.*

Exhibits

*Exhibit A – Application submitted by Manuel Cunin, contractor, and received on June 7, 2024*

*Exhibit B – Slides of current and proposed conditions shown at meeting*

**Building Demolition Delay waiver**

**3. 17 Knox Street (27-011-00006) – BDDW-24-24**

***Petition purpose: Replace siding, construct a new deck, add a new door, and replace existing porch elements***

Israel Sierra, contractor, o/b/o Jaime Aviles participated online and gave an overview of the project and all the work looking to be done on the exterior. All porches are being rebuilt as they are.

Ms. Johnstone stated existing is cedar shingle siding and the plan is to replace with regular lap siding. Decks in the back are not historic. Back deck will be replaced with composite. Front decking is now tongue and groove, and plan is to replace with composite - the decking is historic, but the balustrade is not. Columns are historic and will remain. Plan is to add a new door to the rear of house and add a landing and stair that will not be visible from the road.

Mr. Sierra stated windows will be replaced to match all vinyl that has been replaced over the years.

Chair Long asked what materials are on the front of the house.

Mr. Sierra said cedar shakes.

Chair Long asked if Mr. Sierra would be willing to use a material that mimics cedar shakes.

Mr. Sierra said that would be fine and do regular siding for the rest of the house.

Ms. Johnstone stated it sounds like the front will be cedar shingle impression siding and the rest of the house would be lap siding. She stated she would administratively approve the rear windows.

Commissioners had no additional comments.

*Public comment:*

Jonathon Ostrow, Worcester, asked why the original material of cedar needs to be replaced. The condition does not look bad. Could the shakes be replaced with natural materials and not vinyl.

Chair Long stated this house is not in a local historic district.

Mr. Sierra said the pictures do not reflect the true condition and that the cedar shakes are in really bad shape.

*On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.*

*On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed demolition at 17 Knox Street, consisting of installing siding with cedar looking shakes in the front, replacing porches and keeping columns in the front, replacing a*

*window with a door and adding a stair would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous vote, the motion passed and a Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 17 Knox Street was thus approved.*

Exhibits

*Exhibit A - Application submitted by Israel Sierra, contractor, and received on May 7, 2024*

*Exhibit B – Slides of current conditions shown at meeting.*

**OTHER BUSINESS**

A. Policies & procedures - NONE

B. 100 Chandler Street status update

Chair Long said there was a letter submitted from the new owners.

Ms. Johnstone gave an overview of the work done on the property without permitting. There was a previous agreement with the old owner and the commission to replace the front windows with custom windows and paint the white vinyl windows and plywood in some window openings a matte black. The owner then sold the building without doing the agreed upon work. The new owners bought it and do know they need to rectify things. Ms. Johnstone met with them this week and they are here to present to the Commission.

Jose Freitas, accompanied by other members of his parish, stated that as the building's new owners, they are going to transition the building back to a church use. One of the original arch windows was found in the building and the plan is to replicate that window to match and replace the front windows.

Ms. Johnstone said that the new owners have already met the previous condition of painting sections of the building, so now all that is needed is to get the windows put in.

The new owners of the building gave an update of the work they are looking to do.

Mr. Freitas stated that the stairs that come inside the building were damaged, and the brickwork was already repaired.

Ms. Johnstone stated that the stairs were concrete on brick pilings with brick sidewalls that were very damaged. The new owners resurfaced the concrete to make it safe to walk on. They have gotten a lot done in a very short amount of time. Everything is also underway on the inside of the building as well.

Chair Long asked how long it will take to have the window replicated.

Mr. Freitas stated maybe a month or so.

Commissioner Helnarski asked if the commission could receive photos of all the work that has been done along with a status update in approximately three months.

Ms. Johnstone asked if September 5, 2024, would work for a status update meeting, to which the new owners agreed.

*On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to continue the status of 100 Chandler Street to the September 5, 2024, meeting.*

The owners stated they had pictures of the stairs with them at the meeting tonight for the commissioners to see – both before and after.

Commissioner Helnarski asked Ms. Johnstone how folks who buy a property are notified that work is required.

Ms. Johnstone responded that as soon as a permit is applied for, or while the attorney helping with the purchase is doing due diligence, outstanding items will be found. Ms. Johnstone asked the new owners how they were made aware of the issues.

The Freitas' were aware there was an issue with the title of the building but not of all the violations and problems in the actual building.

Commissioner Helnarski asked if they went to pull a permit and then found out about the violations.

Mr. Freitas answered exactly, yes. He reached out to someone before the building was purchased, and was not informed of the violations and were asked if the planned use was a church.

C. Vote to endorse preservation restriction for 36 Butler Street

The owner of the property entered into an agreement with the city for a preservation restriction. The idea is that the building will remain in place, but the schematic itself will change depending on future development.

*On a motion made by Chair Long and seconded by Vice-Chair Theerman, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to endorse the preservation restriction for 36 Butler Street.*

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Request from Ryan, Inc., for updated letter of support for Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit allocation for Paul Revere Life Insurance Company Building, 18 Chestnut Street.

*On a motion made by Chair Long and seconded by Vice-Chair Theerman, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to provide a letter of support for the tax credits.*

B. Request for comment on City of Worcester Housing Division projects at 72 Richland Street, 22 Conway Street, and 7 Chadwick Street (Section 106).

Commission did not provide comment.

C. Request for comment on MASSDOT Route 20 drainage project (Section 106).

Commission did not provide comment.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – May 2, 16 & 30 2024

*On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to Approve the minutes for May 2, 16 & 30, 2024 as written.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long, the Commission voted five (5) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:04 p.m.