

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

September 17, 2020

CITY HALL*

Commission Members Participating:

Mark Wamback, Chair
Randolph Bloom
Diane Long
Tomi Stefani
Janet Theerman
Erika Helnarski, Alternate

Commission Members Not Participating:

Devon Kurtz, Vice-Chair
Cathryn E. Jerome-Mezynski, 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

August 20, 2020: On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the August 20, 2020 meeting minutes.

September 3, 2020: The vote on the September 3, 2020 meeting minutes was held until the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver

1. 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), within the Montvale Local Historic District (LHD)

Petition Purpose:

- Redesign front exterior concrete stairs and front walkway (retroactive)

There was a lack of quorum to hear the item

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 re-advertise the petition.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, dated June 4, 2020, and received June 9, 2020.

2. 24 Crown Street – HC-2020-058 (MBL 03-024-00021)

Petitioner: Joseph Aquino o/b/o Thomas Aquino

Year Built: 1866

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register of Historic Places District (NRDIS); National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA), within the Crown Hill Local Historic District (LHD), FKA Elijah Flagg Brooks House #2 and the Trinity Hall – First Methodist Church Hall

- Regrade and repave driveway
- Demolish stone wall and install new retaining wall
- Repair garage roof decking and install steel roof
- *All above work is partially retroactive.*

Maureen Roy, second floor tenant of 24 Crown Street speaking on behalf of the owner, spoke on the application. She stated that the proposal now being made by the owner, which is to rebuild the existing wall with the existing material and some new materials as needed.

Commissioner Wamback asked whether any additional work had been done since the last time the application was considered by the Commission. Ms. Roy stated that no additional work had been done.

Steve Rolle read the new proposal, which had been submitted since the last meeting, for the record. The new proposal calls for a dry-stacked wall.

Commissioner Wamback stated that he didn't see the new proposal being an issue. Commissioner Long agreed and stated that she was thrilled that the applicant had decided to rebuild the existing wall.

Commissioner Theerman mentioned that the last time the application was considered, there was some question of whether the wall fell on the applicant's or their neighbors' property. Ms. Roy stated that it is shared; the property line goes through the center of the wall at an angle. Mr. Rolle also confirmed that the neighbor has been in contact with the Division of Planning and Regulatory Services and they have agreed to the proposal.

Commissioner Bloom noted that he thinks the neighborhood will be pleased that the original materials will be used to rebuild the wall.

No public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 to close the public hearing. Commissioner Bloom did not vote due to an absence at a previous meeting where the application was discussed.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed changes at 24 Crown Street are appropriate for the Crown Hill Local Historic District, thus approving the Certificate of Appropriateness. Commissioner Bloom did not vote due to an absence at a previous meeting where the application was discussed.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition at 24 Crown Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester, thus approving the Building Demolition Delay Waiver. Commissioner Bloom did not vote due to an absence at a previous meeting where the application was discussed.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, dated and received July 29, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

3. 16 Greenwood Street – HC-2020-060 (MBL 10-024-00007)

Petitioner: Rebecca Rafferty

Year Built: ca. 1898

Historic Status: MACRIS listed, FKA Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Petition Purpose:

- Install 3 antennas
 - Install and exhaust blower in the steeple
 - Replace louvers in steeple
-

Rebecca Rafferty spoke on behalf of the application. She gave a synopsis of the petition, stating that the intent is to remove the louvers in the steeple of the church and replace them with solid panels on all four sides; to install three additional antennas; and to install an exhaust blower. Ms. Johnstone clarified that the latter two items in the proposal will be inside the steeple and not visible from the public right-of-way.

Commissioner Theerman asked if it was a possibility to re-install the louvers over the panels. Ms. Rafferty stated that currently there are no louvers available that the antennas are able to penetrate.

Commissioner Stefani asked for clarification on whether the louvers would be replaced with the panels or if the panels will go behind the louvers, and asked more of the steeple would be replaced with the panels. Ms. Rafferty stated that only the louvers would be replaced with the panels. Commissioner Stefani then asked if the louvers would affect the signal, and inquired as to whether the louvers would deflect the signal, or not allow the signal to pass through them. Ms. Rafferty stated the signal would be deflected and would not be able to penetrate through the louvers; and that the louvers would be removed altogether.

Commissioner Stefani asked what the louvers were made out of. Ms. Rafferty stated that the original wood louvers were recently replaced with fiberglass louvers.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he was a bit concerned by the absence of the appearance of louvers on the steeple.

Commissioner Long asked if the panels would be the same color as the louvers are now. Ms. Rafferty confirmed that they would be.

Commissioner Bloom asked why the panels need to be installed in lieu of keeping the louvers. Ms. Rafferty stated that the company that is being used only offers panels, but she assumes louvers will be offered in the future. Commissioner also asked if a different type of antenna could be used that would be able to penetrate the louvers. Ms. Rafferty stated that 5G technology cannot penetrate the louvers.

Commissioner Long asked if the signal would pass through wood louvers. Ms. Rafferty stated that it would not.

Mr. Rolle stated that telecommunications are placed in steeples around the City, and that this is the first time the Commission has encountered a technology that could not penetrate louvers. He stated that this is something the Commission will need to think about moving forward. He asked the applicant if the panels were paintable, and if it would be possible to paint a striped pattern that mimics the appearance of a louver from a distance. Ms. Rafferty stated that they are 3m wrappable, so it would be possible to give an illusion of louvers.

Commissioner Stefani stated that the idea of painting or wrapping the panels would be a good compromise. Commissioner Wamback agreed.

Commissioner Bloom stated that the steeple is visible from up and down the street. Commissioner Wamback stated that he was considering that Mr. Rolle's suggestion might be a good compromise for the time being.

Commissioner Stefani asked if any vendors could supply louvers that would be 5G penetrable. Ms. Rafferty stated that to her knowledge no other suppliers provide 5G penetrable materials right now.

Commissioner Bloom asked whether or not it was possible to approve the petition based on a condition that a louver-like system would be installed in the future. Mr. Rolle stated that he does not think there is a way that requirement could be made. Mr. Rolle also stated that this is not the most intact example of a historic church in Worcester, but the steeple is the most intact part of it.

Ms. Johnstone agreed with Mr. Rolle, stating that most or all of the character defining features of the church are gone, but that the steeple remains intact. She suggested that if the applicant was amenable to using a material to mimic the appearance of a louver, it would be a good compromise. Commissioners Long and Wamback agreed.

No public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition at 16 Greenwood Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural

resources of the City of Worcester, on the condition that the new panels will be painted or wrapped in a way to mimic the existing louvers, thus approving the Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, dated July 31, 2020, and received August 3, 2020.

4. 15 Heroult Road – HC-2020-065 (MBL 37-008-00004)

Petitioner: Anthony Brown

Year Built: 1967

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register District (NRDIS); National Register Multiple Resources Area (NRMRA)

Petition Purpose:

- Replace wood shingle siding with vinyl siding

Anthony Brown, homeowner of 15 Heroult Road, spoke on behalf of the application. He stated the intent of the application, which is to install vinyl siding.

Commissioner Wamback asked why the applicant wants to reside the house. The applicant stated that he wants to reside the house due to its condition of the existing wood siding, which is cracking, has holes, and is warped.

Commissioner Wamback asked the applicant if this was his residence or if he just owns the property. Mr. Brown stated that this is his residence. Commissioner Wamback also asked what the proposed siding material would be. Mr. Brown stated that they chose to go with Kaycan siding in dark gray with white trim. Commissioner Wamback went on to ask if the applicant had investigated a possibility of repairing the existing siding, to which the applicant stated he would not. Commissioner Wamback also inquired about the cost of the proposed siding project, which according to Mr. Brown will be \$11,000 including the gutters.

Ms. Johnstone gave some context into the age of the house, given that it was constructed in 1967. She stated that it is in the Indian Hill North Village National Register District, and that when the nomination for the district was written, it was given an inventory number but was called out as a non-contributing resource. Given the time that has passed, and the history associated with the house, it is likely eligible for the National Register at this point. She also noted that vinyl siding is appropriate for a house of this vintage given its availability at the time of its construction.

Commissioner Long stated that she was surprised that this property was even coming before the Commission, and that she had no problem with a proposal for vinyl siding. Commissioner Wamback agreed.

No public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition at 15 Heroult Road would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester, and thus the Building Demolition Delay waiver was approved.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A. Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, dated August 17, 2020, and received August 18, 2020.

5. 677 Cambridge Street – HC-2020-067 (MBL 05-023-00002)

Petitioner: Richard Mancuso o/b/o Gusto Associates

Year Built: ca. 1890

Historic Status: MACRIS listed, FKA Crompton Loom Works Carpet & Comb Department Building

Petition Purpose:

- Replace windows

Rick Mancuso of Academy Glass, on behalf of John and Dug Stowe of Lutco, who were also on the line, spoke in regards to the application. Mr. Mancuso stated that the intent of the application is to replace approximately 98 existing windows with new aluminum windows. Universal Windows of Marlborough would be used.

Commissioner Wamback asked what style of window would be used as opposed to what are there now. Mr. Mancuso stated that you can't see the windows currently due to the storm windows. Ms. Johnstone stated that the existing windows are multi-paned double-hung windows, some under fixed sash, and that the proposed replacement windows are one-over-one and one-over one under fixed sash aluminum windows. Mr. Rolle stated that there is an example of the proposed window replacement in the slideshow. He also noted that the proposed replacement windows are of a type that are commonly used in rehabilitation projects of these types of buildings, the only difference being that they are absent a grid pattern.

Commissioner Bloom asked what color the new windows would be. Mr. Mancuso stated that they would be black. Mr. Rolle stated that a matte black color would be used, and that it almost appears as a really dark brown. Commissioner Wamback stated he likes the contrast of the color with the brick.

No public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition at 677 Cambridge Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester, and thus approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A. Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, dated and received August 27, 2020.

Exhibit B. Additional photographs of 677 Cambridge Street, submitted by John Stowe on September 16, 2020.

Certificate of Appropriateness

6. 104 Austin Street – HC-2020-066 (MBL 03-024-0017A)

Petitioner: Felix Familia o/b/o Maximo Severino

Year Built: 1866

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; State Register of Historic Places (SR); National Register of Historic Places District (NRDIS); National Register Multiple Resources Area (NRMRA); Within the Crown Hill Local Historic District (LHD), FKA Edwin and Eliza Ames House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace six columns on rear porches
- Replace plywood on porches as needed

Maximo Severino, property owner, participated on behalf of the petition.

Ms. Johnstone described the intent of the application, which is to replace six columns on the porches on the rear of the house, and to replace failing plywood on the porches as needed.

Commissioner Theerman asked if the new columns would be round or square. Ms. Johnstone stated that from what she gathered from the application, the columns, which are not highly visible, would be replaced with square posts.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed changes at 104 Austin Street consisting of replacing six columns with like materials on the rear porches are appropriate for the Crown Hill Local Historic District, and thus approved the Certificate of Appropriateness.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 that the proposed demolition at 104 Austin Street would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester, and thus approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the meeting was adjourned at 6:58 PM.