

MINUTES OF WELLESLEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING OF OCTOBER 11, 2017.

Present: Members: Grant Brown (Chair), Jan Gleysteen, Neal Goins, Jacob Lilley, Lawrence McNally (Vice Chair), Vicki Schauffler, and Rise Shepsle;

Alternate Members: Robert Carley, Peter Fergusson, Vin Loccisano, Michael Racette, Elizabeth Shlala;

Advisory Member: Joshua Dorin

1. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Great Hall, Wellesley Town Hall.
2. Citizen Speak: No citizens present chose to speak on matters not on the agenda.
3. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw :
89 Russell Road (Application DR-2017-08)

Owners, Glen Magpiong and Jane Magpiong, 89 Russell Road, Wellesley, MA, and their attorney, David Himmelberger, addressed the WHC. Attorney Himmelberger stated general agreement with the Planning Department report, and its recommendation that the WHC deem the existing house structure not Preferably Preserved. He stated that the existing house's exterior siding has changed from its original condition. He stated that most of the nearby houses have been significantly altered from their original condition.

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present: No neighbors asked to speak.

Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. Although it is probably one of the last of the original cabins in that area, the Planning Department does not feel that it had sufficient historical significance to deem it to be Preferably Preserved.

The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure not Preferably Preserved.

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property. The structure is part of a 1913 development known as "Pine Ridge Park," which was located near the Boston-Worcester trolley line. Most of the houses were relatively modest in size. Over time, most of the houses were winterized. The original owner is of no particular historical significance to the Town of Wellesley.

WHC members had a general discussion regarding the Planning Department recommendation as well as the elements related to whether or not the structure should be deemed preferably preserved. There have been radical changes to the exterior of the structure. Although the area of town is unique, over time, the houses in the area immediately near the subject property has changed. In contrast, other streets in that general area have not seen similar changes.

Motion (Goins) to determine that the structure be deemed not Preferably Preserved (Gleysteen seconded). Vote: 7 – 0 in favor.

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-08 was closed.

4. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw:
16 Hampshire Road (Application DR-2017-09)

Owners, Wei Zhang and Jia Zhou, 25 Benvenue Street, addressed the WHC. The owners purchased the property in June 2017, and filed their application for a demolition permit prior to the effective date of the new Bylaw. However, the issuance of that permit was delayed until after the effective date, because of the prerequisite that the utilities first be disconnected. At the time of their decision to purchase the property, they believed—based upon information available and accessible in town public records, that the house was constructed in 1950. The Planning Department research, however, determined that the year of construction was 1949, thus bringing the structure within the purview of the Bylaw. The owners' misunderstanding of the date of construction was caused, in part, by erroneous information about the date of construction in the town assessors and/or building department records, and this misinformation was compounded by the fact that the original building permit for the structure was filed under a different house number ("14"). The owners stated that delaying their ability to build a new house on the property would result in an economic hardship.

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present: Steve Peretti, 37 Audubon Road, Wellesley, Thomas McGinnis, 49 Audubon Road, Wellesley, Walton Butterworth, 8 Hampshire Road, Wellesley, and Marjorie Freiman, 146 Lowell Road, Wellesley, each expressed concern that the replacement of the existing house with a larger house would potentially adversely impact the existing character of the neighborhood, depending on the location of the new house on the subject property, given the property's topography, which slopes upward towards the rear. Concern was expressed about the fact that dozens of trees in the rear of the property have already been cut down.

Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. Few changes have been made to the structure since its original construction, according to building permit records. The structure is a Garrison Colonial. The Planning Department feels that it is not a model example of this architectural subtype. The existing house is the oldest house in the immediate neighborhood. None of the immediately surrounding houses would be subject to the new Bylaw. The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure not Preferably Preserved.

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property. The owners of longest duration were Frederick M. & Emilie (Tavel) Livezey. An award-winning journalist for The Christian Science Monitor, Emilie Livezey is famous for coining the term "NIMBY" (Not In My Backyard) in her 1980 article on hazardous waste disposal facilities.

WHC members had a general discussion regarding the Planning Department recommendation as well as the elements related to whether or not the structure should be deemed preferably preserved. The WHC cautioned residents that data information listed in the records of town departments (such as assessors' and building department) are often inaccurate. There was discussion of how the elevation or topography of a property can affect the manner in which a structure fits into the character and context of the immediately surrounding neighborhood. The existing house fits the scale and scope of the immediate neighborhood. There was discussion of the house's association with an historic person, i.e., Emilie Livezey.

Motion (Goins) to determine that the structure be deemed Preferably Preserved, because the subject building is historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings (namely, in the context of the immediately surrounding neighborhood, and because it is importantly associated with an historic person, i.e., Emilie Livezey). (McNally seconded). Vote: 6-1 in favor:

In favor: Brown, Gleysteen, Goins, Lilley, McNally, and Shepsle.
Opposed: Schauffler.

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-09 was closed.

5. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw:
80 Walnut Street (Application DR-2017-10)

Owner, 80 Walnut Street LLC's representative, Viktor Gyuris, and the owner's attorney, Stanley Brooks, addressed the WHC. Attorney Brooks stated that this structure is not listed in the Kathy Broomer's 1990 survey of Wellesley's historic assets. He asserted that the house is not an important example of the Dutch Colonial style; there are better examples throughout the town. It is located in a business district, and the property abuts the Cochituate Aqueduct. The existing house has no contextual relation to the neighboring commercial area. Most of the residential properties on nearby Cedar Street have been developed. There is no significant builder or owner associated with the property's history. The historic significance of this area of town, he added, is associated with its industrial history, but this house and its long-time owners (Gleason) are not connected to that era in Wellesley's history.

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present: No neighbors asked to speak.

Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The house structure is Dutch Colonial. Although there are numerous examples of this style of architecture in the town, the Planning Department feels that the structure's location adjacent to a commercial area adds to its historic significance for the town.

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property. The side of Walnut Street where the subject property is located was once primarily residential, until it was re-zoned, in the 1950's, for commercial use. Other neighboring properties were sold and developed as commercial properties. Kathy Broomer's 1990 survey of Wellesley's historic assets was not intended to be an inclusive survey of, or opinion on, which structures were of historic importance to the Town of Wellesley. Rather, the intent of the survey was to identify structures which might qualify for designation in the National Historic Register, which has different criteria than the Bylaw criteria.

WHC members had a general discussion regarding the Planning Department recommendation as well as the elements related to whether or not the structure should be deemed preferably preserved. This is a good specimen of the Dutch Colonial architectural type. Although the house is separated from any neighboring residential neighborhood, it can also be considered as a "gateway" into the residential portion of town, when travelling from the Lower Falls commercial office park area.

Motion (Goins) to determine that the structure not be deemed Preferably Preserved, because the subject building is historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings (Shepsle seconded). Vote: 6 - 1 in favor:

In favor: Brown, Gleysteen, Goins, Lilley, Schaufler, and Shepsle.
Opposed: McNally.

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-10 was closed.

6. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw:
11 Pleasant Street (Application DR-2017-11)

Owner, Brossi Brothers Limited Partnership's, LLC's, through its attorney, Stanley Brooks, and by various members of the Rossi family, including David Brossi and Joe Brossi, addressed the WHC. Attorney Brooks stated that all required permit applications—including the permit for demolition—were filed prior to the time that the new Bylaw went into effect. However, the demolition permit was not issued until after the effective date of the Bylaw, because the gas company took three months to disconnect the gas supply. The Brossi family has owned this property since 1958. Across the street is a condominium building, and there are other apartments in the neighborhood. Attorney Brooks suggested that there is little consistency in building style in this neighborhood. He stated that the property is not associated with any notable historical town resident. He asserted that the existing house does not possess historical or architectural significance.

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present: No neighbors asked to speak.

Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The Planning Department feels that the existing structure has historical significance to the town due to the period and style of the architecture, especially in the context of the other houses on the same side of Pleasant Street. Although the houses are different styles, they are generally of the same era, and represent examples of American Folk Architecture style. The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure Preferably Preserved.

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property. The subject property is part of a sprawling, and ultimately failed, 1846 subdivision of the Blanchard Estate. In the first several decades of the 1900's, it took on a working-class character, in large part due to its close

proximity to the Diehl's industry supply complex on Linden Street. Because of the association of Diehl's with the early 20th Century wave of Italian immigration, the neighborhood developed a heavy Italian immigrant presence. Its first owner was the house's builder, John T. Ryan. Mr Ryan became active in town affairs, serving as the Wellesley Townsman's first editor after the newspaper was founded in April 1906, and was Clerk of the Board of Selectmen, a post he held for 9 years until the creation of the Town Clerk position, which he was elected to -- and reelected to annually -- until his death in 1952. At that time, Ryan was the longest serving Town official in Wellesley history. (His portrait still hangs in the Town Clerk's office at Wellesley Town Hall.)

WHC members had a general discussion regarding the Planning Department recommendation as well as the elements related to whether or not the structure should be deemed preferably preserved. The existing house has a similar size, scale and character when compared to many of the surrounding houses on both sides of that end of Pleasant Street. The six houses at that end form a distinct "ecosystem."

Motion (Shepsle) to determine that the structure be deemed Preferably Preserved, because the subject building is historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings (Schauffler seconded). Vote: 7 – 0 in favor.

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-11 was closed.

7. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw:
21 Pleasant Street (Application DR-2017-12)

Owner, Brossi Brothers Limited Partnership's, LLC's, through its attorney, Stanley Brooks, and by various members of the Rossi family, including David Brossi and Joe Brossi, addressed the WHC. Attorney Brooks stated that the subject property is a conforming lot. The existing house structure is a wood-frame colonial of no historical or architectural significance. The Brossi family built the house, and David Brossi was born and raised in it.

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present: No neighbors asked to speak.

Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The existing house was built in 1929. The Planning Department feels that the existing structure has historical significance to the town due to the period and style of the architecture, especially in the context of the other houses on the same side of Pleasant Street. The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure Preferably Preserved.

Dorin alluded to the historical information about the history of that area of the town that he had discussed in connection with the presentation of 11 Pleasant Street. In addition, he stated, this house was built in 1929-30 by William H. Hewett for William Brossi. William H. Hewett was a resident of Wellesley from 1927 until his death in 1951. He had long been engaged in the building business in Wellesley and the vicinity, and served as the Town of Wellesley Building Inspector during the final year of his life. William Brossi was born in Italy and immigrated to the U.S. as a young man in 1923 after fighting for Italy during WWI. After moving to Wellesley, he joined his brother in the masonry and construction business. Two of his sons, Joseph and David Brossi, formed the Brossi Brothers Construction Company in Framingham. The firm is still in business, largely servicing the Framingham region.

WHC members had a general discussion regarding the Planning Department recommendation as well as the elements related to whether or not the structure should be deemed preferably preserved. Unlike the area of Pleasant Street discussed in connection with the application for 11 Pleasant Street, the area of Pleasant Street where the subject property is located contains houses and buildings of different scale, including several large apartment buildings across the street.

Motion (Goins) to determine that the structure be deemed not Preferably Preserved (Shepsle seconded). Vote: 5-2 in favor.

In favor: Gleysteen, Goins, Lilley, Schaufler, and Shepsle.
Opposed: Brown and McNally.

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-12 was closed.

8. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw
251 Weston Road (Application DR-2017-13)

Owner, 251 Weston Road Trust's representative, Paul Delaney, and the owner's attorney, David Himmelberger, addressed the WHC. The subject property has been in the Delaney family for approximately 100 years, and it abuts property owned by one of the beneficiaries of the trust, Paul Delaney, who resides in the house on that abutting property. Attorney Himmelberger stated that the existing house consists of 1,315 square feet of living space, and the house is set far back on the lot. He stated that the owner has obtained the opinion of a builder, who told the owner that expansion would be difficult, given its location on the lot and the current condition of its rubble foundation.

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present: No neighbors asked to speak.

Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The house was built in 1883. The Planning Department feels that the existing structure has historical significance to the town due to the period and style of the architecture, American National Folk, especially given its gabled roof. The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure Preferably Preserved.

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property. The property's first owner, Philip Edward McMahan, was appointed in 1896 as one of the first police officers in the Town of Wellesley and would become one of the most notable and popular police officers, retiring in 1923.

WHC members had a general discussion regarding the Planning Department recommendation as well as the elements related to whether or not the structure should be deemed preferably preserved. The existing structure has "exciting" architectural significance. It is one of the older houses in town, adding to its historical significance to the town. It fits in well with the existing neighborhood and those houses along Weston Rd.

Motion (Goins) to determine that the structure be deemed Preferably Preserved, because the subject building is historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of Buildings (Gleysteen seconded). Vote: 7 - 0 in favor.

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-13 was closed.

9. Minutes: After discussion and review of the draft minutes of the WHC meeting of September 11, 2017, it was moved by McNally, seconded by Goins, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes as amended of the WHC meeting of September 11, 2017.
10. House Plaque Approvals: No approvals. Dorin expects to have some for approval at the next WHC meeting.
11. House Plaque Research Contract. Brown is waiting on signatures from Town representatives to begin this project and will reach out again to obtain the executed contract.
12. CPC Projects: Villages Project: Brown continues to review the merits of an RFQ vs. an RFP and should have an update at the next WHC meeting.

13. CPC Projects: Fells Branch Library Roof: Shepsle and Lilley will draft a summary of their proposal and will discuss it with representatives of the Facilities Maintenance Department. We might want to suggest copper flashing at the chimney.
14. Project Updates: Beebe Plaque: McNally will obtain information from former WHC member, Dwight Lueth, regarding the status of his past efforts, and will follow up, as appropriate.

15. Project Updates: Single Historic Districts:

Schauffler will contact the owners of 4 Oakland Street regarding their interest in this designation for their property.

Fergusson will contact a member of the Murray family regarding their possible interest in this designation for their property.

The Wellesley Historical Society reportedly is exploring possible designation of the former Tolles house (near the Wellesley Community Center) in the National Historic Register. There was discussion regarding how ownership and lease issues might affect those efforts, and how the process could take several years. Brown will contact a representative of the Wellesley Historical Society regarding potential designation of property as a Single Historic District.

16. Project Updates: Historic Articles and/or Awards:

Dorin and Gleysteen will confer concerning planning ideas and logistics for authoring articles in the Wellesley Townsman newspaper on topics of historic interest.

The WHC briefly discussed the idea of sponsoring periodic awards to recognize and thus encourage historic house renovations and/or new construction that reflects historic design elements. This subject will continue to be discussed in future WHC meetings.

The Wellesley Historical Society plans to present an informational program at the Wellesley Free Library on the topic of how to research one's house's history. The WHC co-presented a similar event last year, and we are interested in doing the same, this year. Loccisano volunteered to contact the Wellesley Historical Society and discuss doing the same, this year.

17. Upcoming Meeting: October 23, 2017 at 7 p.m. in the Great Hall, Wellesley Town Hall.
18. It was moved by Brown, and seconded by Goins, and passed unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 11:20 p.m.