

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

July 9, 2020

CITY HALL*

Commission Members Participating: Devon Kurtz, Vice-Chair
Randolph Bloom
Diane Long
Janet Theerman
Cathryn E. Jerome-Mezynski, Alternate

Commission Members Not Participating: Mark Wamback, Chair
Tomi Stefani
Erika Helnarski, 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 11, 2020 & June 25, 2020: On a motion made and duly seconded, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the June 11, 2020 and June 25, 2020 meeting minutes.

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)

The petitioner requested that the item be postponed to the next meeting.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 4-0 to postpone the item to the July 23, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Bloom recused himself.

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

2. 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

There was not a quorum of members to proceed on the item.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to postpone the item to the July 23, 2020 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Certificate of Non-Applicability

3. 2 Congress Street – HC-2020-043 (MBL 03-026-00035)

Petitioner: Randy Bloom

Year Built: 1856

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; National Register District (NRDIS); National Register Determination of Eligibility (NRDOE); State Register of Historic Places (SR); Preservation Restriction; Local Historic District (LHD), FKA Walter Daniels House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace cedar stockade fence in-kind

The Commission did not have comment on this item.

No Public Comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 4-0, with Commissioner Bloom recused as he was the petitioner, that the proposed changes at 2 Congress Street consisting of the replacement of the stockade fence is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission and is therefore not applicable due to the fact it is an in-kind replacement and approved a Certificate of Non-Applicability.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Non-Applicability dated June 23, 2020, received June 23, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff review memorandum from Michelle Johnstone to the members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated June 30, 2020.

4. 258 Pleasant Street – HC-2020-046 (MBL 03-026-00007)

Petitioner: Steven McElwee

Year Built: ca. 1855

Historic Status: Local Historic District (LHD)

Petition Purpose:

- Replace, in-kind, melted vinyl siding on the south (rear) elevation of the building
- Replace, in-kind, broken storm window in east bay of south (rear) elevation

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- Rebuild, in-kind, burned fenestration opening in west bay of south (rear) elevation
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Ms. Johnstone described the petition, stating that there was a fire at the property in the rear of the property. The vinyl siding melted and two window openings were burned or otherwise damaged. The petitioners propose to replace the siding and windows, in-kind. Steve McElwee, the petitioner, was also on the line.

The Commission had no comment on the item.

No Public Comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed changes at 258 Pleasant Street consisting of repairing vinyl siding and windows due to a fire is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission and is therefore not applicable due to the fact it is an in-kind replacement and approved a Certificate of Non-Applicability

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Non-Applicability dated June 25, 2020, received June 27, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff review memorandum from Michelle Johnstone to the members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated June 30, 2020.

5. 12 Crown Street – HC-2020-053 (MBL 03-026-00039)

Petitioner: Aly Abayazeed

Year Built: ca. 1855

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; National Register District (NRDIS); State Register of Historic Places (SR); Preservation Restriction; Local Historic District (LHD), FKA Horace H. Dayton House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace wood fence with vinyl fence (not visible from public way)
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The applicant did not call into the meeting.

The application was held until the end of the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, the Commission decided that they would prefer to wait to have discussion with the applicant before hearing the item.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to postpone the application to the July 23, 2020 meeting.

Certificate of Appropriateness

6. 220 Salisbury Street – HC-2020-038 (MBL 20-007-0030A)

Petitioner: Erjona Mehillaj

Year Built: 1952

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

Petition Purpose:

- Redesign exterior walkway and front steps (retroactive)
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Erjona Mehillaj spoke on behalf of the application. She described the work that had been done, stating that the existing concrete stairs were cracked and the railings were rusted. The metal railings were removed and bluestone was installed on top of the existing concrete steps and walkway.

Commissioner Jerome-Mezynski asked whether railings were required through building code.

Mr. Rolle stated that he would suggest that the application be continued to allow for time to confirm whether or not railings would be required.

Ms. Mehillaj requested a continuance.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to continue the petition to the July 23, 2020 meeting.

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

7. 64 Harlem Street – HC-2020-039 (MBL 10-032-00029)

Petitioner: Michael O'Rourke o/b/o AT & DP LLC

Year Built: ca. 1916

Historic Status: MACRIS listed, FKA Andrew Connolly House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace front and side porch element where repair is not feasible

Jonathan Finkelstein, Michael O'Rourke, and Thaddeus Szkoda spoke on behalf of the item.

Ms. Johnstone gave a brief synopsis of the application, stating that the applicants are proposing to do some repairs on the front and side porches. She notes that staff is of the opinion that this building is probably not eligible for listing in the National Register and would not fall under the purview of the Commission.

Mr. Rolle reminded the Commission of the specific wording of the Building Demolition Delay Ordinance, which states that if a property is not eligible for listing in the National Register, it does not come under the purview of the Commission.

The Commission stated that they agreed that this building does not fall under the purview of the Commission.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition to 64 Harlem Street is not subject to the Historic Building Demolition Delay Ordinance because the structure has been heavily altered and is no longer potentially eligible for listing on the National Register and therefore grants leave to withdraw without prejudice to the application.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated June 16, 2020, received June 19, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff review memorandum from Michelle Johnstone to the members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 6, 2020.

8. 17 Russell Street – HC-2020-040 (MBL 06-008-00051)

Petitioner: Michael O'Rourke o/b/o AT & DP LLC

Year Built: ca. 1916

Historic Status: MACRIS listed, FKA Andrew Connolly House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace front and side porch element where repair is not feasible

Ms. Johnstone gave a background on the property, stating that a positive opinion of eligibility was rendered for the property in 2005, and stated that staff is of the opinion that the property is potentially eligible for listing in the National Register within a district, and invited the representatives of the application, Attorney Finkelstein and Michael O'Rourke and Thaddeus Szkoda, to speak to the intent of the application.

Mr. Szkoda stated that of the items outlined in the memorandum from Michelle Johnstone to the Commission, dated July 6, 2020, that what they found most difficult was the expectation to duplicate the existing railing sections on the north and east sides of the front porch, due to the fact that many sections have been replaced; some of the original

sections are missing balusters; and to be code compliant, replacement railings would have to be at least 42 inches high.

Mr. Szkoda stated that the columns on the front porch are failing and that they hoped to replace the columns with a product similar in appearance. He also stated that the decking and framing on the front porch is weathered, and it is necessary to replace some of those elements in kind. He went on to describe the rest of the elements on the front porch to be replaced or repaired, including the front granite steps (to be repaired), and the pipe railing.

He went on to describe the proposal for the side porch, which includes repairs and replacements in-kind and the installation of a new railing and guardrail.

The Commission expressed concern that the replacement material to be used on the front porch is to be vinyl, and that the original decorative railing system, which is character-defining, is to be removed. They offered some suggestions for ways to keep the system intact while being code compliant.

The applicants stated that it would be very difficult to recreate the decorative detailing of the railing system in the sections that had previously been replaced.

After extensive discussion between the Commissioners and applicants, Mr. Szkoda reminded the Commission that it would be very difficult to both recreate the railing system and meet code requirements. Mr. Szkoda stated that he has experience with historic restorations and he doesn't believe that recreating the railing system is possible.

Commissioner Theerman asked if the applicants have considered replacing the spindles with wood.

Commissioner Long suggested that a weightier top and bottom rail be used rather than what is proposed.

After further discussion, the applicants stated that they would be amenable to using a wood railing system.

There was some discussion about possibly having portions of the porch restored and balusters re-turned, suggested by Commissioner Bloom. Attorney Finkelstein stated that that would be economically unfeasible, and that they would not be coming back with a proposal for economic hardship.

Mr. O'Rourke described an updated proposal, stating that they could replace the balustrade and railing system with an approximate 42" pressure treated wood railing system with top and bottom rails and turned spindle balusters, to be painted after a weathering period to allow the pressure treated wood to dry. The railing system will terminate at the bottom rail approximately 2.5"-3" above the porch floor, and balusters will be spaced by approximately 2.5"; the decking will be replaced with pressure treated boards. The columns will be replaced with 7-7.5" fiberglass columns on square or round plinths, and will closely replicate the existing columns. The plywood porch apron will be removed and replaced with a one-by-four pressure treated wood lattice apron. The pipe rail will be replaced with a molded wood railing finished with wood spindles to allow for an appropriate guardrail.

On the new proposal, the Commission was amenable to the compromise.

No Public Comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 3-2, with Commissioners Kurtz, Bloom, and Jerome-Mezynski being the yeas and Commissioners Long and Theerman being the nays, that the proposed demolition at 17 Russell Street to include repairs and/or replacements on the front porch of columns, steps, guardrails, and decking; and on the side porch of replacing missing balusters, and repairing and/or replacing guardrails and lattice, based on the revised proposal by Mr. O'Rourke for the front porch railing, recognizing that wood will require a weathering period before being painted, would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City, and approved the issuance of a Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated June 16, 2020, received June 19, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff review memorandum from Michelle Johnstone to the members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 6, 2020.

9. 8 Olde Millbury Street – HC-2020-041 (MBL 05-023-0024A)

Petitioner: Jon Pouliot

Year Built: Between 1886 and 1896

Historic Status: MACRIS listed within the Ashmont – Harding Streets Area (WOR.DA)

Petition:

- Remove slate shingle roof that was previously covered by asphalt shingles, and install new asphalt shingles
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Ms. Johnstone stated that Jon Pouliot, real estate agent for the property was on the line for the application. She went on to state that similarly to 64 Harlem Street, it is the opinion of staff that the property is not eligible for listing in the National or State Registers of Historic Places individually or within a district.

Commissioner Bloom stated it didn't appear as though there is any slate on the roof. Mr. Pouliot and Ms. Johnstone both stated that there was evidence of slate on the roof.

Mr. Bloom stated that the slate roof on this house is not a prominent feature. The Commissioners agreed with Commissioner Bloom's comment.

No Public Comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Long, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Long, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition to 8 Olde Millbury Street is not subject to the Historic Building Demolition Delay Ordinance because the structure has been heavily altered and is no longer potentially eligible for listing on the National Register and therefore grants leave to withdraw without prejudice to the application.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application dated June 19, 2020, received June 22, 2020.

Exhibit B: Staff review memorandum from Michelle Johnstone to the members of the Worcester Historical Commission, dated July 6, 2020.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Request from Epsilon Associates for updated letters of support for the Walker Shoe Factory (28 Water Street) and the Commerce Building (340 Main Street)

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to send updated letters of support for 28 Water Street and 340 Main Street.

- B. Notification from MHC regarding a concurrence of finding no adverse effect for proposed projects at Union Station

The Commission did not have comment on this item.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Kurtz and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM.