

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

**January 14, 2010
LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL**

Commission Members Present: Peter Schneider, Chair
Thomas Constantine
Timothy McCann
Michael Theerman
Janet Merrill

Staff Present: Luba Zhaurova, 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.

CONTINUANCES – WITHDRAWALS

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Mr. McCann and seconded by Mr. Constantine, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2009 Historical Commission meeting as amended.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. 194 Grafton Street (HC-2009-093) Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Raymond Grimaldo, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Grimaldo stated that he was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to remove the existing roofing material of the building on site, and replace it with synthetic architectural shingles, and install 8” white aluminum drip edge. Mr. Theerman stated his support for the project. Mr. Grimaldo stated that the exterior of the building is painted brick. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the

- 2. 9 Lagrange Street (HC-2009-094) Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Lonn Beaudin, owner and petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Beaudin stated that he was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to implement the following changes: to remove and replace wood windows with vinyl windows, repair vinyl siding as needed, remove front porch and replace with pressure treated stairs and landing, remove rear egress and replace with pressure treated stairs and landings, remove and replace front concrete stair with new landscape block, and remove and replace entry doors with new insulated steel entry doors. Also present was Jacqueline Vachon-Jackson, Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative Coordinator in the city's Neighborhood and Housing Services Division. Ms. Vachon-Jackson clarified that the existing windows are vinyl, not wood. Chair Schneider stated that there appears to be little historic value left except for the original shape of the building and asked whether or not the petitioner considered replacing the windows with the original wood material. Mr. Beaudin stated that it would be too expensive. Ms. Vachon-Jackson stated that the property was qualified for the rehabilitation funding through the City's Neighborhood Stabilization Program. Mr. Theerman asked when the vinyl windows were put in. Mr. Beaudin responded that he thinks it was in the 1980s and that he will replace the windows with Energy Star windows. Mr. Theerman pointed out that this house presents an example of the vinyl windows' lifespan of about 20 years. Ms. Vachon-Jackson stated that the upper portion of the house was taken down in the past and, therefore, nothing above the first floor of the building is original. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Constantine and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Worcester Historical 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 for this project was approved.
- 3. 114 Austin Street (HC-2009-095) Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Hany Ahmed, owner and petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Ahmed stated that he was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to implement the following changes: (a) install vinyl siding throughout the house and barn, (b) remove and replace one window on the second floor, (c) build a second-floor extension to the barn, (d) build a staircase on the right-side of the house, (e) enclose the second-floor porch, and (f) enclose the walkway on the third floor. Also present was Charles Leslie, petitioner's contractor. Mr. Ahmed stated that the existing windows are vinyl. Chair Schneider asked when they were installed. Mr. Ahmed indicated he was not sure. Chair Schneider stated that wooden siding is part of the historic fabric of the building and encouraged the petitioner to consider repairing and repainting instead of replacing it. Mr. Constantine stated that he supports the project as it will generally improve the property. Mr. Leslie stated that the proposed vinyl siding will have a cedar-shingles look. Chair Schneider asked if the proposed siding would affect the window trim. Mr. Leslie responded that the existing windows are vinyl and that window trim is in poor condition, and that the goal is to make all windows look identical. He added that the arches of the building will not be affected.

Also present was Jacqueline Vachon-Jackson, Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative Coordinator in the City's Neighborhood and Housing Services Division. Ms. Vachon-Jackson stated that the City assessed this foreclosed property and found that the substrate of the building is poor. She added that the property was approved for Neighborhood Stabilization Program, Lead Abatement, and Energy Efficiency funds.

Jim Marcotte from the Crown Hill Neighborhood Association stated that he would like to see the petitioner preserve as much of the original historic character of the building as possible and suggested that the petitioner uses acrylic paint to repaint the siding which breathes and thus lasts longer. Ms. Merrill stated that the property looks similar to other buildings on Crown Street.

Mr. Leslie stated that over time, the building had 3-4 additions with no historical attributes. Mr. Theerman agreed that the existing building does not appear to have much of the original character left. Chair Schneider stated that he would not support residing the building with vinyl, but is in support of other proposed changes.

Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Constantine and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 3-2 (with Commissioners McCann, Constantine, and Theerman voting yes, and Commissioners Schneider and Merrill voting no) that the proposed demolition would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester. The motion passed; therefore, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project was approved.

- 4. 163 Chandler Street (HC-2009-096) Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Joseph Smith, owner and petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Smith stated that he was seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to remove and replace the roof of the garage on site with like materials. Mr. Smith clarified that the garage is made of cement blocks, and is not a wooden structure. He stated that he built the garage himself, and, therefore, that it is not a historic structure in itself. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Worcester Historical 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 for this project was approved.

5. **2 Preston Street (HC-2009-097) Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Ugo Apodemi, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Apodemi stated that he is seeking Building Demolition Delay Waiver approval to install a new rubber roof and a new aluminum drip edge around the perimeter of the roof of the building on site. Mr. Apodemi added that the roof has a slight pitch but is mostly flat. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Worcester Historical 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 for this project was approved. Chair Schneider asked if the owner will be repointing bricks sometime soon. Mr. Apodemi responded that he is a contractor, but that he will suggest that to the owner.

OTHER BUSINESS:

6. **Crown Hill Local District Update:** Jim Marcotte of Crown Hill Neighborhood Association stated that the survey is in the process of being completed. Relating back to the 114 Austin Street item, he expressed concern with the Commission approving vinyl siding of the building. He stated that the vinyl will make the wood shingles rot underneath. Chair Schneider stated that since Crown Hill area is not a historic district yet, the Commission can only consider the petition for the Building Demolition Delay Waiver and has to use different set of criteria, but pointed out that 2 Commissioners voted against the petition. Mr. Marcotte stated that the latex paint now being sold is 100% acrylic and is very flexible and breathes well. Mr. Constantine responded that this paint's durability depends in large part on how well a building is prepared and that this could be expensive.
7. **City Hall Project – Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant Proposal:** John Odell, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Program Manager, described the proposed project to the Commission. He stated that the City was recently awarded funding through the Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program and plans to utilize a portion of these funds to implement two energy efficiency measures at Worcester's City Hall: 1) A comprehensive upgrade to the heating, ventilation and air condition (HVAC) systems and 2) Window efficiency upgrades through removal of existing caulking and re-sealing. Mr. Odell stated that the City is seeking the Commission's support in order to submit the proposal to the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The first project would bring the gas line into the City Hall, which is now being serviced by oil, and will also install a gas meter. The proposed chiller will replace the existing chiller and will be screened by vegetation. It would be roughly the same size as the existing chiller and would not be right against the building to improve air circulation around the unit and to protect it better from falling roof ice. Chair Schneider stated that he prefers a shorter chiller unit to reduce sidewalk impact, such as model 34B (attachment 3 in the information packet distributed to the Commission). Mr. Odell also stated that the proposed unit would be a smaller chiller serving the City Hall, while the primary chiller is proposed to be located in the pavilion next to the ice rink off of Front Street, which is being designed by MassHighway. Mr. Theerman, Mr. Constantine, and

Mr. Theerman stated that all windows in the City Hall were double-glazed recently. Mr. Odell confirmed that the work was done in 2002-2003, but that the caulking is now failing. Chair Schneider stated that he saw no issue with replacing the caulking.

Mr. Odell also stated that the City plans to utilize a portion of the funds to install a small-scale wind turbine on the Worcester Common to improve energy efficiency at City Hall and to demonstrate the applicability and effectiveness of wind power in an urban setting. He stated that the goal of his presentation is to inform the Commission of the upcoming request of letter of support. The proposed wind turbine would have a low cut-in speed (the wind speed at which the unit begins to produce power), and low-noise and flicker characteristics. The unit is approximately 6 feet in diameter, and would be mounted on a mast at an elevation of 25 - 30 ft. above ground level, easterly of the Worcester Common. Mr. Theerman asked if the installation would be permanent. Mr. Odell responded yes and stated that it is proposed to be a long-term demonstration project that symbolizes City's goals. Mr. Theerman stated that he believes Massachusetts Historical Commission's permission might also be required. Chair Schneider asked if the project will be federally funded, to which Mr. Odell responded yes. Mr. Theerman proposed an alternative siting of the wind turbine, for example close to the bank building. Mr. Odell responded that the turbine has to be metered to the facility because it is federally funded. Mr. Theerman suggested that a wind turbine be installed on top of Green Hill Park, which is highly visible and windy. Mr. Odell responded that the park has a preservation restriction preventing it from being used in such a manner, but that the City is considering a wind turbine at the Worcester Vocational School. He added that the proposed turbine at the Common would be 2.5-5 kW, which is equivalent to 2-4 homes. Mr. McCann stated that he finds a 3-blade design to be more aesthetically pleasing than the one proposed that looks like a wheel. Mr. Odell responded that the reason behind the proposed turbine design is to have a higher rotational speed and to withstand the downtown's wind turbulence better. He stated that it would cost approximately \$40,000-\$50,000 to install the turbine, most of which would be used to erect the support structure. He added that Massachusetts Technical Collaborative has not yet been informed of this proposal. Mr. Theerman stated that he thinks the wind turbine might detract from the recent improvements done to the Common. Chair Schneider concurred with this opinion. Mr. Odell stated that it would be more costly to move the turbine elsewhere on the Common. Mr. Constantine asked where the conversion equipment would be placed. Mr. Odell responded that it would be located inside City Hall. Mr. McCann asked if the City is planning on installing solar panels on the Common as well. Mr. Odell responded they will be installed on the pavilion off of Front Street. Mr. Constantine suggested that placement of the wind turbine might be a better option along the Front Street due to natural wind patterns, while at the same time not dominating the Common. Mr. Odell clarified that he just wanted to inform the Commission of the wind turbine project, but is not yet formally seeking recommendations. He then stated that anemometer would be installed first to test wind speeds on site.

Upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Constantine, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 5-0 to support City Hall's 1) comprehensive upgrade to the heating, ventilation and air condition (HVAC) systems and 2) window efficiency upgrades through removal of existing caulking and re-sealing, with an understanding that option #2 would be used for placement of the chiller and that the chiller model would have as short of a height as possible.

Chair Schneider stated that he think the wind turbine will require filing of Section 106. Mr. Odell stated that while currently there is no timeline for the project, the funds will need to be encumbered within 18 months from November 2009 (May, 2012). Mr. Constantine stated that with time more schools in the area might have wind energy programs, and that Worcester Vocational School is a great place to have a wind turbine for educational reasons. Mr. Odell informed the Commission that he will be coming back to discuss larger operational projects for the City buildings as well as buildings in the Neighborhood Stabilization Program areas.

- 8. Request for Letter of Support – 48 Water Street:** Upon a motion for the by Mr. McCann and seconded by Mr. Theerman, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 5-0 to write a letter of support expressing its continual support for the project.
- 9. Request for Letter of Support – 2 Grove Street:** Upon a motion for the by Mr. McCann and seconded by Mr. Theerman, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 5-0 to write a letter of support expressing its continual support for the project.
- 10. Request for Letter of Support – 140 Eastern Avenue:** David Zisskind, President of Green-Haus Development Inc., presented the project. He stated that the project consists of rehabilitating an 1894 triple-decker with some assistance from Neighborhood Stabilizations Funds. Seven dwelling units are proposed in the house and the project costs will be approximately \$1,000,000. Upon a motion for the by Mr. Theerman and seconded by Mr. Merrill, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 5-0 to write a letter of support expressing its continual support for the project. Mr. Theerman expressed hope that this project will encourage further development and property rehabilitation in the area.
- 11. Notices pursuant to National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106** (regarding proposed telecommunications facility installations) for the following addresses:
 - 67 Millbrook Road
 - 5 Suburban Road
 - 121 Providence Street
 - 111 Park Avenue
- 12. Election of Officers:** Mr. Theerman stated that Commission elections need to be held the first meeting of January. Ms. Zhaurova encouraged the Commission to wait until the next meeting so that this item can be on the agenda.

Adjournment: Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7 PM.