

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

**August 27, 2009**

**WORCESTER CITY HALL, 455 MAIN STREET, WORCESTER  
LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER (3RD FLOOR, ROOM 309)**

**Commission Members Present:** Peter Schneider, Chair  
Timothy McCann  
James Crowley  
Janet Merrill  
Michael Theerman

**Staff Present:** Ruth Gentile, Planning and Regulatory Services

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

**REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES, EXTENSIONS OF TIME, POSTPONEMENTS,  
WITHDRAWALS**

**27 and 27-1/2 Ellsworth Street (HC-2009-053)** – Building Demolition Delay Waiver: The item was postponed to September 10, 2009 meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the August 13, 2009 meeting were accepted as amended.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- 1. 11 Pleasant Street (HC-2009-049)** – Building Demolition Delay Waiver: Panadorou Properties, LLC, petitioner, is seeking to replace the rubber roof on the former Odd Fellows Hall. The petitioner proposed to replace the existing rubber roof with the same material. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition to replace the rubber roof with like material would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.
- 2. 507 Main Street (HC-2009-050):** – Building Demolition Delay Waiver: The item was postponed because the petitioner was not present.

- 3. 17 Roxbury Street (HC-2009-051):** Building Demolition Delay Waiver: Attorney John K. McGuire, representative for David and Maureen Sideris, petitioners, is seeking to remove and replace 1) roof with like materials, 2) rotted railing on second floor porch with like materials, 3) rotted portions of front stairs and 4) rotted railing on first floor porch with like materials. He stated that a fire in 1981 destroyed the house and that there is little original material left. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner McCann and seconded by Commissioner Merrill, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition to remove and replace 1) roof with like materials, 2) rotted railing on second floor porch with like materials, 3) rotted portions of front stairs and 4) rotted railing on first floor porch with like materials would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.
  
- 4. 507 Main Street (HC-2009-050):** Building Demolition Delay Waiver: Giulia Alimonti and Jacqueline Vachon-Jackson, Lead Abatement Program Manager in the City's Neighborhood and Housing Services Division, representatives for 507 Main Street, LLC, petitioner, are seeking to remove and replace 450 windows. Ms. Vachon-Jackson stated that the interior storm windows are not a legal method of lead abatement and that the petitioner is proposing to replace windows from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> floor. Ms. Alimonti showed a proposed window sample to the Commission and stated that their frames will be black, same as existing windows. The proposed windows are one-over-one double-hung. Susan Ceccacci stated that the window character and the three-dimensionality will not be the same with the new windows. Ms. Alimonti stated that she believes the new windows would be of the same style as the current ones, but will be more energy efficient. Ms. Ceccacci disagreed that the style will be the same and asked if the petitioner considered restoring the existing windows or replacing them with wood windows. Ms. Alimonti responded that the windows are in a very poor condition and would be very difficult to repair and retrofit in such a way that they would comply with the energy code. Additionally, opening and closing them would also be difficult. Ms. Vachon-Jackson added that lead abatement through repair rather than replacement would make the project cost prohibitive. Ms. Vachon-Jackson stated that the City is providing funding for lead abatement which is for non-discrimination so that the petitioner can rent to families with children. Commissioner Crowley stated that he agrees with Ms. Ceccacci that the depth of windows is going to change. Chair Schneider stated that he agrees with Ms. Ceccacci with regards to the ground level windows look, but not with regards to the upper floors windows look. Ms. Ceccacci stated that one can see a difference between a wood and metal material of the windows. Commissioner Theerman stated that this building is a major downtown building, and that the windows are an important feature of a building. However, he added, the lead abatement is financed by the City, the changes to the windows will not be significantly different, and while ideally he would like to see the same window restoration that was done to the City Hall, for example, an economic hardship for the petitioner might be valid as well. Commissioner Crowley stated that the materials windows are made of and the depth perception are important architecturally, but concurred with Commissioner Theerman that there might be economic hardship argument for the petitioner. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by

Commissioner Crowley, the Commission voted 2-3 (with Commissioners Theerman and Crowley voting yes, and the rest voting no) that the proposed demolition to remove and replace 450 windows would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester. The motion failed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was not approved. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, the Worcester Historical Commission voted 5-0 that the petitioner had demonstrated undue economic hardship and approved the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for this project based on the economic hardship.

5. **41 Lancaster Street (HC-2009-054):** Building Demolition Delay Waiver: Todd E. Brodeur, attorney, and Michelle Tuck, architect, representatives for the proponent of the project (not CM+K, LLC, the owner), are seeking to demolish the structure. Mr. Brodeur stated that the building is currently vacant, is in disrepair, and that most of its historic features have been stripped away. Ms. Tuck added that the building has vinyl siding and vinyl windows, and that many features, such as handicap ramp, stairs, and upper floors are not to the current building code. She stated that renovation would also need to include an elevator and new plumbing and, therefore, the cost would be almost twice the cost of building a new structure. The new building would be designed for professional offices. Carmine Zamorro spoke in favor of the project. He stated that the building was damaged by a fire in the abutting building and that the structure is not good for the neighborhood as it is vacant and is in disrepair. He added that a building similar in style to the proposed building is already located on the opposite corner of the street. Richard Bohigian of 48 Wachusett Street, an abutter, spoke in favor of the project and expressed concern that the building is not being taken good care. Commissioner Crowley asked how long the building was vacant. Mr. Brodeur responded that it was vacant since 2006. Deborah Packard of Preservation Worcester stated that the building is on the 2009 annual endangered list of Preservation Worcester and that it was part of the Steve Salisbury land subdivision. She stated that the first occupant of the building was a minister of the Unitarian Church and lived there for 50 years. She stated that the new design does not reflect the character of the neighborhood and that if the petition is denied, it would give time to seek alternatives. Commissioner Crowley stated that it is reasonable to assume that the building is historically and architecturally significant, and that the only alternative for the petitioner would be to pursue economic hardship argument. Chair Schneider asked about the costs of refurbishing the building. Ms. Tuck responded that it would cost approximately \$70-\$80 per square foot, which translates into \$500,000-600,000 to renovate the building (not including landscaping and parking costs), vs. \$350,000 to build a new one. Additionally, while the current building is 5,000 square feet, the new building would have a smaller footprint of 3,000 square feet. Mr. Brodeur stated that the property was on the market for more than a year, the economy is not yet improving, and that the structure continues to deteriorate. While the building is in a good location, in his opinion it can not support the proposed use, and rehabilitation is prohibitively expensive. Commissioner Crowley asked if anyone remembered the cost of rehabilitation of a 12 Lincoln Street property. Commissioner Theerman responded that the building was in a better condition and it cost approximately \$100,000 to rehabilitate. Mr. Brodeur requested a continuance to the September 10 meeting on order to have sufficient time to provide information to the Commission with regards to the economic

hardship. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, the Commissioner voted 5-0 to continue the item to September 10 meeting.

- 6. 10 Lucian Street (HC-2009-056):** Building Demolition Delay Waiver: Michael Mason, representative for A-Pro Builders, the petitioner, is seeking to renovate roof, framing, siding and windows due to a fire that compromised the structure. Mr. Mason stated that the Inspectional Services Department issued an emergency order to do some work on the building after the fire. Because the roof collapsed due to the fire, the applicant is proposing to rebuild it and cover it with asphalt shingles. The roof was slate with asphalt shingles on top. Other work involves rebuilding a pressure-treated deck, mechanical upgrades, and sprinkles installation. Upon reviewing the request submitted and the evidence provided, and upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Crowley, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed demolition to renovate roof, framing, siding and windows due to a fire would not be detrimental to the architectural or historical resources of the City of Worcester and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver was approved.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- 7. Local Historic District Study Committee Update:** Ms. Gentile informed the Commission that a bid candidate would be selected one week from the bid closing date of September 11, 2009 and that he/she would be presented to the Commission on the September 24, 2009 meeting. She then described the timeline of the grant.
- 8. Request for a Certified Local Government Opinion: 4 Woodford Street – former Stanley Kunitz House:** Upon a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Crowley, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the CLG opinion: Eligibility for National Register and to send it to the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
- 9. Request for a Letter of Support: 140 Eastern Avenue (Green-Haus Development Inc.):** David Zisskind, President Green-Haus Development Inc., stated that he is applying for state and federal tax credits. This is a 7-unit residential structure with vinyl siding. The project would include a new roof, wooden siding, wooden windows and wood window trim. Chair Schneider indicated that the applicant would need to work with the National Park Service to get their approval. Commissioner Theerman stated that the Commission had denied a letter of support for Ecotarium, because over the years the renovations were not consistent with the original architectural plans. Commissioner Crowley spoke in support of the project that would bring the original architectural features back and stated that the tax credits will not be granted for the project unless it meets NPS standards. Upon a motion by a Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner McCann, the Commission voted 4-0-1 (with Commissioner Theerman abstaining) to support the letter for application for the tax credit.

**10. Request for a Letter of Support: 2 Grove Street - Worcester Vocational Technical High School (Epsilon Associates):** Taya Dixon of Epsilon Associates requested a letter of support from the Historical Commission for the project of converting the building into a 67-unit residential building with some artist lofts. Upon a motion by a Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Crowley, the Commission voted 5-0 to support the letter for application for the tax credit.

**11. Request for a Letter of Support: 48 Water Street – Hill Envelope Company Factory:** Taya Dixon of Epsilon Associates requested a renewed letter of support from the Historical Commission for the project. She stated that the construction is planned to begin before the year end. Upon a motion by a Commissioner Crowley and seconded by Commissioner Merrill, the Commission voted 5-0 to support the letter for application for the tax credit.

**12. Antiquarian Society:** Commissioner Crowley stated that there is an unresolved issue with regards to the tennis court of the Antiquarian Society and whether it will be included in the proposed historic district. The Commissioners were in favor of including it in the proposed expanded Montvale Local Historic District.

**13. 2 Massachusetts Avenue:** The Commission has requested that staff write a letter to inform Gerald Mcgillicuddy of 2 Massachusetts Avenue that he needs a retroactive Certificate of Appropriateness to replace his front walk.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 P.M.