

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

October 1, 2020

CITY HALL*

Commission Members Participating: Mark Wamback, Chair
Devon Kurtz, Vice-Chair
Randolph Bloom
Diane Long
Tomi Stefani
Janet Theerman
Erika Helnarski, Alternate

Commission Members Not Participating: None

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.

CALL COMMISSION TO ORDER

The Commission was called to order by Chair Mark Wamback at 5:35 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 3, 2020: On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 4-0 to accept the meeting minutes from September 3, 2020.

September 17, 2020: On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to accept the meeting minutes from September 3, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

Certificate of Non-Applicability

1. 12 Monadnock Road – HC-2020-071 (MBL 20-005-00001)

Petitioner: Diane Alexandrou & Diane Karalekas

Year Built: ca. 1904

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; listed on the State Register of Historic Places; within a National Register District (NRDIS); within a National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA); within the Montvale Local Historic District (LHD), FKA Frank Harrington House and Barn

Petition Purpose:

- Replace the concrete driveway in-kind (original granite elements to remain)
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Dean Alexandrou, homeowner, spoke on behalf of the application. He gave an overview of the intent of the application, which is to replace the existing concrete driveway in-kind.

Chair Wamback asked Ms. Johnstone for the reason the work qualifies for a Certificate of Non-Applicability. She stated it is because it is a like-for-like comparison, except for the area in the public right-of-way, which may not

be scored. Mr. Rolle elaborated that DPW may not allow for scoring in the concrete in the right-of-way. Mr. Alexandrou stated that scoring would probably not be there. It will likely be broom swept for traction with a couple of cuts to prevent cracking.

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 changes consisting of replacing the driveway with in-kind materials at 12 Monadnock Road is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission and is therefore not applicable, and approved a Certificate of Non-Applicability.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Non-Applicability application, dated September 17, 2020, and received September 18, 2020.

2. 96 Sagamore Road – HC-2020-072 (MBL 20-002-02+4A)

Petitioner: Adrian & Kimberly Vanderspek

Year Built: ca. 1902

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; listed on the State Register of Historic Places; within a National Register District (NRDIS); within a National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA); within the Montvale Local Historic District (LHD), FKA Albert Gordon House

Petition Purpose:

- Replace the concrete driveway in-kind

Kim Vanderspek, homeowner, spoke on behalf of the application. She stated that the intent of the project is to replace the driveway with in-kind materials from the interior edge of the sidewalk to the garage.

The Commission did not have comment.

No public comment.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, 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 consisting of replacing the concrete driveway at 96 Sagamore Road is not under the jurisdiction of the Commission and is therefore not applicable, and approved a Certificate of Non-Applicability.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Non-Applicability application, dated September 18, 2020, and received September 18, 2020.

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

3. 189 May Street – HC-2020-068 (MBL 51-014-00025)

Petitioner: Jason Grinacoff

Year Built: 1893

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; listed in the State Register of Historic Places; listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRIND); within a National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA), FKA Fairlawn Estate

Petition Purpose:

- Remove a small number of slates to allow for the installation of stanchions to support three new metal snow guards

Jason Grinacoff of Chapman Construction spoke on behalf of the application. He stated the intent of the application, which is to install snow guards in three separate locations on the roof, with an intent to match an existing snow guard that is already installed on the building. In order to install the snow guards, some slate will be removed. Mr. Grinacoff stated that approximately 8-9 slates for each snow guard rail would need to be removed, so about 27 in total.

Chair Wamback stated that the Commission doesn't like to see slate being removed, but there is a concern for safety for those walking beneath the roof.

Commissioner Bloom stated that given that he lives in house with a slate roof that does not have snow guards, he could understand the importance of putting them on, and thinks that their installation is a wise move.

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 189 May 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 September 3, 2020.

4. 20 Windsor Street – HC-2020-069 (MBL 01-010-00006)

Petitioner: Jay Cox

Year Built: ca. 1893

Historic Status: MACRIS listed, FKA James Forsstedt House

Petition Purpose:

- Remove front porches (first- and second-story) and replace first-story porch (partially retroactive)
 - Re-side house with vinyl siding
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Jay Cox, the owner of the building, spoke on behalf of the application.

Mr. Cox described that the porches were removed, and that he plans on rebuilding the first-story porch.

Ms. Johnstone gave an overview of the porches, stating that the first story porch was original to the building, but had likely been altered by enclosing the open balustrade with cedar shingles in about the 1920s. Also in the 1920s, the second-story porch was added. She stated that given that the second-story porch was not original to the building, the Commission may want to take that into consideration with regards to the application. She stated that at this point, the applicant is proposing to construct a deck to be enclosed with cedar shakes, and to reinstall the decorative railing that was previously on the north end of the porch. No roof was included in the proposal.

Mr. Cox stated that the triangular portico would also be recreated.

Chair Wamback asked what would happen with the second-story porch. Mr. Cox stated that that was not proposed to be reconstructed.

Chair Wamback asked if vinyl siding would be used. Mr. Cox confirmed. Chair Wamback asked if the siding would be textured. Mr. Cox stated that the siding would be textured, and that imitation shingles would be used in the gable peak to make the house look as similar as possible.

Mr. Rolle clarified the siding proposal, which is to use a clapboard-style vinyl siding on the body of the house, and to use a vinyl shingle product in the gable peak.

Commissioner Theerman asked if the second-story porch would be eliminated. Mr. Cox stated that the existing door that led to the second-story porch would be turned into a window opening to conform to the other window openings, which would be filled with a wood window.

Commissioner Theerman also asked if there was an intention to match the small window adjacent to the front door to the rest of the windows. Mr. Cox said he hadn't looked at it too closely, but that he eventually would. Commissioner Theerman also asked if the applicant still had the upright pillars (porch supports). Mr. Cox stated that he did not.

Commissioner Theerman asked what he was planning on using in their place. He stated that a like material would be used.

Commissioner Theerman also asked what the applicant's intention with the section of original railing was. Mr. Cox stated that it would be refinished and reinstalled.

Commissioner Theerman also asked if new lattice would be installed. Mr. Cox stated that new, wood lattice would be installed.

Commissioner Bloom asked for some clarification on whether the fascia boards, trim boards, and corner boards, as well as the window details would remain. Mr. Cox stated that those details would stay.

Ms. Johnstone asked for clarification on whether there would be a roof over the porch. Mr. Cox said there would only be a roof over the portico section. Ms. Johnstone described the total proposal as discussed.

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 20 Windsor 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 September 9, 2020, and received September 10, 2020.

5. 305 Belmont Street – HC-2020-029 (MBL 57-004-B1-01)

Petitioner: Worcester Business Redevelopment Corporation (WBDC)

Year Built: ca. 1900

Historic Status: MACRIS listed; listed in the State Register of Historic Places; within a National Register District (NRDIS); within a National Register Multiple Resource Area (NRMRA), FKA Hale Building/Nurse's Home

Petition Purpose:

- Demolish the building (request to waive the remainder of the delay period)

Commissioner Stefani recused himself from participation in the item.

Mr. Rolle provided context for the application, stating that the application was previously denied under both the impact to the historical and architectural resources of the city and economic hardship considerations. He also summarized some of the efforts made by the applicant to find a developer to redevelop the building. He went on to explain the provision in the City's ordinance that allows for an applicant to request that the length of a delay period be reduced or waived if the Commission can determine that there is no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other group or person is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore such building. He clarified that regardless of the decision made by the Commission regarding the length of the delay, the original decision of the Commission stating that the demolition of building would be detrimental to the historical and architectural resources of the city would remain unchanged.

Craig Blais, president and CEO of the WBDC and New Garden Park, Inc., the owner of the building spoke briefly on the application, and on the further efforts made to find a developer to redevelop the building, including reissuing the RFP. No proposals were received. He also stated that the property is under agreement with Galaxy Development. WBDC had asked Galaxy to take another look to see if the building come somehow be used as an addition or somehow be incorporated into any new proposed building. Galaxy also came to the conclusion that that would not be possible. He went on to describe the proposed development of adjacent parcels. Mr. Blais stated that he understands that asking for a reconsideration on the waiver is different, but did note that he mentioned at a previous meeting that he would return if something like this should happen.

Mike O'Brien of Galaxy Development, as well as Matt Zicaro, head of Galaxy Life Sciences, and Pat Doherty, civil engineer, also spoke in regards to the application.

Mr. O'Brien stated that Galaxy did take a look at the building when the RFP was released. They walked through the facility and did not deem it adaptive for reuse due to its layout and major structural issues. They had considered utilizing the building for an accessory use such as a Starbucks, but stated that such a use was not feasible. He went on to describe that there is a tenant interested in the site, and stated that the tenant would not wait until the end of the existing delay period to move forward.

Mr. Doherty reiterated that every effort was made in examining the building for reuse. He stated that it would be economically infeasible to try to retrofit the building. He also stated that the delay would impose lost opportunities to get a new tenant into the space.

Commissioner Long thanked Mr. Blais for trying to find a buyer for the building. She stated that she thinks it's clear that the building would be coming down at the end of the delay period regardless of the Commission's decision. She went on to ask if there was a chance that any of the architectural elements could be salvaged for use in other preservation projects. Mr. Blais stated that in a previous project at the former Worcester State Hospital campus, capstones on cottages were salvaged, and stated that the WBDC had requested that Galaxy consider salvaging some of the materials from this building.

Mr. Doherty stated that some of the stone from the building could be used in walls or landscaping.

Mr. Zicaro stated that there had been discussion about using some of the stone in outdoor collaboration areas throughout the park, including walls, monuments, and signs. Commissioner Long stated that she would like to see that happen.

Commissioner Bloom echoed the sentiment of Commissioner Long, and stated that he finds the decision to waive the remainder of the delay period a difficult one. He noted that he understands that the reality of the situation is that there is little chance that the building could be reused in the way the Commission had hoped, but would like to see some of the stone used in other ways rather than simply being discarded.

Mr. O'Brien stated that there are some components of the building, including the front columns that could be used elsewhere on the site. He stated that he would make a commitment to salvaging some elements of the building if possible.

Mr. Blais stated that the building would be documented prior to demolition.

Public Comment

Alex Guardiola, Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy for the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce offered comment, stating that the Hale Building is beautiful, but is not up to code for repurposing. He noted the efforts of the WBDC to find redevelopers to no avail. He noted that there is interest in lab space in the city, and that new bio-development space would create jobs. He stated that the Chamber was requesting that the remainder of the delay be waived.

Jonathan Ostrow of the Save Notre Dame Alliance offered comment. He thanked the WBDC for their second effort in finding a developer to redevelop the site, and for their willingness to document what is there, as well as their openness to the suggestions of the Commission to salvage some of the architectural elements of the building, including the columns and stonework. He asked if there had been a study done, or could be done, to preserve part of the façade for incorporation into a lobby wall; an end of the building; or common space.

Mr. Blais stated that the incorporation of a wall would be very difficult into the type of building proposed at the site.

Gary Vecchio of Worcester submitted an e-mail correspondence to the Commission. He stated that he served on the Worcester State Hospital Board of Trustees, and that he would have been happy to see the Hale Building renovated and preserved. However, he noted that the WBDC made a good case that that was not going to happen. He urged the Historical Commission to grant the waiver.

Julie Downen, President of the Worcester Heritage Society submitted an e-mail correspondence to the Commission. She stated that she was concerned that the Commission was reconsidering the request by the WBDC to waive the remainder of the delay. She stated that she thinks it is unacceptable to the people of the City of Worcester to not fully and finally address a petition on the date a decision was rendered. She went on to reiterate that she finds it problematic that the Commission would revisit an application that was already decided. She also stated that she was not given application materials by the Planning Department upon request. She asked the Commission to deny the request.

Mr. Rolle addressed some of the comments made by Ms. Downen. He stated that Ms. Downen was provided the full and complete application, and that the application is posted online. Planning Division staff tried to confirm that with her on multiple occasions. He also stated that any decision made by the Commission would not change the earlier

decision of the Commission, but that the Commission could choose to waive the remainder of the delay if they felt that the delay was no longer serving any purpose.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public hearing, with Commissioner Helnarski, Alternate, voting in place of Commissioner Stefani, who had recused himself.

On a motion by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 5-1, with Commissioners Wamback, Kurtz, Bloom, Long, and Theerman being the yeas, and Commissioner Helnarski, Alternate, being the nay, that there is no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person or group is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore the building, and therefore waived the remainder of the twelve-month delay period enacted on April 2, 2020 and due to expire on March 10, 2021, causing the demolition delay to expire immediately.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Notice from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) of a finding of no adverse effect regarding the Doherty Memorial High School project.

Ms. Johnstone stated that comments referenced were issued in compliance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 9, Sections 26–27 given that state school building funding would be used in the Doherty Memorial High School project. Given the use of state funding, the MHC was notified of the project, and issued a finding of no adverse effect on historical resources.

The Commission did not comment.

- B. Notice from the BETA Group of an Environmental Notification Form Notice of Project Change (NPC) to include the proposed demolition of the Nurse’s Home/Hale Building at 305 Belmont Street.

On a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to not issue comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Vote to endorse Certified Local Government Annual Report

On a motion by Commissioner Wamback and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted 6-0 to endorse the Certified Local Government Annual Report as written.

- B. Mr. Rolle noted that Commissioner Jerome-Mezynski had to resign from the Commission, and commended her service to the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

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