



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

Thursday, January 4, 2024

Commissioners Present: Diane Long, Chair
Janet Theerman, Vice-Chair
Steven Taylor
Erika Helnarski
Donald Northway – *Participating Remotely*
Devon Kurtz
Vanessa Andre, Alternate

Commissioners Absent: None

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

Approval of Minutes – 12/21/23

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed approve the minutes from 12/21/23 as written.

Old Business

Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver

1. 42 Somerset Street (02-041-00075) – COA-23-2

Petition purpose: Replace roof

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to continue until 02/01/2024 meeting with a constructive grant deadline of 02/16/2024.

New Business

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

2. 22 Heroult Road (37-017-00072) – BDDW-23-64

Petition Purpose: Replace rotted fascia and soffit, install vented vinyl soffit, wrap fascia and rake board with PVC coated aluminum.

Chris Dececcia, Power Home Remodeling Group, Project Manager stated that the plan is to replace fascia board that is rotted and cap all the fascia with PVC trim with coated aluminum that has a wood grain texture to it to make it maintenance free and do the soffit panels. Right now, in the original part of the house there is open soffit, so he is hoping to install vented soffit panels there to help protect the home. They were told they could do siding because the original siding material was replaced. It was aluminum. Now they are planning on doing the fascia board. The homeowner would like that to protect the home. They started seeing some water leaking. To make the fascia board maintenance free he will cap it.

Chair Long asked if they already had the approval for the siding and this is just for the soffit.

Mr. Dececcia answered correct. The fascia and the soffit. The neighboring houses have a slate roof as well. The neighbor redid the fascia, and they capped it as well. Not sure if that helps, but something that was observed.

Commission had no questions.

Public Comment – None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve the building demolition delay waiver.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver submitted December 14, 2023 by Ted Dow on behalf of Amanda Mehl, owner, received on December 14, 2023.

Exhibit B: 3 slides showing existing conditions of the building.

BUILDING DEMOLITION DELAY WAIVER

3. 2 Ionic Avenue (03-009-00020) – BDDW-23-65

Petition purpose: Replace windows & doors, remove fire escape. (reapproval)

Chair Long stated this has been approved previously but the 12 months has passed so they have requested the commission reapprove to give them another 12 months.

Rob Parra Jr., architect with Lamoureux/Pagano Architects on Grove Street representing the Creative Hub which recently purchased the building. This project has been before the commission before for Demolition Delay Ordinance and also has been presented to Massachusetts Historic and the National Park Service for tax credits. The commission is probably very familiar with the building. It's about a century old. It's the old Worcester Boys Club. It was fairly recently closed down. Since the Creative Hub recently purchased the building, the community use for which the Boys Club was used, will be continued. It will be art space, studio space, event space and just community use. It's going to be a sterling project and proudly represented here. Architects have done complete drawings for this project and will present them tonight. The doors and windows in the building are being replaced, masonry restoration, a new entrance piece - all with keeping with the original masonry. All windows except for four have previously been replaced with aluminum windows. All windows will be replaced and will meet the National Park standards which are going to look like the original windows in the building. The windows will be a fixed window but will be built as a double hung window and they will have new insulating glass. The frames will match as close as possible to the existing frames and the architect has the original drawings from the 1900's and original pictures and has matched what is going in. It's going to the National Parks after Mass Historic looks at it. They are a very good replacement window for the building. The masonry on the building will be restored, unsure if it is going to be washed, but all the bad masonry will be replaced. The gym building was found to have some structural problems. The parapet for the gym building has rotted out and that will be replaced. The architect has a matching brick, and the brick will be reused in other areas, rusted lintels will be replaced - so it will be professionally done. The doors being replaced will match what the windows will be. The main door that probably has been replaced at some point in its life will remain. There will be new HVAC units on the roof. The units were pretty large, but they are not visible for public view. There is a professional construction manager on board and there is probably a years' worth of construction.

Chair Long stated that it looks like a beautiful project.

Commissioner Theerman asked if they are removing a fire escape.

Mr. Parra responded yes. On the rear of the building there is an old fire escape. It is half gone now. There will be a new entrance piece with a canopy that is not attached to the building. That is where the new entrance will be. There will be new stairs and an elevator.

Commissioner Taylor clarified that Mr. Parra stated there was about a years' worth of construction left and if he believed the work would be completed by this time next year.

Mr. Parra responded that he hoped so. Don't hold him on that! His firm was hired to value engineer the building back and get as much as they possibly can. They are not quite there, but it's getting there.

Ms. Johnstone asked if Commissioner Taylor was asking to see if they don't finish if they would have to come back before the commission next year. Ms. Johnstone advised Mr. Parra to make sure that all the permits are pulled before 12 months from now otherwise they would have to come back.

Public comment

None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed to re-approve the building demolition delay waiver.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted on December 13, 2023 by Laura Marotta on behalf of Creative Hub Worcester, owner, and received December 14, 2023.

Exhibit B: 6 slides showing existing conditions and architectural plans for the building.

Communications

A. Solicitation of comments from the City of Worcester regarding 108 Illinois Street (Section 106).

B. Solicitation of comments from EBI Consulting regarding 339 Main Street (Section 106).

Chair Long stated that in the past, the commission has chosen not to make comment on these communications. Does anyone wish to change that precedent that we've set in the past? OK, we are not going to make comment on either item.

Other Business

A. Whispering Wall Renovations at Lincoln Square.

Ms. Johnstone explained the project. The wall is being moved back to exactly where it's supposed to be. The commission doesn't have a statutory requirement to vote on anything, but wanted to make sure you were aware of what was going on just in case you got a call about it. A timeline was also shared. Undated photos were shown of the original location in front of the Worcester Boys Club. The wall was moved in the 1950's. Construction plans were shown. Then the wall was moved again, not sure of the date. It was moved to its existing location. The proposal is to move it back to the original location. There is no requirement for the commission to do anything and the parks department wanted to make you aware. The wall had to be moved as part of the development project happening over the tunnel. Ms. Johnstone asked if there were any

questions about the project. Ms. Johnstone acknowledged that Chair Long had questions about the acoustics, but she couldn't get any answers before tonight's meeting.

Chair Long is glad the Whispering Wall and the tunnel are staying.

B. Commission Officer Elections

Chair Long stated that Commissioner Taylor wants to relinquish the Clerk position and asked if there is interest from other commissioners.

Ms. Johnstone asked Commissioner Theerman if she was happy remaining Vice Chair.

Commissioner Theerman responded that as long as Chair Long remains Chair or until there is a replacement found.

Chair Long would be happy to remain as Chair unless someone else wants it.

Ms. Johnstone advised that if Commissioner Theerman and Chair Long want to stay in their positions, someone can make a motion, the commission can confirm and then the commission can nominate someone to be the clerk.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed for Diane Long to be Chair.

On a motion made by Chair Long and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed for Janet Theerman to be Vice-Chair.

On a motion made by Chair Long and seconded by Commissioner Taylor, the Commission voted seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed for Erika Helnarski to be Clerk.

Commissioner Helnarski accepted and stated she was Clerk years ago.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long, the Commission voted seven (7) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m.