



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER
Thursday, March 28, 2024**

Commissioners Present: Diane Long, Chair
Janet Theerman, Vice-Chair
Erika Helnarski
Devon Kurtz
Vanessa Andre, Alternate

Commissioners Absent: Donald Northway
Steven Taylor

Staff Present: Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Michelle Smith, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Amy Beth Laythe, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)

Call Commission to Order – 5:30 PM

Approval of Minutes – 3/14/24

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve minutes from 3/14/24.

Old Business

BUILDING DEMOLITION DELAY WAIVER

- 1. 56 Blackstone River Road (10-024-00031) – BDDW-24-5**
Petition Purpose: Install ramp, replace doors & windows.

Charles Wilmot o/b/o Ellen Coffie said that there was an outstanding issue from the previous meeting that the rear windows were sliders and there was question about how to preserve those, however, the windows are hinged. The plan is to leave them and make sure they are water tight.

Chair Long thanks Mr. Wilmot for the follow up and stated that no action would be needed by the commission.

No demolition delay waiver needed.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Charles Wilmot, contractor, and received February 6, 2024.

Exhibit B: slides showing existing conditions.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS & BUILDING DEMOLITION DELAY WAIVER

2. 160 Russell Street (02-041-00058) – COA-24-3

Petition Purpose: Replace windows & exterior trim

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to postpone until April 11, 2024, with a constructive grant deadline of May 3, 2024.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Anthony Linn, owner, and received January 26, 2024.

New Business

CERTIFICATE OF NON-APPLICABILITY

3. 88 Sagamore Road (02-002-00005) – CNA-24-5

Petition purpose: Replace roof

Sean Farren, owner, presented that they are looking to change the shingle color darker to be in line with other roof colors in the neighborhood.

Chair Long stated it looks like the roof is currently asphalt and they are replacing with an asphalt roof/like materials.

Mr. Farren said yes. The roof is leaking and it is only 11 years old so to prevent further damage, they would like to replace the roof. The chimney was repointed and that was where the water was thought to be coming from, but the leaking continued.

Commissioners had no questions.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve Certificate of Non-Applicability for the roof replacement with in kind materials for 88 Sagamore Road.

Exhibits

Exhibit A – Certificate of Non-Applicability Application submitted by Franco Larosa, received March 20, 2024.

Exhibit B – slides showing exterior views of the house with current existing conditions.

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

4. 55 Salisbury Street (02-036-00096) – BDDW-24-9

Petition purpose: Replace windows, Conduct masonry repair and limited replacement

Seth Wiseman o/b/o Worcester Art Museum presented to the Commission. The project is focused on the 1898 historic building and 1983 addition. Slides of the plans were shown. They would like to replace windows in 1898 and 1983 building and repair the façade. Two windows on the south side will be infilled.

Chari Long asked if windows from 1800s are being replaced or infilled.

Mr. Wiseman stated the arched windows were replaced in the 1960's and the plan is to replace those windows with modern assemblies working with a historic consultant. The lower level will be infilled. Those windows were originally double hung and not as ornamental.

Commissioners had no additional questions.

Public comment – None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve a Demolition Delay Waiver for the Worcester Art Museum at 55 Salisbury Street.

Exhibits

Exhibit A – Building Demolition Delay Waiver submitted by Seth Wiseman o/b/o Worcester Academy, received March 4, 2024.

Exhibit B – slides showing scope of work to be done.

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

5. 17 Mill Street (08-024-005-9) – BDDW-24-10

Petition purpose: Demolish the building/complex or substantial portions of it

Joel Greene, lawyer, o/b/o Halfway River Realty, LLC presented to the commission. Slides of existing conditions and a survey of the existing land were shown. The owner is planning to demolish some or all of these buildings depending on what the engineering determines. They are not claiming any economic hardship. This project will not be detrimental to historic resources of the city. While this location may be historic, the building is not historic. The original buildings were destroyed by fire. The Massachusetts Historical Commission reviewed this building in 2001 and deemed the building ineligible for a historic listing. The owner is looking for permission to demolish all the buildings through the commission and will see what happens. A piece of the building sits on top of the flood conduit so they are unsure if it can be saved or not.

Ms. Johnstone encouraged the commission to issue a leave to withdraw or a decision based on architectural integrity.

Chair Long stated comfort in taking a vote.

Vice Chair Theerman asked what pieces would be left if all the buildings were not demolished.

Mr. Green answered the Mill Street side. The buildings are legally in a flood plain so next steps are to go in front of the Conservation Commission. There is a lot of engineering that needs to happen before any action is taken.

Public Comment – None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve Demolition Delay Waiver for the 17 Mill Street Complex.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Appropriateness Application, submitted by Edward Salloom, Jr., owner, and received March 5, 2024.

Exhibit B: slides showing existing conditions

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

6. 45 Fremont Street (27-021-00001) – BDDW-24-11 *Petition purpose: Demolish the building*

Joshua Lee Smith, lawyer, o/b/o Shady Lane Associates, LLC presented to the commission. Photos of existing conditions were shown to highlight the portion of the building to be demolished. The piece of the building that will be remaining will come back to the commission with finalized plans at a later date. The piece to be demolished was built in the 1950's and has had many alterations since then. That piece has no architectural significance. Other buildings in the area are made of brick, where this is made of metal fabrication.

Ms. Johnstone stated the building has brick perimeter walls sheathed in metal.

Mr. Lee Smith stated that the previous owner had reported structural safety concerns. The current owner would like to build new building.

Vice Chair Theerman asked if the entire building has one address.

Ms. Johnstone said no. The second building is a different address.

Mr. Lee Smith stated all the building that is part of the 'red building' address will be demolished

Public Comment – None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve Demolition Delay Waiver for the proposed demolition at 45 Fremont Street.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Lawrence Guzzardi, owner, and received March 7, 2024.

Exhibit B: slides showing existing conditions.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

7. 114 Austin Street (03-024-00002) – COA-24-10

Petition Purpose: Design changes to the building proposed to be constructed.

Jesse Hilgenberg o/b/o Polar Views, LLC

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to postpone to the next meeting on April 11, 2024 with the Constructive Grant Deadline of May 3, 2024.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Jesse Hilgenberg, contractor, and received March 7, 2024.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

8. 122 Austin Street (06-006-00032) – COA-24-11

Petition Purpose: Replace existing playground equipment with new playground equipment

Annessia Jimenez, o/b/o Worcester Common Ground stated that the plan was to renovate the playground, provide new mulch and a new sign for the playground. The current playground is about 25 years old.

Commissioners had no questions.

Public Comment – None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to close public comment.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Helnarski, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of playground equipment in the crown hill local historic district.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Annessia Jimenez, Organization Associate, and received March 8, 2024.

Exhibit B: slides showing existing conditions and new proposed playground.

Communications

A. Request from Ryan, Inc. for updated letters of support for Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit projects at 35, 42, 47 & 50 Lagrange Street, 90 Grove Street, 98 Beacon Street, 660 Main Street, 55 Salisbury Street, 2 Ionic Ave, 1 Exchange Place, 134 Gold Street.

On a motion made by Chair Long and seconded by Vice-Chair Theerman, the commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to provide updated letters of support.

B. Invitation from the Housing Division for comment on projects at 23 Ashton Street, 44 Greenhalge Street, 17 Angelo Street, 25 Camp Street, and 97 Dana Avenue (Section 106). March 28, 2024 Worcester Historical Commission Meeting Page 3 of 3

Chair Long stated that commission has historically not made comment on these items.

C. Communication from the Massachusetts Historical Commission regarding award of FY 2024 Planning & Survey Grant to support the Worcester Historic Survey of Environmental Justice Neighborhoods.

No Action Needed

Ms. Johnstone stated that DPRS applied for a grant with the state and was awarded \$20K with a \$20K match for research in environmental justice neighborhoods and are going out to bid soon.

D. Communication from the Massachusetts Historical Commission regarding a positive determination of eligibility for the J.R. Torrey Razor Co. & J.R. Torrey & Co. Manufacturing Facility (126–128 Chandler Street) for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

No action taken.

Other Business

A. Status update – 100 Chandler Street.

Patrick Sullivan, owner, stated the window company has begun production and they should be done in six weeks. Then it will be a week or two to install the windows.

Chair Long asked for Mr. Sullivan to be back at a meeting in 8 weeks with photos.

Ms. Johnstone asked if Mr. Sullivan was available to attend the June 13 meeting to provide updates.

Mr. Sullivan said yes.

B. Presentation of Design Review Guidelines.

Peter Benton, Heritage Strategies, talked about design guidelines report. Commented meetings are very well run and efficient! Historic context was most fun and looking at the maps of how the city developed over time. Coming to visit and see things in place was fun. The three guideline chapters are straight forward and simple in content. The complexity comes in how the commission applies them. Around the edges of Crown Hill historic district is difficult and provides an opportunity to strengthen that area over time. Same for the Elm Park neighborhood. The use of photographs in the guidelines provides guidance and illustrates different conditions and treatments. There are great people who have made these neighborhoods great places to live.

Chair Long stated how great the report is and thanked Mr. Benton very much for the guidance and suggestions for substitutions for material uses. Anyone would be able to understand the information. This is really going to be helpful for the commission.

Mr. Benton appreciated the comments.

Chair Long said the photos definitely help.

Ms. Johnstone stated that the guidelines are complete and happy with the final product. There is a completion meeting with the state next week. It is the hope that these guidelines will be voted on and be part of practice for the commission.

Commissioner Helnarski stated that it is great to have the resource for the commission.

Mr. Benton stated sometimes rental properties are an issue, but it is always a challenge.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long, the Commission voted five (5) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting at 6:18 p.m.