

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

**March 25, 2010
LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER – CITY HALL**

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

Staff Present: Luba Zhaurova, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services
Joel Fontane, Director, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Fontane presented a certificate of appreciation to Mr. Theerman for his 11 years of service on the Historical Commission on behalf of Michael V. O'Brien, City Manager.

Mr. Theerman expressed gratitude to Jody Kennedy-Valade and to Edgar Luna for their assistance with Historical Commission matters. He stated that he enjoyed working with the Commissioners and staff and learned a lot about the City and suggested that more students from Worcester Public School system be used to assist with the Commission's work.

MINUTES

The Commission approved the March 4, 2010 and March 11, 2010 minutes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- 1. 20 Whitman Road (HC-2010-005) – Certificate of Appropriateness and Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Jeanice Sherman, petitioner, presented the petition. She indicated that was seeking to repair and replace slate tiles on the roof, and replace tiles along the edge of the roof with flat-seam copper. Ms. Sherman made a presentation to the Commission explaining what ice dams are and how they cause damage to the roof. Ms. Sherman stated that she is proposing to replace the slate tiles that cannot be repaired with unfading green color slate to match existing slate. She also indicated that over time, the

patina on the proposed copper roof edges would match the green color of slate; therefore, it will not be conspicuous. She added that each slate tile has two holes in order to attach them to the roof, which provides opportunity for water seepage, while copper does not have such condition. She also clarified that she is not seeking to install a five-foot copper edge. Mr. Crowley asked if the petitioner had pictures of other houses with a copper roof edges. Ms. Sherman stated that there is such a house on the corner of Beechmont Street and Institute Road. Chair Schneider stated that he believes the proposed copper is not an appropriate material for the Local Historic District as no other houses have it. Ms. Sherman stated that her house has had problems with roof leaking for 15 years and that she has to repair it often twice a year. Chair Schneider stated that slate tiles not visible from a public way and that are in good shape can be used for repair on the front of the house. He also noted that the copper on the Beechwood Street house is still not covered in patina. Ms. Sherman responded that the amount of runoff and a type of copper determine the range of patina variations. Chair Schneider suggested insulating the upper part of the attic. Todd Rainey of Bill's Roofing and Siding suggested that the petitioner soffit vents.

Upon a motion by Michael Theerman and seconded by James Crowley, the Commission voted 6-0 to continue the item to April 22, 2010 to allow the petitioner to get further advice from an insulation expert and to extend the constructive grant deadline to May 13, 2010.

2. **127 Austin Street (HC-2010-008) – Building Demolition Delay Waiver:** Todd Rainey and Patricia Kapulka of Bill's Roofing and Siding, representatives for Michael Razzo, petitioner, presented the petition. Mr. Rainey stated that that the petitioner is seeking to install vinyl siding over the existing wood frame. Chair Schneider asked whether the petitioner considered the alternative suggested by the Commission at the last meeting and contacted the City with respect to its Lead Abatement Program. Mr. Rainey stated that he was not sure. He indicated that the owner is planning to rent units through the Section 8 program and indicated that such program would not subsidize housing that has presence of lead. He added that the program's rules have changed and that all lead now needs to be abated. Mr. Crowley suggested that the owner talk to the City about the programs before making an economic hardship argument. Chair Schneider stated that window trim is one of the main historical features of the house. Chair Schneider asked if the petitioner is planning to replace the windows. Mr. Rainey stated that the windows were replaced about 20 years ago and that some of the front windows will be repaired.

Upon a motion by Michael Theerman and seconded by James Crowley, the Commission voted 6-0 to continue the item to April 22, 2010 meeting to allow the petitioner additional time to contact the City's Lead Abatement Program.

OTHER BUSINESS:

3. **41 Lancaster Street:** Attorney Todd Brodeur and Epiphany Vera were present for an informal discussion with the Historical Commission regarding 41 Lancaster Street. Mr. Brodeur was seeking to shorten the delay period according to the Building Demolition

Delay Waiver regulations that state the following: "... the twelve-month delay period established herein may be reduced at any time by the Commission whenever it is satisfied that there is no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person or group is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore such building". Mr. Brodeur stated that Preservation Worcester was not able to find a viable alternative and that WPI was at first interested in purchasing the building but then pulled out. Mr. Brodeur asked what kind of information the Commission would be looking for to consider shortening the 1-year period. Chair Schneider stated that the petitioner would need to make a case for economic hardship. Mr. Crowley added that the petitioner would need to make a cost comparison. Chair Schneider suggested comparing costs of not doing anything to the property to the cost of tearing it down and rebuilding to the cost of repair. Ms. Merrill disagreed that the Commission should compare restoration costs to demolition and rebuilding. Mr. Brodeur stated that previous owner had a \$400,000 mortgage but sold the property to Mr. Vera for \$250,000. Chair Schneider stated that in his opinion the decision should be made based on what the petitioner can afford. Mr. Crowley disagreed. Mr. Constantine stated that the Commission made decisions in the past based on petitioners' ability to pay. Mr. Crowley noted that these decisions were related to partial demolitions, and not complete demolitions of the structures. Mr. Brodeur stated that the petitioner withdrew the petition for 41 Lancaster Street. Ms. Zhaurova stated that the minutes from that meeting indicate that the Commission denied the petition. Mr. Brodeur stated that the owner would like to start construction in late spring.

4. **9 May Street:** Upon a motion by Michael Theerman and seconded by Janet Merrill, the Commission voted 6-0 to approve a letter of support for the nomination of the Andrew H. Hammond Organ Reed Factory at 9 May Street for the Massachusetts Historical Commission 32nd Annual Preservation Award submitted by Worcester Common Ground (WCG).
5. **Michael Theerman:** Mr. Crowley thanked Mr. Theerman for his dedication and energy. He stated that he learned a lot from Mr. Theerman. Chair Schneider and Ms. Merrill concurred.

Adjournment: Chair Schneider adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.