

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER  
SPECIAL MEETING  
October 14, 2010**

**LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL**

**Commission Members Present:** Peter Schneider, Chair  
Thomas Constantine, Vice-Chair  
Timothy McCann  
James Crowley  
Janet Merrill

**Staff Present:** Joel Fontane, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services  
Ruth Gentile, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services  
Edgar Luna, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

**REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

**MINUTES**

Mr. Luna informed the Commission that the October 7, 2010 meeting minutes will be sent to the Commission prior to the November 4, 2010 meeting.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- 1. 171 Austin Street (HC-2010-066) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Jacqueline Vachon-Jackson from the City of Worcester Division of Neighborhoods and Housing Development, representative for Wilson and Carmen Veras, petitioners, presented the petition. Ms. Vachon-Jackson stated that the petitioners were seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to implement the following changes: (a) remove twenty-seven (27) lead-painted windows and replace them with vinyl windows, (b) remove and replace twenty-seven (27) aluminum storm windows, (c) remove and replace five (5) windows located in the basement, and (d) remove and replace one (1) skylight. Ms. Vachon-Jackson stated that the proposed project was part of the Lead-Abatement Program sponsored by the City of Worcester through the Division of Neighborhoods and Housing Development. She also indicated that she had reviewed the funding allocated to this project and had decided to restore the six (6) original wooden windows instead of replacing them with new vinyl windows. Chair Schneider stated that such amendment to the original petition was acceptable to the Historic Commission. Upon a motion by Commissioner Constantine and seconded by Commissioner Crowley, the Commission

voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester, therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

**Exhibits:**

**Exhibit A: Application prepared by Wilson Veras, dated August 26, 2010 and received on August 27, 2010.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

2. **38 Sever Street (HC-2010-068) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Chair Schneider asked the audience if Claude Dorman, petitioner, or his representative were present in the audience but no one responded. Chair Schneider asked Mr. Luna if the petitioner had contacted the Planning Division to inform the Commission that he would not be able to attend the meeting. Mr. Luna responded that he had not heard from the petitioner. Chair Schneider stated that the petitioner was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to remove and replace the existing roof shingles with architectural shingles. He also indicated that in his opinion, the Commission could render a vote on the matter even though the petitioner was not present. Commissioner Crawley stated that the petitioner was proposing to replace the roof with the same materials. Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester, therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

**Exhibits:**

**Exhibit A: Application prepared by Claude Dorman dated August 30, 2010, and received on September 8, 2010.**

3. **2 Lucian Street (HC-2010-069) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Charles Wilmot, representative for the petitioner and Jorge Ramirez, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Wilmot stated that the petitioner was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to make the following changes: (a) remove sixty-two (62) windows and replace them with vinyl windows, (b) remove and replace existing roof shingles with architectural shingles, (c) remove and replace exterior front door with like materials, (d) install vinyl siding where needed, (e) install a new roof dormer, (f) repair chimney and (g) remove, repair and re-install the front porch utilizing the same floor plan, design and materials as the original porch. He stated that the second and third floor porches would not be enclosed. Mr. Wilmot also indicated that the proposed work was needed in order to repair the damage caused by a recent fire on site which damaged the second and third floors of the residential building. Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 3-2 (Commissioners Crawley and Merrill voting no), that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to

the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester, therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

**Exhibits:**

**Exhibit A: Application prepared by Jorge Ramirez, dated September 8, 2010 and received on September 10, 2010.**

4. **142 Burncoat Street (HC-2010-070) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Paul Lieneck, representative for Community Healthlink, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Lieneck stated that the petitioner was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to make the following changes: (a) remove and replace the front porch, stairs and railings with like or similar materials. He also indicated that a new wooden handicapped ramp would be built on the right-side of the building in order to comply with City code regulations. Mr. Lieneck also stated that the entablature would be repaired and retained; however, he also indicated that front-porch columns were damaged beyond repair and would be replaced with new wooden columns in the Tuscan style. Upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester, therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

**Exhibits:**

**Exhibit A: Application prepared by Deborah Ekstrom, dated September 17, 2010 and received on September 21, 2010.**

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

3. **Crown Hill Survey Project Presentation:** Joel Fontane introduced Neil Larson from Larson Fisher Associates Inc., and indicated that after a comprehensive selection process, his company was selected to implement the Crown Hill Neighborhood Historic Properties Survey. He also indicated that Mr. Larson's presentation was an important component of the overall process, and stated that several subsequent presentations were planned to keep neighborhood residents informed of the project's development and to encourage their participation. He also indicated that the Crown Hill Neighborhood Historic Properties Survey Project was funded by the FY-2009 Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey and Grant Program, the Crown Hill Neighborhood Association (CHNA) and the City of Worcester. In addition, Mr. Fontane stated that the ultimate goal of the survey was to serve as foundation for the creation of a Local Historic District in the Crown Hill Neighborhood area. Finally, Mr. Fontane acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the support and financial contribution received from CHNA members. Mr. Larson stated that the Crown Hill neighborhood had been significant in the City as a mid nineteenth-century residential development area that is still distinguished by its original street and subdivision plans and period domestic architecture. He also indicated that the Crown Hill neighborhood was originally part of land owned in the early 1700s by Major Daniel

Ward, that extended west from Main Street to what is now Newbury Street (between Pleasant and Austin Streets). Mr. Larson indicated that in 1881, Benjamin Butman bought the 30-acre hillside tract of land from John Bush and his sons Jonas and Richard, and hired the Boston engineer R. H. Eddy to survey it. Eddy's 1836 subdivision plan for "Park Hill" named for the park laid out in the middle of the block between Oxford and Crown Streets, featured 30 x 150 SF parcels along three new streets: Irving, Oxford and Crown Streets. He indicated that although the lot sales ranged from \$85.00 and \$260.00, the area was slow to develop. Mr. Larson also indicated that as industrialization expanded and diversified the City's population, a change was reflected in the course of Crown Hill's history. The neighborhood felt a decline of Worcester's fortunes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and by the early 1970s, it became the target area for an ambitious revitalization project, one of first to use funding from the Housing and Community Act of 1974. He indicated that a façade project (coordinated by the Crown Hill Development Committee), was instituted to reverse the deterioration and abandonment of historic buildings in the neighborhood, and the City invested community development funds to stem the decline of buildings and infrastructure. Mr. Larson indicated that eventually, the core of the Crown Hill neighborhood was listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, and the district was expanded in 1980. Such efforts, Mr. Larson indicated, have resulted in the renaissance of this significant grouping of mid nineteenth-century architecture in the City of Worcester. In addition, Mr. Larson indicated that the objective of the project was to bring the level of documentation in the Crown Hill neighborhood and the Oxford-Crown National Register Historic District up to a more current and comprehensive level, as well as provide the basis for determining the appropriate area for a Local Historic District (LHD) and, possibly, an expansion of the existing National Register Historic District. Mr. Larson further added that his company had completed new inventory forms for one-hundred and seventeen (117) properties in the area, which together with the existing forms, covers the majority of the area subsequently proposed for a LHD. Commissioner Constantine asked for clarification regarding why the properties along Chandler Street had been excluded from the survey. Mr. Larson stated that most of the structures along Chandler Street had been renovated over time to accommodate commercial uses; therefore, most of the significant architectural details were lost and/or permanently damaged. Randall Bloom, president of the Crown Hill Neighborhood Association expressed support for the project. Thomas Johnson stated that he has lived in the neighborhood for 22 years, and indicated that besides the significant and historic architecture of the area, the neighborhood continues to be a vibrant, diverse and multi-ethnic community. He also added that the creation of a Local Historic District in the area will ensure the protection and thereby survival of this important historic district. Deborah Packard from Preservation Worcester expressed support for the project and indicated that the Board of Director of Preservation Worcester also supported the creation of the Crown Hill Local Historic District. Mr. Larson indicated that the Crown Hill neighborhood represented a special and distinct period of development of the City. Chair Schneider stated that the next step of the project was for the Commission to review the surveys submitted, and indicated that a meeting will be scheduled in the near future to discuss the possible boundaries for the creation of the Crown Hill Local Historic District.

**Exhibits:**

**Exhibit A: Power point presentation by Neil Larson, October 14, 2010**

**Exhibit B: GIS map depicting the areas surveyed and boundaries proposed for the creation of the Crown Hill Local Historic District prepared by Ruth Gentile**

**Exhibit C: Map in the Request for Proposal prepared by Ruth Gentile.**

Adjournment: Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7:40 PM.