

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

FEBRUARY 12, 2015

LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL

Commission Members Present: Andrew Shveda, Vice-Chair
Timothy McCann, Clerk
Robyn Conroy
Randolph Bloom
Karl Bjork

Commission Members Absent: Kevin Provencher, Chair

Staff Members Present: Stephen S. Rolle, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services-
Deborah Steele, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Shveda called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: 1/22/2015

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of January 22, 2015.

OLD BUSINESS

1. 26 Louise Street (HC-2014-075)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: 26 Louise Street LLC
Present Use: Three-family residence
Year Built: Circa 1900
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, NRIND, NRMRA, formerly known as the David Hunt Three-Decker
Petition Purpose: Remove/replace siding and porch with like materials

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 5-0 to grant a Leave to Withdraw for the application.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver received October 27, 2014 and dated October 15, 2014.

NEW BUSINESS

2. 167 Eastern Avenue (HC-2015-004)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: 167 Eastern Avenue Realty Trust
Present Use: Three-family residence
Year Built: Circa 19002
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, NRIND, and formerly known as the Lydia Blodgett Three Decker
Petition Purpose: Remove/replace existing front three story porch and stairs

Charles Wilmot along with Edward Rodriguez appeared on behalf of the application.

Mr. Wilmot stated that the request is to remove and replace the existing front three-story porch and stairs as they have become dilapidated and are a safety hazard.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if the homeowner had been cited by the Code Department. Mr. Wilmot stated that they haven't as Code has not been to the property but if not fixed they will be cited as the porch is slipping away from the house.

Commissioner Bjork asked if the home was occupied. Mr. Rodriguez stated that at moment his brother lives there.

Commissioner Bloom asked when the vinyl siding was put on the home. Mr. Wilmot stated that believed it was done in the 80's.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that the asymmetrical roof is a really interesting detail that you don't see in many three deckers.

Mr. Wilmot presented photos of the proposed work.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if all the original material was encased. Mr. Wilmot stated that it is clapboard siding with wide space framing member, firm tongue and groove and they were great for 50 or 60 years but now they are water logged.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if there was any drainage. Mr. Wilmot stated that there was not.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if they have investigated replacing porch with original materials. Mr. Wilmot stated that if he did that he wind up putting in clapboard and it may not meet building code and to bring back to original would be about \$20,000 and the cost presented tonight for the work would be \$10,000.

Commissioner Bloom stated that he was disappointed that it had been covered in vinyl.

Secretary McCann stated that for the reasons stated it would be difficult to bring back to clapboard and would be inconsistent with the rest of the building.

Secretary McCann stated that any original material under the vinyl conceivably would be in serious disrepair.

Vice-Chair Shveda showed on photo the eve on left side and asked if all the work would remain. Mr. Wilmot stated that he would remove the post and in worst case scenario if there was a concern about the horizontal band at the top not being structurally sound he would run a piece of framing lumber across it and put the aluminum back on it but nothing will get touched on the roof line.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if any thought had gone into painting the deck. Mr. Wilmot stated you could but it would need to age for about six month and there is additional cost involved.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that it obvious that the porch has deteriorated and the Historical Commission's purview is what is being removed and they really don't have much say on what is being put back.

The Commission briefly discussed how three deckers like this are important to the City of Worcester and how it will be included in the new Historical Commission brochure so people understand how important these homes are to the City of Worcester.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Conroy and seconded by Secretary McCann, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed Building Demolition Delay Waiver is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver received January 13, 2015 and dated January 13, 2015.

3. 41 Maywood Street (HC-2015-005)

Petition: Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner: Trustees of Clark University
Present Use: Multi family residence
Year Built: Circa 1894
Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, and formerly known as the Edward A Bryant Two Decker

Petition Purpose:

- Scrape/wrap window and door systems;
- Remove/replace four basement windows;
- Remove/replace porch railing systems
- Scrape porch columns

Commissioner Conroy recused herself and left the room.

Derek Lundstrom appeared on behalf of the petition for Clark University.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that this application is for a de-leading project.

Mr. Lundstrom stated that they are primarily doing this work to make the first floor apartment lead free and it also includes some exterior work and some of the railings on the front would be removed and replaced with vinyl.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked what they were replacing the railings with. Mr. Lundstrom showed a photo of another property that had similar railing that they wanted to put on the property. The railings are made out of vinyl.

Secretary McCann asked what exterior work involved removing components was going to be done. Mr. Lundstrom stated that the railings, including a side railing, will be replaced and the four basement windows will be replaced and aluminum wrapping on the door casing. Everything else is scraping.

Mr. Lundstrom stated that all the other windows in the home besides the basements windows are already vinyl replacements.

Mr. Lundstrom stated that the railings to be replaced will then meet the required code height.

Commission Bloom stated that this is a small porch and wanted to know why the applicant couldn't just strip the balusters of the paint and recoat them. Mr. Lundstrom stated that they could do that but it wouldn't meet code as railings have to be 42 inches.

Secretary McCann asked how tall the porch was as he doesn't believe the railings need to be 42 inches. Vice-Chair Shveda stated that the limit is 30 inches. Mr. Lundstrom stated that he would still have concern that porch could cause injury.

Secretary McCann stated that he believed the injury done to the building would be in the railings being removed. The other Commissioners agreed. Mr. Lundstrom stated that he didn't think eight feet of railing would make that much of a difference and that it would be hard to clean the lead paint.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that these could be removed relatively easy and dipped and then reconfigured to meet the required guardrail height.

Commissioner Bloom asked how many balusters are on the front and assumed not more than five or six and they are unique and significant to the home and he would be disappointed to see them changed.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that this is a gorgeous house and the argument is really how difficult it would be to reconfigure and to make code safe and what the additional cost would be. Mr. Lundstrom stated that it would be significantly more and he was not sure the railing would be safe and doesn't think that those things are worth an architectural feature that is only eight feet long.

Vice-Chair Shveda asked if remediation of the balusters was looked at. Mr. Lundstrom stated that it was not.

Secretary McCann stated that the same detail on the porch is running through windows and that is reinforcing point as to why balusters on the porch should be saved and if only eight feet why not try to save it as it is a focal point of the porch.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that looking at the historical photos it looks like a wraparound porch was already removed and this is why it's even more important to maintain the balusters as they are the only ones remaining which is a rich detail of the building.

Mr. Lundstrom stated that he believed the Commission was looking at it from a narrow point of view since they were discussing just eight feet of railing and he was more concerned about the safety of the children in his building.

Mr. Lundstrom stated that dipping takes a lot out of the wood. Secretary McCann stated that the applicant stated he had not looked into remediation.

Secretary McCann stated that a vinyl replacement would have serious negative effect on the façade and he was worried that more homes will be lost piece by piece if homeowners keep removing portions of the home.

Mr. Lundstrom stated that railings are different because they are there to keep people safe. Mr. Lundstrom stated that the railings are already 100 years old. Secretary McCann stated that shows the quality of the railings as they lasted 100 years. Mr. Lundstrom stated that it will not be cheap vinyl and he put it on other building that came before Historical Commission for a handicapped ramp. Secretary McCann stated that is different argument as material was not being taken away on the property.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that if the plans was to build up the composite wood material and have them turned and readjusted he would give it much more thought but buying off the shelf and not going through thought process of how it could be saved is the issue.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that they would look at the other items on the scope of work and asked about the door casing and how far up the aluminum would go. Mr. Lundstrom stated that it would go from the header of the door to the sill. Vice-Chair Shveda asked if it would go to the deck. Mr. Lundstrom stated that it would go to the edge of the sill. Vice-Chair Shveda stated that it appears that the head trim of the door looks identical to the head trim of the window and asked if the contractor would cut the metal coil and go underneath. Mr. Lundstrom stated no and would be for remediating purposes.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that once you bump into aluminum you are going to have a dent that will never come out.

Secretary McCann stated that he was not crazy about the aluminum wrap but that could be removed in future and not like the applicant is removing a historic component if someone wants to do a full restoration and does not have issue with that.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that the applicant may want to think about transferring some scrapings to the door jams and think about how that door casing is going to look after few things bang into it. Mr. Lundstrom stated it can always be replaced and their motivation is to keep the building safe. Secretary McCann stated that he does not question their motivation but the execution and the applicant shouldn't take it personally and they do appreciate what he has to do and they are hoping to find a middle ground that you can have home that will go on for years and have children that can live in it.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that the house is being upkeep very well and is in excellent shape.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that the only other items are the four windows which are going to be replaced with white Harvey vinyl and asked if they could be fixed. Mr. Lundstrom stated that he did not believe so and thought it be a slide casement on the two small ones and the others would be double hung. Secretary McCann stated that they would usually have problem with removal of windows but these are basement windows and all the other windows in the home are vinyl replacements.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that windows are in brick and asked if the brick mold would be covered. Mr. Lundstrom responded that it would be and just a typical vinyl replacement.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that going back to the balusters that they are a very historical element and the Commission agrees that safety is a concern but they are not convinced that removal is necessary. Mr. Lundstrom stated that they are probably right but it's about the quality.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that he agrees but that needs to be investigated. Mr. Lundstrom stated that a company did investigate and stated that the railings had to be removed. Vice-Chair Shveda asked if that was included in the application filed and if the company knew that the home was historical and how did they come to conclusion that the railings need to be removed and could not be remediated. Mr. Lundstrom stated he could not answer that and doesn't believe the contractor included that in the application.

Secretary McCann stated that his recommendation was to vote on certain portions of the application and separate the baluster on the front façade so that applicant can look at another option. This allows the petitioner to do some of the work while looking at different means of remediation for the balusters. Commissioner Bjork stated that would be a good solution.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that is the A porch. Mr. Lundstrom stated yes.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that he would agree with Secretary McCann's recommendations. Mr. Lundstrom stated that it comprises the safety of the people residing in the house and not sure dipping is right and thinks it putting one aspect of life over another and not sure this going in right direction.

Commissioner Bjork stated that he drove by the building and the property is well maintained and beautiful and is owned by Clark, who keep all their properties beautiful. It is not too much to ask that Clark would maintain what there is of this beautiful home and even though a small thing it is significant and he would urge the applicant to take up Secretary McCann's recommendation.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated that he would echo Commissioner's Bjork's sentiment and very little to ask and asked applicant if he would like to separate out the application. Mr. Lundstrom stated that he would.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commission Bjork, the Commission voted 4-0 to continue the portion of the application relative to the work on the balusters on the front A side of the building as noted in the lead inspection report and to extend the constructive grant deadline until March 21, 2015.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bjork, the Commission voted 4-0 that the proposed Building Demolition Delay Waiver with regards to the application regarding the following scope of work

- Scrape/wrap window and door systems;
- Remove/replace four basement windows;
- Scrape porch columns

is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver received January 15, 2015 and dated January 14, 2015.

Commissioner Conroy rejoined the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

4. 128 Providence Street (HC-2015-006)

Petition:	Building Demolition Delay Waiver
Petitioner:	City of Worcester
Present Use:	Senior Center Facility
Year Built:	Circa 1923, 1950 & 1998

Historic Status: MACRIS-listed, and formerly known as the Saint Vincent Hospital Nurses Home

Petition Purpose:

- Remove/replace windows on the 1950 & 1998 additions
- Coat the flat roof

John Odell representing the City of Worcester and Robert Para, Jr. from Lamoureux Pagano & Associates appeared on behalf of the item.

Mr. Odell stated that the city is looking to upgrade and replace the windows on the first three floors of the newer portion of the Senior Center and they will replace the current aluminum clad with aluminum and the funding source for this project is time sensitive as the project and funding must be expended by the end of April so they are in bit of a time constraint.

Mr. Para stated that the building was built in portions, the 1950's portion and the 1988 building. He stated that MACRIS doesn't list the 1950's portion of the building. The window replacement consists of all four sides of the building and only one side can be seen from the courtyard. They are a white aluminum double hung on the second floor and it is commercial grade vinyl with a full screen and probably half a dozen more of the windows have been replaced with vinyl and aluminums ones are beyond their lifespan.

Secretary McCann asked if the window replacement was confined to 1950's portion. Mr. Para stated that it was.

Commissioner Bloom asked if the 1950's windows were replacement windows. Mr. Para stated there are some replacement windows.

Vice-Chair Shveda stated this looks like a fairly straight forward application.

Secretary McCann sated that he did not have an issue with application as they are really talking about some non-historic and non-visible elements. Vice-Chair Shveda stated that he agreed.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Conroy, the Commission voted 5-0 that the proposed Building Demolition Delay Waiver is not detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City. The motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver petition was approved.

Exhibit A: Application for Building Demolition Delay Waiver received January 22, 2015 and dated January 20, 2015.

COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Letter from EBI Consulting re: 147 Sterling Street; dated January 13, 2015; received January 15, 2015.

No Comment.

- b. Letter from Massachusetts Historical Commission re: Worcester Common Phase 3B Project; dated January 13, 2015; received January 15, 2015.

Mr. Rolle stated he would follow up with the Parks Department on item and report back to Commission.

- c. Request for Letter of Support, George Valeri, 39-41 Irving Street.

Mr. Valeri stated that the property had a devastating fire a few years ago and he has been trying to bring it back and during the rebuilding process he was notified that he would need to put in a handicapped accessible ramp. It would be a 30 foot ramp to the sidewalk and that is the only place the ramp could be placed and it would be too steep so he would like to have the ramp abated in its entirety. Mr. Valeri stated that he has been working with Epsilon Associates and had asked them if the ramp would affect his historical tax credits and they stated it would.

Mr. Valeri stated he has spoken with Preservation Worcester and they wrote a letter stating why the home would lose its historic value if they had to install the handicapped ramp and that they could lose \$100,000 in historic tax credits and asked if City of Worcester would draft a letter similar to the one Preservation Worcester drafted.

Commissioner Bjork asked if the building was handicapped accessible without the ramp. Mr. Valeri stated that it was not.

Secretary McCann stated that he would not have problem saying the ramp would take away from the historic value but the law is on the side of handicapped accessibility board.

Mr. Rolle stated that would be up to the Access Board and believes Mr. Valeri is just looking for letter stating that ramp would take away from historic value.

The Commission members stated that they all agreed they do not have problem with drafting letter stating the ramp would alter the historic value of the property and would make the building look different.

Commission Bjork asked if that was under the Board's purview. Mr. Rolle stated that the Commission is not voting on the item. Just voting on whether they want to issue Letter of Support on whether the ramp would change the historic value of the building.

Jo Hart, city resident, asked what the problem with the ramp was. Vice-Chair Shveda stated that it did not meet grade standards. Ms. Hart stated you could use the letter to have architects address this problem as they are developing ramps that are ugly and need to be designed to go with the building and there are better way to do things.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted to issue a Letter of Support based of the fact that the structure is located in the Crown Hill Local Historic District and is important to the architectural landscape of the city. The rehabilitation of the property includes a handicapped ramp

requirement and due to the limited size of the lot and grading issues the ramp could negatively impact the appearance of the property. Mr. Valeri has received \$100,000 in historical tax credits to rehabilitate the property which could be affected by the handicapped ramp requirement if the building is not found to be code compliant.

- d. Request for Letter of Support, Voke Lofts received via email February 5, 2015.

Upon a motion by Secretary McCann and seconded by Commissioner Bloom, the Commission voted 5-0 to issue a letter of support.

OTHER BUSINESS

Secretary McCann brought to the Commission's attention that on February 26, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. the City of Worcester will be having a public meeting on the proposed new theater district plan and the area includes historical buildings. He stated that he planned to attend and just wanted the Commission to know if any other members wanted to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.