

MINUTES OF WELLESLEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING OF NOVEMBER 13, 2017.

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

Alternate Members: Robert Carley, Michael Racette, Elizabeth Shlala;

Advisory Member: Joshua Dorin

1. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:03 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 :
1 Ingleside Road (Application DR-2017-15)

Owners, Tucker Realty Trust/Richard Acheson and Jacqueline Swerling-Acheson addressed the WHC.

The owners described the existing structure as a 1935 pre-fab, with an addition. They believe that the house has no historical significance.

Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The house is best characterized as “Modern, of the minimal subtype.” Construction began on the oldest part of the existing structure house in 1935. It likely was prefabricated. According to town records, the structure has undergone exterior changes over the years. Although the fact that the structure is a pre-fab construction is interesting, the Planning Department does not feel that it is historically important. Research did not reveal anything notable about the prior owners of the property. The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure not Preferably Preserved.

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

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property, drawing from written materials distributed at the meeting. The subject property is part of a sprawling subdivision originally consisting mostly of bungalows that served as summer cottages, like the subject property. Not much of the original structure is evident, today.

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. Although there are some similar size and style houses nearby, the existing house did not seem to be especially significant.

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

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-15 was closed.

4. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw:
8 Old Farm Road (Application DR-2017-20)

Owners Marcia Abbott and Richard Krueger, Trustees, M 13S Advisory Trust, and their attorney, David Himmelberger, addressed the WHC.

In 2015, the owners subdivided their lot, creating two buildable lots. The owners have been in discussions with a buyer who plans to build one large house on both lots. Attorney Himmelberger provided a written report from an architect who opined that the existing house no longer represents an authentic example of a colonial revival, due to changes to the exterior since the time of its construction. Himmelberger suggested that the existing house is the smallest house in the neighborhood.

Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The house is best characterized as “Side-gabled Roof subtype of the Colonial Revival style.” Construction began on the oldest part of the existing structure house in 1941. Based upon town records, additions or changes to the exterior were made in 1980, 1987, and in 2002. The front main body of the house appears to be consistent with its original construction. The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure Preferably Preserved.

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present.

Michelle Foster, 12 Old Farm Road, Wellesley, addressed the WHC. She suggested the WHC allow the existing home to be demolished, stating that she believes that a delay would not prevent the eventual demolition of the existing house. She expressed concern that a delay could ultimately result in the construction of two houses on the two lots, rather than one large house on both lots, and stated that this result would adversely affect the neighborhood.

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property, drawing from written materials distributed at the meeting.

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 was discussion about the fact that the WHC's purview is more limited than considering whether the proposed demolition and replacement with one, rather than two, houses, would be more bucolic. The WHC's focus is on the existing structure. There was discussion about whether the WHC's concerns should include whether a house is a "pristine" example of an architectural type or subtype. Members stated that the many exterior alterations over the years were in keeping with the house's original character, and that the existing house remained a good example of a colonial reproduction, despite the alterations. As the structure was built in 1941, there was a conversation about it not being an "authentic" historic colonial. However, given that the bulk of Wellesley's homes were built between the 1920s and 1950s, houses like this define the historic character of Wellesley. While many of the nearby houses have been replaced over the years, some WHC members felt that this neighborhood no longer was intact. Others pointed out that there are many colonial style houses in the neighborhood (older and newer), and that the replacement of nearby houses with newer houses was completed over a period of many years, and thus in context, such that the neighborhood has "evolved," and is not "gone."

Motion (Shepsle) to determine that the structure be deemed Preferably Preserved (McNally seconded). Vote: 5 – 2, in favor. In favor: Brown, Goins, McNally, Goins, Schauffler, and Shepsle. Opposed: Gleysteen and Lilley.

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-20 was closed.

5. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw:
47 MacArthur Road (Application DR-2017-21)

Owners Dennis Miller and Susan Braunhut, addressed the WHC. The owners stated only four rooms remain from the original house, due to extensive renovations and additions over the years.

Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The house is best characterized as "Modern, of the minimal subtype." Construction began on the oldest part of the existing structure house in 1948. Based upon town records, additions were added to it in 1951 and 1986. Although the fact that the original house was part of an effort to provide affordable housing to veterans is notable, very little of the original house remains today. The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure not Preferably Preserved.

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

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property, drawing from written materials distributed at the meeting. The original house was part of an effort to provide affordable houses to veterans returning from WWII.

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. Most of the surrounding houses have been torn down and replaced, from their original construction. Due to numerous changes to the exterior of the house, it is difficult to see what the original house looked like.

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

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-21 was closed.

6. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw:
83 Edgemoor Road (Application DR-2017-23)

Owner, Brian Daggett, and his attorney, David Himmelberger, addressed the WHC. The Planning Department’s written report and recommendation echo what they believe, namely, that the existing house has no historical or architectural significance.

Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The house is best characterized as “Gable-Front Family subtype of the Folk-National style.” Construction began on the oldest part of the existing structure house in 1923. Based upon town records, no exterior additions have been made to the original structure. Although the original exterior is largely intact, the Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure not Preferably Preserved.

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

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property. The house is a 1920’s bungalow, which was only later winterized.

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. Lilley stated his opinion that the existing house is not a period home with qualities worth preserving. Brown stated that there is a mix of old and new houses in the immediate neighborhood. The area is not a collection of bungalows.

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

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-23 was closed.

7. Public Hearing – Waiver Review:
7 Wildon Street (Application DR-2017-04)

Owner, DNH Homes LLC's representative, Stanley Hargus, and the applicant's designer, Donna Trabucco, and the applicant's structural engineer, Mike Hunter, addressed the Commission.

The applicant submitted a new design, which is dramatically different from the initial submission and much more in line with the neighboring structures, though still not complete, as there was no rear elevation. The exterior details mimic many design elements found on other homes in the neighborhood.

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present.

Kelly Uller, 3 Wildon Road, addressed the Commission. Ms. Uller stated that the new design is beautiful, and is much more consistent with the neighborhood than the prior design, but expressed concern about the side elevation, which is visible from the street, as well as the incomplete design of the right side which faces her property. She also expressed concern about the potential loss of existing trees.

WHC members had a general discussion regarding the waiver application, including how complete and final the waiver applicant's plan must be, and how much exterior detail should be shown, for consideration by the Commission. Mr. Zehner expressed an opinion that the current plans were sufficient, and stated that if the bar is set too high, an applicant's flexibility is adversely affected. After much discussion about potential conditions to include in any waiver approval, the Commission voted to continue the hearing on this waiver application to the next meeting, on December 11, 2017, in order to have more complete and final plans, and as the owner continues to wait for an upcoming ZBA hearing.

Motion (McNally) to continue the waiver application to the December 11, 2017 Commission hearing (Shepsle seconded). Vote: 7 - 0 in favor.

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-04 was continued to the December 11, 2017 Commission hearing.

8. Public Hearing – Waiver Review:
16 Hampshire Road (Application DR-2017-09)

Owners, Wei Zhang and Jia Zhou, 25 Benvenue Street, and their architect addressed the WHC. The applicant submitted architectural plans which is a classic colonial design.

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present.

Henry Biner, 20 Hampshire Road, stated that he had no questions or concerns, and was simply observing the proceeding.

WHC members had a general discussion regarding the waiver application. There was much discussion about whether the submitted plans were too preliminary and unrealistic, in light of other zoning requirements. The Commission asked to know the roof ridge height relative to what currently exists, and details about the materials to be used in construction of the exterior. Its front setback is closer to the street than the current house. There was also concern regarding the scale of the front elevation as it relates to its neighboring structures. After discussing the need to continue the hearing on this application, the Commission also stated that the applicant should submit clearer drawings for the next hearing.

Motion (McNally) to continue the waiver application to the December 11, 2017 Commission hearing (Lilley seconded). Vote: 7 - 0 in favor.

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-09 was continued to the December 11, 2017 Commission hearing.

9. Denton Road Neighborhood Conservation District Commission.

The Commission discussed the two vacancies on the Denton Road Neighborhood Conservation District Commission, and the proposal to renew the terms of two current members, Herbert Nolan and Mr. Tucker Swan. Gleysteen also volunteered to serve as the Historic Commission representative to the DRNCDC.

Motion: (Lilley) to re-appoint Mr. Herbert Nolan and Mr. Tucker Swan and appoint Mr. Jan Gleysteen to three-year terms and (McNally seconded). Vote: 7 – 0 in favor.

10. Minutes: After discussion and review of the draft minutes of the WHC meeting of October 23, 2017, it was moved by McNally, seconded by Schaufler, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes as amended of the WHC meeting of October 23, 2017.

11. House Plaque Approvals: Dorin circulated written summaries of his research on each of the following properties, and the Commission had a general discussion about them:

- a. 20 Riverdale Road.
- b. 5 Hundreds Road
- c. 5 Montvale Road.
- d. 14 Damien Road.
- e. 21 Squirrel Road.
- f. 22 Longfellow Road.
- g. 25 Cypress Road.
- h. 28 Windsor Road.
- i. 29 Riverdale Road.
- j. 30 Riverdale Road.
- k. 35 Clovelly Road.
- l. 35 Riverdale Road.
- m. 35 Washburn Road.
- n. 40 Calvin Road.
- o. 40 Riverdale Road.
- p. 46 Dover Road.
- q. 69-71 Curve Street.
- r. 85 Glen Cross Road.
- s. 117 Grove Street.
- t. 156 Walnut Street.

Motion: McNally moved that the Commission approve each of the properties for house plaques (Goins seconded.) Vote: 7 – 0, in favor.

12. CPC Projects: Historic House Research: Brown reported that this project has started. It is estimated to include 342 houses.
13. CPC Projects: Fells Branch Library Roof: Shepsle and Lilley reported that this project is moving ahead. The Commission stated that a cedar shingle roof is more historically accurate than an asphalt shingle roof (asphalt shingles were invented after this structure was built). The Commission also believes that in the long run, a cedar shingle roof will prove to be less expensive than an asphalt shingle roof given its longer life span. Shepsle and Lilley will get information comparing the costs of an asphalt shingle roof versus cedar shingle. The town's prior information was just an estimate. They will present their findings to the CDC at its December meeting.
14. Project Updates: Beebe Plaque: McNally will obtain information from former WHC member, David Wright, regarding the status of his past efforts, and will follow up, as appropriate.
15. Project Updates: Single Historic Districts:
 - 4 Oakland Street: Schaufler will contact the owners of 4 Oakland Street within the next week regarding their interest in this designation for their property.
 - Murray family: Joel Slocum will follow up with the Murray family regarding their interest in this designation for their property.
16. Project Updates: Historic Articles and/or Awards: The Commission discussed creating an award or in some way publicly recognizing a house that has had the most historically accurate renovation in the past year.
17. Upcoming Meeting: December 11, 2017 at 7 p.m. in the Great Hall, Wellesley Town Hall.
18. It was moved by Schaufler and seconded by McNally, and passed unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 11:54 p.m.