



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

Thursday, March 14, 2024

Commissioners Present: Diane Long, Chair
Janet Theerman, Vice-Chair
Erika Helnarski - *Participated Remotely*
Donald Northway
Vanessa Andre, Alternate

Commissioners Absent: Devon Kurtz
Steven Taylor

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

Call Commission to Order – 5:35 PM

Approval of Minutes – 3/9/23 & 2/29/24

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve minutes from 2/29/24.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve minutes from 3/9/23.

Old Business

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS & BUILDING DEMOLITION DELAY WAIVER

- 1. 49 West Street (02-041-00058) – COA-24-3**
Petition Purpose: Install new siding over existing siding and replace windows.

Fritzie Puverge participated remotely, Greg Benoit participated remotely, and Cedric Richardson participated in person o/b/o Black Equity Group, LLC. They presented to the Commission. Current conditions are that all windows are rotted. Will need to work on all 40 windows. The plan is to restore the 7 smaller decorative windows – they were designed by the sisters who had the house built in the 1800’s. The 33 remaining windows, the plan is to use majesty aluminum wood clad windows. Composite and wood windows were the same price. They will be double hung, divided light, 2 by 2 pattern. They have flexible options that can be customized and have a fiberglass mesh in the middle with a 40-year warranty. These windows

are more energy efficient than vinyl windows. This type of window has been approved previously by the Historical Commission in a historic location on Water Street.

Michelle Johnstone stated that these windows meet the standards of the National Park Service and Secretary of the Interior.

Mr. Richardson added that the original plan was to replace all the windows with vinyl windows and restore windows where possible. However, lead and asbestos made it not as economical, so they did their due diligence to find an appropriate window replacement. This window is great. The group is looking to provide low income/handicapped housing for the community. There is a stipulated ceiling for rents and that puts restrictions on their budget for renovations. They spent every cent for windows, appliances, insulation and to make the house a beautiful place.

Chair long appreciated the fact that seven windows can be restored.

Commissioner Northway asked about the restoration process.

Mr. Richardson said Mr. Puverge has that knowledge, but there is lead in these windows that will stay, but he didn't want to give misinformation to the commission.

Ms. Johnstone stated they are going to blue board behind the window and the windows would remain as decorative fabric. That work would fall under regular maintenance and Ms. Johnstone would work with them on the project. The sash color of the windows should be discussed by the commission.

Mr. Richardson stated they will stay with the same color off white and field paint the windows.

Mr. Benoit said the windows come unfinished so they can match whatever color is agreed upon.

Commissioner Theerman asked what color the siding would be.

Mr. Benoit said the color of the siding will be mahogany.

Mr. Puverge said the contractors will match color and it will be in line and uniform with the neighborhood. There are options for siding colors, but that decision hasn't been finalized.

Ms. Johnstone stated the commission can approve the windows and the petitioner can come back when they decide siding color, or the commission can leave it to staff to determine appropriateness and state that the sash color needs to be a complimentary color.

Chair Long would hate to have them come back. Commission can vote to approve the windows and staff can approve the sash color.

Public Comment - None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, 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 Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed windows in the elm park historic district.

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 windows in the elm park historic district.

Exhibits

Exhibit A – Building Demolition Delay Waiver submitted by Cedric Richardson, Owner, received February 5, 2024.

Exhibit B – slides showing exterior views of the house pre home purchase and current existing conditions along with window options.

BUILDING DEMOLITION DELAY WAIVER

2. 56 Blackstone River Road (10-024-00031) – BDDW-24-5

Petition Purpose: Install ramp, replace doors & windows.

Charles Wilmot o/b/o Ellen Coffie requested to continue until next meeting.

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to continue this item to the next historical commission meeting March 28, 2024, with a constructive grant deadline of April 12, 2024.

New Business

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

3. 15 Whitney Street (05-032-00006) – (BDDW-24-4)

Petition purpose: Replace corner trim, railings & newel posts, Install new vent.

Shawn Durgin, City of Worcester Housing, o/b/o Richard Chysna presented to request a dryer vent on the 2nd floor to the exterior, corner trim replacement next to the driveway, railings on the 1st floor porch and replace newel posts. Material used will be PVC and aluminum backed railings and will look very similar to what is there now. This will bring the railings up to code.

Commissioners had no questions.

Public Comment – None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, 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 15 Whitney Street.

Exhibits

Exhibit A – Building Demolition Delay Waiver submitted by Ariel Lim, received January 23, 2024.

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

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

4. 81 Providence Street (04-035-00005) – BDDW-24-8

Petition purpose: Conduct extensive, careful, masonry repairs and replacements where necessary, replace on column, replace a portion of roof, additional tasks associated with exterior restoration.

Raymond James, Raymond James Restoration, Contractor, o/b/o Worcester Academy, Petitioner, spoke about scope of work shown in the exhibit slides.

Chair Long asked if in kind materials will be used.

Mr. James stated yes. Concrete is deteriorating and a coating that wasn't breathable was used so will be replaced with a breathable material. Steps that are planned to be taken were outlined in the slides shown as exhibits.

Chair Long made sure the look of the building will not change and that the roof is not being replaced.

Mr. James said correct. The repairs are to the precast concrete, not the slate on the roof. The slate will only be touched if there is damage found.

Commissioners had no additional questions.

Public comment – None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, 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 Worcester Academy at 81 Providence Street.

Exhibits

Exhibit A – Building Demolition Delay Waiver submitted by Megan Blomgren Burgess o/b/o Worcester Academy, received February 22, 2024.

Exhibit B – slide showing scope of work and existing conditions of building.

Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver

5. 51 Cedar Street (02-046-0053B) – COA-24-5

Petition purpose: Replace windows, Replace a door, Convert a door to a window.

Mary and Robert O’Neil, Petitioner/Owners, participated online. Their plan is to replace the front facing windows of the carriage house with double hung windows similar to what they saw in an old photo of the location. There used to be two front doors at the carriage house and they don’t need two front doors so one will be changed to a window and then the other will remain a door. They are also removing the air conditioning unit that can be seen in the exhibit slide presented.

Chair Long confirmed that the other windows on the carriage house will be left as is.

Ms. O’Neil said yes and that all the colors will match.

Commissioner Northway asked for the actual address of the location.

Mr. O’Neil said the assessors address is 51A and the address is 51 in the legal description.

Ms. O’Neil believes that the carriage house had been rented out and the A was added at that time.

Commissioner Northway stated that he is interested in carriage houses and would like to follow up at a later date.

Public Comment – None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, 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 Northway, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and zero (0) opposed to approve Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed changes in the elm park historic district.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Appropriateness Application, submitted by Mary O’Neil, owner, and received February 21, 2024.

Exhibit B: slides showing existing conditions and proposed changes.

Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver

6. 45 Cedar Street (02-046-0055A) – COA-24-8

Petition purpose: Demolish garage, Request to change color of previously approved & permitted windows.

Chaim Gaval, Contractor, o/b/o Mar Vista Management, LLC, Petitioner presented that they will be applying to the Zoning Board to convert the building to 7 apartments to ideally house WPI students. They would like to replace windows and have applied for a building permit that was stopped for Historical Commission review. The previous owner had proposed and been approved for almond or black color windows. They signed a compliance form that stated grids all will match. The proposal is for a Harvey series of window. Currently there are vinyl windows on the house and Mr. Gaval's group is proposing to replace and add grids to all windows. They would like to do white windows. In the neighborhood area, there are houses with white grids. The windows would have divided light. In the future they would like to scrape and paint the exterior of the house.

Ms. Johnstone stated there was an approval for the windows before the Elm Park historic district and a permit for work was pulled. Tonight, the commission is approving the change in window color to white. There won't be that much of a difference between the desired white versus the approved almond.

Mr. Gaval stated it would be a downgrade in the window they chose if the almond color needed to be used. The intention is to repaint the house in two tone paint. Decorative windows in the house will be preserved.

Chair Long stated that the windows are fine, and asked if there was a reason why they did not want to use black.

Mr. Gaval stated that black would also be a downgrade of window type. The second part of tonight's application is to demolish the garage. The garage is in complete disarray with framing destroyed and falling apart. Zoning Board is going to want additional parking for the residential use, and they are looking to making it work.

Ms. Johnstone stated this demolition was proposed previously but withdrawn. The garage is not original to the property and was probably built before 1937 but has been altered since.

Public Comment – None

On a motion made by Vice-Chair Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Northway, 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 Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed changes to the window color are appropriate in the elm park historic district.

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 of the garage in the elm park historic district.

Exhibits

Exhibit A: Certificate of Appropriateness & Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application submitted by Mar Vista Management, LLC, owner, and received February 22, 2024.

Exhibit B: slides showing existing conditions.

Communications

- A. Request from Epsilon Associates for updated letters of support for Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit projects at 204, 316, 340, 401–409 & 526 Main Street, and 300 Southbridge Street.

Chair Long stated support for updated projects and asked if anyone disagreed.

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

Other Business

None

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Long, the Commission voted five (5) to zero (0) to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.