



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

Thursday, January 18, 2024

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

Commissioners Absent: Steven Taylor

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 - None

New Business

Certificate of Non-Applicability

1. 34 Irving Street (03-017-00007) – CNA-24-1

Petition purpose: Rebuild deck in-kind

Nick Shannon from Hemlock Contracting o/b/o 34 Irving Worcester LLC, Petitioner, was in person before the commission. The contractor will be rebuilding the deck to what it is now and restaining it to the color.

Chair Long clarified that the same materials that are there now will be used.

Mr. Shannon responded yes, the same materials will be used.

There were no questions from the commission

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 a certificate of non-applicability for a proposed replacement of the deck with in-kind material.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Non-Applicability application submitted January 3, 2024 by Theodore Labonte of Hemlock Contracting on behalf of the owner, received January 4, 2024.

Exhibit B: 3 slides shown at meeting of existing conditions and plans for deck replacement.

2. 81 Elm Street (02-046-00063) – CNA-24-2

Petition Purpose: Replace a portion of the roof in-kind

Felicio Lana, Northeast Properties, petitioner was in person before the commission and stated they are looking to replace the flat rubber roof on the area shown on exhibit B with the same kind of materials. Additionally, the third floor has asphalt shingles, and it was noticed that they are deteriorating.

Ms. Johnstone advised that the petitioner's application was to replace a portion of the roof in-kind. The third-floor asphalt shingles would still fall under the certificate of non-applicability so the commission could take the requests together. Ms. Johnstone asked for confirmation that the color being used would remain the same.

Mr. Hanna responded that the color would be the exact same.

Chair Long added replacement of the asphalt shingles on the third floor with in-kind materials to the petition.

There were no questions from the commission.

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 for proposed replacement of rubber roof and third floor asphalt shingles, both with in-kind materials.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Non-Applicability application submitted January 3, 2024 by Gary Dutkan, owner, and received on January 4, 2024.

Exhibit B: 2 slides shown at meeting of existing conditions.

3. 65 Cedar Street (02-048-00023) – CAN-24-3

Petition Purpose: Replace a portion of a column in-kind

Steve Quist representing the property owner was in person before the commission and stated that there was a city inspection that found rot at one of the front entrance pillars to be a structural concern. The goal is to replicate the original pillar. An example of the millwork to be replicated was shown in Exhibit B (slides at the meeting). Existing conditions shows the work that has been done to secure the pillar currently until approval to replace/replicate is given by the commission.

Commissioner Northway understands that the millwork for the pillar addresses the vertical damage however, based on the photograph, there appears to be some damage to the brick work as well.

Mr. Quist said that he isn't seeing that damage and that wasn't brought to his attention by the city inspector. If there finds to be an issue with the brick work, they will certainly secure it. They want to provide a safe environment and abide by all the historic district rules. If this didn't happen the way it did, this is still work that they would have done. The city wanted this work done immediately. The photo shows a temporary condition, it is not the permanent solution.

Ms. Johnstone stated that the block of wood visible in the photos will not be staying. The work being done will match what is on the other pillars. It's an in-kind solution. Additionally, the damage to the bricks that Commissioner Northway saw is wood. The photo presented on the left is what was there and has been removed and is now represented by the temporary fix on the right photo.

Mr. Quist stated that when the house was purchased, what you see on the left was the condition upon purchase. The intent has always been to replace the millwork on this pillar. The pillar will be replaced to the commission's specifications.

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 the proposed rebuilding of a column with in-kind millwork/materials

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Non-Applicability application submitted January 5, 2024 by Cliff Rucker of Rucker Investments, owner, received January 8, 2024.

Exhibit B: 2 slides shown at meeting of existing conditions and proposed millwork.

Communications

A. Solicitation of comments from the City of Worcester regarding 94–96 Granite Street, 12C Mount Vernon Street, 23 Plantation Street, 187 Beaconsfield Street & 3 Assabet Lane (Section 106). January 18, 2024, Worcester Historical Commission Meeting Page 2 of 2

Chair Long stated that in the past, the commission has chosen not to make comments, the commission has no change in opinion about making comments.

B. Letter from Preservation Worcester regarding the creation of additional local historic districts in Worcester.

Chair Long received a letter from Preservation Worcester suggesting the Historical Commission look into a local historic district on single properties. The properties are Larchmont (36 Butler Street), The Robert Goddard Home (1 Tallawanda Drive), and Liberty Farm (116 Mower Street). We have a speaker on behalf of Preservation Worcester here with us tonight.

Deborah Packard from Preservation Worcester was in person before the commission and started by congratulating the commission on creating two local historic districts recently. What Preservation Worcester has noticed recently is that there are significantly historic buildings that are not located in an area that would qualify for a local historic district. It would be great if the commission would consider creating single building local historic districts. Preservation Worcester came up with a few suggestions of properties that they thought really merited that status as a way to protect them. It is felt that these properties are even more in jeopardy because they are historic, but they are standing alone in a residential area. Preservation Worcester went through a process when Liberty Farm was being sold in working with the City Manager and others because it was one of two national landmarks within the city and you don't know what's going to happen. Thank you for your consideration in doing that.

Chair Long agreed that getting started with this effort to save some of the important historic properties in the city is a great idea.

Commissioner Theerman agreed.

Commissioner Andre agreed that there are a number of properties in Worcester that are by themselves that are likely because of where they are situated to be in sold or removed unfortunately.

Chair Long stated the commission will vote on all three properties tonight to get the process started to have these listed as local historic district. Larchmont is a house that the commission has talked about in the past. It is one of the best-preserved Italianate houses in the city and the architect was Eldridge Boyden who was also the architect for Mechanics Hall. The owner was Ransom Clark Taylor for which there is the Ransom Taylor block. So protecting this particular house should be considered and we should take a vote on starting the process. Is the commission open to taking a vote. What about the Goddard house, the childhood home of Robert Goddard and of course Liberty Farm.

Ms. Johnstone informed the commission they can take a vote to start studying all three tonight with guidance on which to start with first.

Chair Long suggested the order of Larchmont, Goddard, and then Liberty.

Ms. Packard suggested the order of Larchmont, Liberty, and then Goddard. The owner of the Goddard house really is committed to that building. That is the reasoning for the suggestion.

Chair Long stated that the commission has also met with the new owners of Liberty as well and they too seem committed to preserving that property. Either one could go first. The commission can start first by taking the vote for Larchmont which we are all in agreement is the one most in danger that should be started first.

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 commence a study on a single building local historic district for 36 Butler Street.

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 commence a study on a single building local historic district for Liberty Farm (116 Mower Street).

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 commence a study on a single building local historic district for the Robert Goddard childhood home (1 Tallawanda Drive).

C. Call for nominations – Worcester Preservation Awards.

Ms. Johnstone stated that the deadline for nominations is April 19th. If anyone on the commission can think of an instance of really great preservation work in the past three years to nominate, the nomination will be online next week, and it will be shared with the commissioners.

Other Business

A. Status update on 100 Chandler Street.

Ms. Johnstone said the owner of 100 Chandler Street called today and stated that there is no status update. They are still waiting on the special-order windows and the owner will attend the next commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long, the Commission voted six (6) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting at 5:55p.m.