

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

**APRIL 13, 2006  
418 MAIN STREET, SUITE 400**

**Commission Members Present:** Peter Schneider, Chair  
Tom Johnson, Vice-Chair  
Thomas Constantine  
Jeanice Sherman  
Michael Theerman

**Staff Present:** Joel Fontane, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services  
Lara Bold, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services  
Timothy McGourthy, Director of Economic Development

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Peter Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Staff explained that the minutes for the Board's March meetings had not been completed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- 1. Prioritization of 2006 Goals and Objectives:** Chair Peter Schneider tabled the discussion of the 2006 goals and objectives until the end of the meeting.
- 2. 17 Southgate Place Demolition:** Timothy McGourthy, Director of Economic Development, presented an overview of the proposed urban renewal plan for the South Worcester Industrial Park (SWIP). Mr. McGourthy indicated that the SWIP project is focused on providing an easily accessible industrial park with large "development-ready" parcels for light manufacturing use. He spoke about the challenges at 17 Southgate Street and acknowledged its historic value. Mr. McGourthy described the next steps for the SWIP project includes: road improvements to Armory Street, the demolition of 25 Southgate Street, and resolving tenant issues at 17 Southgate Street.

Chair Schneider asked if the current tenants could remain at 17 Southgate Street. Mr. McGourthy stated that the parcel at 17 Southgate Street is needed to obtain the sufficient square footage for urban renewal. Commissioner Johnson asked if the City had procured

a demolition consultant/engineer. Joel Fontane, Director of Planning and Regulatory Services stated that the Commission's request for a feasibility study from a demolition consultant was communicated to Julie Jacobson, Assistant City Manager. Mr. Fontane stated that he did not know the status of hiring a demolition consultant. Mr. McGourthy stated that the Economic Development staff would continue to update the Historical Commission on the status of the project. Chair Schneider reiterated the Historical Commission's preference that the building at 17 Southgate Street be restored and/or retained on site.

- 3. Board member status:** Mr. Fontane stated that a Commission seat had been vacated by Brian Batty. He also stated that there are five applicants for the Worcester Historical Commission's opening.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- 4. 103 Austin Street (HC-06-04) Building Demolition Permit:** Stacey Clews, petitioner, presented the petition. Chair Schneider questioned if the siding on the house was recently installed and Ms. Clews indicated that clapboard siding was new. Chair Schneider explained that any exterior work should be reviewed by the Historical Commission prior to beginning work. Ms. Clews stated that she had not been aware of that provision. She also indicated that she was seeking to remove and replace 31 windows on the house with double hung, 6 over 6, double paned, vinyl windows measuring the same size as the current windows. In addition, she stated that the wooden trim on the exterior windows would remain and that both the rear and front porches would be repaired. Ms. Clews stated that she hopes to restore the unique architectural elements of the front porch. Commissioner Johnson inquired about the portico on the east side of the house and Ms. Clews stated that it would remain. Mr. Patton, representing Worcester Common Ground, stated that as an abutter, the organization would be pleased with the project. Upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Johnson, *the Commission found that the proposed demolition of the designated historic building at 103 Austin Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage or resources of the City of Worcester* and approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver 4-1 (Commissioner Sherman voting against).
- 5. 12 Watt Road (HC-06-05) Building Demolition Permit:** Daniel and Margaret Hayes, owners and petitioners for 12 Watt Street, presented the petition, along with their contractor, Ken Curry. At the applicants' request, Chair Schneider reviewed why the demolition delay ordinance applied to their particular project and what the necessary steps were. He also indicated that the houses in the neighborhood of 12 Watt Street are historically significant because of their front porches and slate roofs. Mr. Hayes explained that they were looking to expand the house by adding a second floor above a previous addition to the house, which had been constructed in 1969. Ken Curry indicated that the addition would measure 16'x 14'.

The Commissioners and Ken Curry discussed the possibilities of maintaining the slate roof on the front of the house and discussed possible strategies on how to match the ridge

lines if two different roofing materials were used. Commissioner Sherman suggested that the house might already have ridge vents, aiding circulation, and that the slate from the back of the house could be used on the front of the house, visible to the street. Peter Schneider suggested using copper flashing at the seams. Commissioner Constantine felt that the combination of roofing materials was not realistic and would not be sufficiently weather resistant. Chair Schneider suggested that the Board vote only on the proposed demolition of the side porch and not on the roofing materials until the contractor could provide research showing a comparison between 1) using slate on the front of the house and architectural slate on the addition and 2) using architectural slate on both roofs. Upon a motion by Commissioner Constantine and seconded by Commissioner Sherman, *the Commission found that the proposed demolition of the designated historic building at 12 Watt Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage or resources of the City of Worcester* and approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver 5-0 with the condition that the contractor, Ken Curry, provide research on the roofing options prior to beginning any work on the roof.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

6. **9 May Street – Presentation by Worcester Common Ground:** Steve Patton, Executive Director of Worcester Common Ground and Yvette Lavigne, Construction Project Manager, presented a preliminary proposal for the rehabilitation and revitalization of the former Hammond Organ Reed Factory building located at 9 May Street. Their proposal includes removing the existing 100+ storage space units for fire safety reasons and developing a mixed-use affordable housing, commercial and community space on the 60,000 square foot parcel. Mr. Patton requested a letter of support from the Worcester Historical Commission for Massachusetts Historic Tax Credits from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Chair Schneider reminded Worcester Common Ground that the project would, as proposed, require a Building Demolition Permit in the future. Upon a motion by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Sherman, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve sending a letter of support to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, relative to Historic Tax Credits for the proposed Hammond Organ Reed Factory project.

Commissioner Constantine left the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

7. **TiNovo Restaurant, candidate for MHC Adaptive Reuse Preservation Award:** Upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Sherman, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 4-0 to approve a letter of support for the nomination of TiNovo Restaurant located at 55 Pearl Street for an Adaptive Reuse Award for the 2006 Massachusetts Historical Commission Preservation Awards.

8. **Memorandum of Agreement – Massachusetts Trial Court, Displays of Gilman Architectural Elements:**

Commissioner Theerman presented a letter from Charles Willse, Project Manager for the Massachusetts Trial Court in which Mr. Willse outlined the design proposal to

incorporate architectural elements and historic displays from the former Gilman Building into the new building of the Massachusetts Trial Court in downtown Worcester. Commissioner Theerman expressed concerns about the location of the Statue of Lady Justice between two restrooms on the fourth floor as opposed to the lobby as stated in paragraph three of the Memorandum of Agreement.<sup>1</sup> Commissioner Sherman also expressed concerns with the proposed lighting of the statue. Commissioner Theerman offered to draft a letter summarizing the key concerns of the Commission.

**9. Prioritization of Goals and Objectives:** Mr. Fontane briefly presented the main goals of the Division of Planning and Regulatory Services in relation to the Worcester Historical Commission:

- Rules, Regulations, & Fees
- Guidelines
- Clarification of Board Authority
- Training
- Newsletter – to historic property owners.

The Commission agreed to discuss these goals more in depth at the upcoming April 27, 2006 meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7:20 pm.

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum of Agreement between Division of Capital Asset Management and the Massachusetts Historical Commission regarding the Gilman Building display in the Massachusetts Trial Court building, 201-249 Main Street, March 12, 2002