



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

Thursday, October 10, 2024

Worcester City Hall - Levi Lincoln Chamber,
with remote participation options available via Webex online at
<https://cityofworchester.webex.com/meet/historicalcommissionwebex> and
call-in number 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1608081191).

Commissioners Present: Diane Long, Chair
Janet Theerman, Vice-Chair
Donald Northway
Vanessa Andre, Alternate
Steven Taylor
Devon Kurtz

Commissioners Absent: Erika Helnarski, Clerk

Staff Present: Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Michelle Smith, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)

Call Commission to Order – 5:30 PM

OLD BUSINESS

1. 117 Vernon Street (10-028-00006) – BDDW-24-29

Petition Purpose: Demolish building

The applicant did not appear.

Ms. Johnstone clarified that the commission had previously requested a plan of what would be constructed after the demolition of the property. The petitioner had stated via email that he did not have any plans and would like the commission to take a vote on the demolition. Ms. Johnstone stated that they may take a vote with or without the applicant present.

Public Comment: None

Ms. Johnstone added that the first time this item came before the Historical Commission the Worcester Heritage Society provided a comment urging the owner to not demolish the property.

Commissioners Kurtz and Taylor did not vote on this item.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted zero (0) in favor and four (4) opposed that the proposed demolition at 117 Vernon Street, consisting of demolishing the property would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having

gained a unanimous vote, the motion was denied and a Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 117 Vernon Street was thus denied.

Exhibits: *Exhibit A.* Building Demolition Delay Waiver application for 117 Vernon Street, dated July 25, 2024, and submitted July 29, 2024.

Exhibit B. Request for continuance, dated August 29, 2024.

2. 151 Hope Avenue (27-002-00003) – COA-24-33

Petition Purpose: Replace windows

Petitioner Rick Valiquette explained that he would like to finish the window replacement project he began last year. However, he was unable to complete it due to a lack of funds. Mr. Valiquette stated that the new windows would match the ones already installed.

Ms. Johnstone clarified that while the contractors had started the work without a permit last year, the commission eventually approved the project.

Public Comment: None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed demolition at 151 Hope Avenue, consisting of replacing eight windows to match the existing replacement windows 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 151 Hope Avenue was thus approved.

Exhibits: *Exhibit A.* Building Demolition Delay Waiver application for 151 Hope Avenue, dated August 26, 2024, and submitted August 29, 2024.

NEW BUSINESS

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

3. 114 Austin Street (03-024-00002) – COA-24-26

Petition Purpose: Construct multifamily dwelling, associated work

Chair Long reminded the commission that this item was approved last year, but after a fire destroyed the carriage house, the petitioners are now proposing to replicate it.

Attorney Joshua Lee Smith and architect Jesse Hilgenberg attended on behalf of Polar Views. Mr. Smith explained that the carriage house had burned down, so the project team pivoted, presenting a slightly revised design from the street side. The new plan aims to replicate the carriage house while also reflecting the previous approval by the commission for the construction of five units. They adjusted the back units to be uniform, improving circulation. This design also allows for all vehicles to be parked in garages directly under each unit. Their preference is to align the carriage house with the other units.

Chair Long clarified that in order to allow vehicles enough space to turn around, the carriage house cannot be set back more than three feet.

Commissioner Northway expressed his preference for the carriage house to be pushed back but acknowledged the existing constraints.

Architect Jesse Hilgenberg noted that the facade of the new building would match that of the carriage house. He mentioned some material shipment issues but confirmed that they plan to use pre-painted materials, including white trim and wood decking.

Ms. Johnstone added that the retaining wall would feature a textured finish.

Public Comment: None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve the proposed changes. These changes include the construction of a multifamily dwelling and a replicated carriage house that is flush with the multifamily dwelling, along with a textured retaining wall and all hardscaping as outlined in the submitted plans for 114 Austin Street. With a unanimous affirmative vote, the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness was approved.

Exhibits: Exhibit A. Certificate of Appropriateness application for 114 Austin Street, dated and received September 3, 2024.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS & BUILDING DEMOLITION DELAY WAIVER

4. 47 Sever Street (02-047-00048) – COA-24-28

Petition Purpose: Install gutters

Lee Anne Hooley sought to replace the gutters on her home. Ms. Hooley presented a quote from a company experienced in gutter work for historical homes. The current gutters are not functioning properly, leading to water runoff from the roof, and they aim to prevent ice from falling.

Ms. Johnstone recommended using white for the new gutters.

Mrs. Hooley also expressed her desire to install gutters on the back steps, underneath the AC condenser, and in the area where they park their cars. The existing gutters are aluminum.

Public Comment: Jonathan Ostrow provided some suggestions regarding materials.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed changes at 47 Sever Street consisting of installing white gutters are appropriate for the Elm Park Neighborhood Local Historical District. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness was approved.

Exhibits: Exhibit A. Certificate of Appropriateness application for 47 Sever Street, dated and received September 13, 2024.

5. 185 Salisbury Street (20-014-00010) – COA-24-30

Petition Purpose: Install a safety railing

Andrew Cariglia from the American Antiquarian Society stated that they are proposing to add an iron railing to the 1972 addition on Regent Street at the main library. The addition was built in 1972, and a safety railing was not included at that time. Since the library is located in a residential neighborhood, adding a railing is essential for safety. There is an 11-foot drop from the upper level to the lower area, making the addition necessary. They would like to mimic the look of the iron railing they installed a few years ago.

Public Comment: None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed changes at 185 Salisbury Street consisting of installing a metal safety rail is appropriate for the Massachusetts Avenue Local Historic District. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness was approved.

Exhibits: Exhibit A. Certificate of Appropriateness application for 185 Salisbury Street, dated and received September 19, 2024.

6. 96 Elm Street (06-005-00032) – COA-24-31

Petitioner: Margie Roman o/b/o Gloria Franco, with the assistance of a remote Spanish interpreter

Petition Purpose: Replace porch (retroactive)

Chair Long explained that this item is retroactive, as the proposed work has already been completed.

Gloria Franco shared that her late brother was the owner of the house, and they were unaware that the property was historic. She mentioned that her husband replaced the porch.

Chair Long clarified that even if the property were not historic, a construction permit would still be required.

Mrs. Franco stated that she was not aware of this requirement.

Chair Long pointed out that the new porch is strikingly different from the original. She asked if the original pieces were available for reinstallation. Ms. Franco's daughter replied that those pieces were thrown away because they were rotted but clarified that the roof remains the same. They also planned to paint the remaining pieces white.

Chair Long noted that painting alone is not sufficient and that certain pieces need to be replaced. Ms. Franco expressed her willingness to install the necessary pieces but mentioned that it has been challenging to find replicas. She stated that if they had known the house was historic, they would not have removed those pieces. She has been in contact with Preservation Worcester, but they have been unresponsive.

Ms. Johnstone suggested that Ms. Franco continue reaching out to Preservation Worcester, as well as contacting carpenters who might be able to assist her. She recommended delaying the meeting to a later date, allowing the petitioner to return with examples of the replicas for approval.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to continue the 96 Elm Street item to November 7th, 2024m with a constructive grant deadline of December 6th, 2024.

Exhibits: Exhibit A. Certificate of Appropriateness application for 96 Elm Street, dated and received September 20, 2024.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Policies & procedures

Chair Long mentioned that the commission attended a conference where the sessions were very interesting. She noted that the historic tax credits process was particularly challenging.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A.** Request from City of Worcester Housing Division for comment on projects at 5 Monticello Drive West, 62 Beaverbrook Parkway, 7 Electric Street, 11 Boardman Street, Worcester, MA.

No comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 8 & 29, 2024

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve the minutes for August 8th, 2024 & August 29th, 2024, as written.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:33 p.m.