



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

Thursday, April 21, 2022

Worcester City Hall - Levi Lincoln Chamber,
with remote participation options available via Webex online at
<https://cow.webex.com/meet/historicalncommissionwebex> and
call-in number 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1608081191).

Commissioners Present: Diane Long, Vice-Chair
Janet Theerman, Clerk
Randolph Bloom (participated remotely)
Erika Helnarski, Alternate

Commissioners Absent: Devon Kurtz, Chair
Tomi Stefani
Steven Taylor, Alternate

Staff Present: Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)

Call Commission to Order – 5:30 PM

Approval of Minutes – 2/24/2022, 3/10/2022, 3/24/2022, 4/7/2022

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the February 24, 2022 meeting minutes.

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the March 10, 2022 meeting minutes.

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the March 24, 2022 meeting minutes.

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the April 7, 2022 meeting minutes.

New Business

Certificate of Non-Applicability

1. 150 Pleasant Street – HC-2022-025 (MBL 03-025-00003)

Richard Grant, petitioner, participated remotely to speak in regards to the application for 150 Pleasant Street. He stated that he had participated in a meeting a month prior, and that replacement of existing slate with synthetic slate had been approved. However, he noted that upon further review of the building it was discovered that there

were sections of existing architectural shingle. The petition at hand included replacing the existing architectural shingles with new architectural shingles to match the colors of the approved synthetic slate roofing.

Commissioner Long asked why the petitioner didn't want the materials on the roof to match. Mr. Grant stated there is about a \$30,000 cost difference.

Commissioner Bloom asked where the existing asphalt shingles are located. Mr. Grant stated that they are on the dormers and the back side of the building. Ms. Johnstone showed on the screen the sections of the roof that were at present covered in architectural shingle. Commissioner Bloom stated that if he has walked by the building hundreds of times and didn't realize that the roof was already covered in asphalt shingles [in certain sections], that he wouldn't object to replacing it with a material that is already there. Mr. Grant stated that he also didn't realize, at first, that there were existing architectural shingles.

Commissioner Helnarski asked for clarification on what product would be used where. Ms. Johnstone stated that to the best of her understanding, existing slate would be replaced with synthetic slate, and architectural shingle would be replaced with new architectural shingle. Commissioner Bloom noted that you really can't see the roof material atop the dormers from the street, as they have shed roofs.

Commissioner Long asked for confirmation that the color choice for the architectural shingles would match the colors of the approved synthetic slate product as closely as possible. Mr. Grant confirmed that this would be the case.

Public Comment

None.

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 to close public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed changes consisting of changing out existing architectural roof shingles for new architectural roof shingles at 150 Pleasant Street is appropriate. Having gained a unanimous vote, the Certificate of Non-Applicability for 150 Pleasant Street was approved.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A. Certificate of Non-Applicability application, dated April 6, 2022, and received April 22, 2022.

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

2. 8 Austin Street – HC-2022-021 (MBL 03-19A-0004A)

Mark Ritz of LLB Architects spoke, in person, in regards to the application. He stated that according to MACRIS, the building was an old Armenian community center. He ran through the proposed work, which included window replacements and the replacement of an existing metal door with a new thermally broken glass and aluminum storefront door.

Ms. Johnstone stated that not all of the work is subject to the Commission's purview, but is all included in the petition as some things do fall under the purview of the Commission. She gave an overview of what is historic fabric and what is not. She stated that some demolition of historic fabric will likely take place.

Public Comment

No public comment

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 to close public comment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition at 8 Austin Street consisting of replacing an existing metal door with an aluminum storefront door and replacing adjacent windows would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous vote, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 8 Austin Street was approved.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A. Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, dated and received March 22, 2022.

3. 40 Southbridge Street – HC-2022-022 (MBL 23-010-006+7)

Mark Ritz of LLB Architects spoke, in person, in regards to the application. He stated that the Stevens Building at 40 Southbridge Street was built in 1851. The work proposed is to replace a single pair of wooden doors with a thermally broken aluminum door system with a closer to allow for accessibility.

Commissioner Long stated that the doors are lovely, original, and character defining to the building.

Mr. Ritz stated that the biggest problem with the doors is getting them up to energy code and to perform better thermally. He stated that it can be done, but there are benefits to having aluminum doors.

Commissioners Long and Helnarski both noted that it would completely change the aesthetic of the building if the doors were to be replaced.

Commissioner Long noted that, like Mr. Ritz said, it can be done and it would not be impossible to work with the existing doors. Mr. Ritz stated that cost could be an issue.

Ms. Johnstone noted that only one set of doors is in question, and it is not as if there are several sets that an increased cost would be applied to. She stated that it would behoove the applicant to price out a way to accomplish the goals of the owner whilst replicating the existing doors or working with the original doors.

Mr. Ritz stated that the owner of the building would like to make the doors uneven, and asked if uneven wood doors of the same style would be acceptable.

The Commission asked why the doors would be uneven. Mr. Ritz stated that it would make it easier to move furniture in and out. He stated that the existing left leaf of the door system is currently inoperable.

The Commission noted that at one point the doors must have been able to open and that someone who specializes in preservation would likely be able to make the doors operable again.

Ms. Johnstone ran through options on how to proceed.

Mr. Ritz asked for a continuance to allow for discussion with the building owner.

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 to continue the item to the May 5, 2022 meeting.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A. Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, dated and received March 22, 2022.

4. 70 Webster Street – HC-2022-023 (MBL 27-032-02+2A)

Donald O’Neil, attorney, and Tony Nguyen of Worcester Affordable Housing, LLC, the owner, appeared in person before the Commission to speak in regards to the application.

Mr. O’Neil gave an overview of the project, which he stated would consist of the demolition of a one-story section of 70 Webster Street to allow for additional parking for the apartments proposed in the main portion of the building.

The Commission welcomed the plan, alluding to the fact that the concrete block addition in question is not in line with the aesthetic qualities of the rest of the building.

Ms. Johnstone ran through some history of the portion of the building in question, showing its evolution through Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps. She noted that the addition had been added on to and taken apart many times historically.

Public Comment

No public comment

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 to close public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition at 70 Webster Street consisting of the removal of a concrete block addition would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous vote, the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 70 Webster Street was approved.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A. Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, dated March 21, 2022, and received March 24, 2022.

5. 481 Cambridge Street – HC-2022-024 (MBL 07-033-00021)

The petitioner did not participate in the meeting.

The Commission elected to have a discussion without the applicant present of whether the building falls under the purview of the Commission, given that it is not listed in the National or State Register of Historic Places.

Ms. Johnstone pulled up the photograph of the building from the MACRIS form, and discussed the changes that have occurred since the date of the photograph, which included the removal of corbels, dentils, and trim underneath the cornice, and the replacement or encasement of wood clapboards, lintels and sills with synthetic siding.

Public Comment

No public comment

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 to close public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed demolition at 481 Cambridge Street is not subject to the Historic Buildings Demolition Delay Ordinance because the structure has been heavily altered and is no longer potentially eligible for listing in the State of National Register and therefore grants Leave to Withdraw without prejudice for the application. Having gained a unanimous vote, Leave to Withdraw for 481 Cambridge Street was issued.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A. Building Demolition Delay Waiver application, dated March 21, 2022, and received March 24, 2022.

Communications

- A. Request from MacRostie Historic Advisors, Ryan LLC, for updated letters of support for State Historic Tax Credit allocations for 1 Exchange Place; 35, 42, 47 & 50 Lagrange Street; 90 Grove Street; 90 Lamartine Street; 98 Beacon Street; 156 Main Street; 2 Ionic Avenue; 55 Salisbury Street; and 134 Gold Street.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, updated letters of support were endorsed by the Commission.

- B. Request from The Traggorth Companies LLC for an updated letter of support for State Historic Tax Credit allocation for Mission Chapel, 205 Summer Street.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, an updated letter of support was endorsed by the Commission.

- C. Copy of the State Register of Historic Places 2021 from Massachusetts Historical Commission, on file with the Department of Planning & Regulatory Services.

No comment.

Other Business

- A. Elm Park Local Historic District report review and vote.

Held.

- B. Commission officer annual elections.

Held.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion made and duly seconded the Commission voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting at 6:13 p.m.