



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

Thursday, October 6, 2022

Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber
with remote participation options available via WebEx online at
<https://cow.webex.com/meet/historicalincommissionwebex> and
call-in number 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 1608081191).

Commissioners Present: Diane Long, Chair
Janet Theerman, Vice-Chair
Erika Helnarski (participated remotely)
Devon Kurtz
Tomi Stefani
Vanessa Andre, Alternate

Commissioners Absent: Steven Taylor

Staff Present: Michelle Johnstone, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Michelle Smith, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)

Call Commission to Order – 5:30 PM

Approval of Minutes – None

Requests for postponement, continuance, & leave to withdraw

1. 600 Lincoln Street (MBL 49-019-32-36) – HC-2022-042 – Building Demolition Delay Waiver (financial hardship consideration)

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted 6-0 to continue discussion on 600 Lincoln Street to the November 17, 2022 meeting and to extend the constructive grant deadline to December 2, 2022.

Old Business

2. 111 Austin Street (MBL 03-016-00022) – HC-2022-051 – Certificate of Appropriateness

Item opened September 8, 2022 – proposal to construct new apartment building with the Crown Hill Local Historic District.

Hilgenberg of Dixon Salo Architects reviewed renderings that show the proposed building within the context of the neighborhood and a site plan. He stated that the building is approximately two times as wide as the neighboring buildings but is about the same in height. He also pointed out other buildings in the neighborhood that are similar in scale or larger than the building proposed for 111 Austin Street.

Chair Long noted that found the drawings showing the proposed building within the context of the neighborhood to be extremely helpful in understanding how the building will fit into the district. She also stated that this parcel is on the outskirts of the district in an area of low architectural integrity, and that there are three larger apartment buildings within eyeshot of 111 Austin Street. She reiterated, as she stated at the September 8, 2022 meeting, that she appreciates the proposed materials.

Commissioner Theerman asked for a review on the siding material. Mr. Hilgenberg stated that the siding is to be a dark brick color CertainTeed James Hardie siding.

Commissioner Therman noted that he appreciated the blend of modern and historic elements and stated that he felt the building will be a good fit in the neighborhood. Commissioner Kurtz agreed, stating that it would provide a clean edge to the historic district.

Commissioner Long asked if any thought had been given to using a slate roof. Mr. Hilgenberg stated that it could be done.

Commissioner Stefani asked if it would be a real or artificial slate. Mr. Hilgenberg stated that he would want to use artificial slate for warrantee purposes.

There was brief discussion on the material proposed for the retaining wall.

Public Comment

None.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public comment portion of the hearing.

On a motion made by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed changes at 111 Austin Street consisting of the construction of a new apartment building consistent with the plans on file with the Division of Planning & Regulatory Services, excepting the roofing material, is appropriate for the Crown Hill Local Historic District. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the motion passed and the Certificate of Appropriateness for 111 Austin Street was approved.

On a motion by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted 6-0 to continue the discussion on the proposed roofing material at 111 Austin Street to the October 27, 2022 meeting and to extend the constructive grant deadline to November 4, 2022.

3. 525 Salisbury Street (MBL 25-042-00001) – HC-2022-062 – Building Demolition Delay Waiver

Item opened September 22, 2022 – proposal to replace windows.

Homeowner Geoffrey Vaughan appeared before the Commission in person. He apologized for not being able to attend the previous meeting.

Mr. Vaughan stated that the windows in the home are not original and that he believes most of them date from the early 20th century, while a few appear to be older. He stated that almost all windows have been modified in some way. He stated that some windows are repairable while some aren't, and he doesn't want to have a patchwork of windows throughout the house.

There was a brief discussion on the proposed color for the windows. Mr. Vaughan stated that a dark bronze would be used.

Commissioner Andre asked who told the applicant that the windows were unsalvageable. Mr. Vaughan stated that Chartier looked at them.

Commissioner Stefani asked if the grid patterns would be matched. Mr. Vaughan affirmed that they would be.

Public Comment

None.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public comment portion of the hearing.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted five (5) in favor and one (1) opposed, with Commissioners Theerman, Helnarski, Kurtz, Stefani and Long being the yeas and Commissioner Andre being the nay, that the proposed demolition at 525 Salisbury Street, consisting of the replacement of windows with replacements to closely resemble the existing windows, would be appropriate for the historical and architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a majority affirmative vote, the motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 525 Salisbury Street was approved.

New Business

Building Demolition Delay Waiver

4. 112 Mill Street (MBL 08-021-00003) – HC-2022-063

Gerta Gjata, co-owner of the property, appeared in person. She stated the intent of the proposal, which is to replace windows and to demolish a trapezoidal bay on the left side of the building. She stated that the windows are old and damaged and are proposed to be replaced with vinyl, and the trapezoidal bay will be replaced with a sliding door.

The Commission discussed the architectural integrity of the building to determine whether to issue a Leave to Withdraw based on the changes that have been made to the building over the years.

Commissioner Stefani asked what changes have been made to the building. Ms. Johnstone reviewed the changes to the building since it has been constructed.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the demolition at 112 Mill Street is not subject to the historic buildings demolition delay ordinance because the structure has been heavily altered and is no longer eligible for listing in the State of National Registers and therefore granted a leave to withdraw without prejudice for the application.

5. 321 Plantation Street, Unit 101 (MBL 19-01A-00101) – HC-2022-064

Daniel Bolon, the unit owner, appeared in-person. He described the intent of the application, which is to replace the windows due to the fact that they have deteriorated and are damaged. He stated that the replacement windows will match the existing windows in grid pattern and will be simulated divided light style windows.

Mr. Bolon also stated that his unit is not the only unit in the building with windows that are failing.

Commissioner Kurtz asked if any other units in the building have replacement issues. Ms. Johnstone stated that to her knowledge this would be the first case of windows being replaced, and noted that since windows do not last forever, it is especially important in a building that has become condominiums to set a precedent early as to what is appropriate to avoid having a patchwork of windows.

Chair Long asked Ms. Johnstone if she was familiar with the product proposed. She stated that she is familiar with it and noted that the Commission affirmed that this type of window as a potentially appropriate replacement window in the set of window guidelines published on behalf of the Commission.

Public Comment

Marion Harnois of 321 Plantation Street stated that she can confirm that the apartments are cold given the state of the windows. She stated that she was also looking into replacement windows, but that she wanted to get at least another one hundred years out of any replacement windows she installs. She hopes to see more research on the cost of wood windows vs. vinyl windows, etc., and wanted to know from the Commission what can be installed.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public comment portion of the hearing.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted four (4) in favor and two (2) opposed, with Commissioners Theerman, Helnarski, Kurtz and Long being the yeas and Commissioners Andre and Stefani being the nays, that the proposed demolition at 321 Plantation Street (Unit 101), consisting of the replacement of seven windows with replacements of a matching design and color to the existing windows, would be appropriate for the historical and architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a majority affirmative vote, the motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 525 Salisbury Street was approved.

6. 681 Millbury Street (MBL 10-013-00023) – HC-2022-065

Attorney Donald O'Neil, on behalf of Desharn Minton and Erin Amoaka-Atta, appeared in-person before the Commission. He described the proposed new use of the building, which is to be used as a barber shop. The use was approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals. He also described the proposed changes to the building, which are to replace and enlarge existing windows in the addition, to create new openings for new windows in the addition, and to create a new opening for egress to allow for handicap access. Mr. O'Neil also stated that the siding would likely be replaced at some point. Ms. Johnstone noted that the siding replacement would be administratively approved so long as the existing siding could be verified to be under fifty years old.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Kurtz, the Commission voted 6-0 to close the public comment portion of the hearing.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted six (6) in favor and zero (0) opposed that the proposed demolition at 681 Millbury Street, consisting of replacing and enlarging existing windows, creating new openings for windows, and creating a new opening for egress to allow for handicap access would not be detrimental to the historical or architectural resources of the City of Worcester. Having gained a unanimous affirmative vote, the motion passed and the Building Demolition Delay Waiver for 681 Millbury Street was approved.

Communications

- A. Invitation to comment on proposed telecommunications project at 100 Madison Street.

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman and seconded by Commissioner Stefani, the Commission voted 6-0 to not issue comment on the proposed telecommunications project at 100 Madison Street.

- B. Communication from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) informing the Worcester Historical Commission of the MHC's vote to encourage the City of Worcester to establish the Elm Park Neighborhood Local Historic District and to encourage the protection of additional significant resources through a larger district or additional local historic districts.

No action taken.

- C. Printed copy (on file in DPRS) of *Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings*, received from the National Park Service.

No action taken.

- D. Notice of the beginning of the MHC FY 2023 Survey & Planning Grant Cycle.

No action taken.

- E. Communication from MHC informing the Worcester Historical Commission of the positive determination of eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the MHC of the Main Street and Murray Avenue Historic District.

No action taken.

- F. Notice of finding of no adverse effect, sent from MHC to Stephen Connelly of the City of Worcester Division of Housing, regarding a proposed project at Union Station.

No action taken.

Other Business

- A. Discussion on proposed Elm Park Neighborhood Local Historic District.

The Commission debriefed after the September 29, 2022 public hearing regarding the proposed Elm Park Local Historic District.

Ms. Johnstone reviewed a 1987 map showing a suggested local historic district in the area currently under consideration by the Commission. She also shared several photographs of buildings in three areas on Cedar Street, Elm Street, and Park Avenue where the district could potentially be enlarged based on comments received by the public. She also read a letter into the record received by Greg Lano of 85 Elm Street that suggested enlarging the district.

Ms. Johnstone laid out next steps for creating the district.

The Commission voiced their support for enlarging the proposed district.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Commissioner Theerman, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:54 PM.