

MINUTES OF WELLESLEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING OF JANUARY 9, 2018.

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

Alternate Members: Robert Carley, Peter Fergusson, Vin Loccisano, Emily Maitin, and Michael Racette.

Advisory Member: Joshua Dorin

1. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. in the Great Hall, Wellesley Town Hall.
2. Brown designated Loccisano as Lilley's replacement as a Voting member.
3. Citizen Speak: No citizens present chose to speak on matters not on the agenda.
4. Public Hearing – Waiver Review:
11 Pleasant Street (Application DR-2017-11)

The owner's attorney, Stanley Brooks, and owner representatives, David Brossi and Joseph Brossi, addressed the Commission. With reference to updated plans submitted to the Commission, attorney Brooks discussed the manner in which the owners had addressed each of the 11 points of feedback given by the Commission at its December 11, 2017 meeting, including: removal of palladium window; removal of shutters; adjustments to the dormer over the garage; changes to the porch roof; realignment of the front windows; expansion of the window trim for a more traditional profile; and removal of faux chimney; and increased front porch post size.

Attorney Brooks stated that the changes achieve a design that is a better fit with the other houses at the lower end of Pleasant Street.

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

WHC members had a general discussion regarding the waiver application. Gleysteen made several suggestions for additional changes or considerations with respect to the revised plans. There was discussion concerning the feasibility of some of the suggested changes, or how such changes might affect other aspects of the design. The discussion included, adding a dormer in the rear of the garage side of the house; making the left end of the front porch roof a shed roof rather than a hip roof; reducing the area of clapboard between the two windows above the garage on the front side; reducing by two feet the height of the roof of the main part of the house; changing the pitches of the roofs above the left and right sides of the house, and making the front pitch 10/12, to match the main roof pitch.

Motion (McNally) to continue the waiver application to the February 12, 2018 Commission hearing (Schaufler seconded). Vote: 7 - 0 in favor.

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-11 was continued, to the February 12, 2018 Commission hearing.

5. Public Hearing – Waiver Review:
40 Beechwood Road (Application DR-2017-09)

Owner representative, Steve Petrucci, and the owner’s attorney, David Himmelberger, addressed the WHC. The applicant has submitted revised plans, including a site plan, for review.

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

WHC members had a general discussion regarding the waiver application. Minor suggestions concerning landscaping were made. There was brief general discussion about how the Planning Department’s role in reviewing modifications to an applicant’s approved plans, to determine whether the modifications are “minor” (in which case, there is no need for further WHC review) or “major” (in which case the WHC would review the application and determine whether to approve the modified plans).

Motion (McNally) to approve the waiver application and reduce the delay contingent on the applicant’s satisfaction of the conditions set forth by the Planning Department in its previously-issued recommendations, to be incorporated into a written agreement signed by the applicant. (Schauffler seconded)

Vote: 7 - 0 in favor. The Planning Department will provide the applicant with a written agreement reflecting tonight’s discussion and vote.

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

6. Public Hearing – Waiver Review:
16 Bay View Road (Application DR-2017-31)

The owner’s Manager, Mark Heavner, addressed the Commission. The applicant has submitted plans for review.

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present. Susan Hurwitz, a co-Trustee of the owner of nearby property located at 4 Bay View Road, asked for clarification of the Commission’s standards when reviewing whether a house is consistent with the current neighborhood, in cases where there are many nearby larger homes. There was discussion about assessing whether a house “fits” into the context and character of the immediately surrounding neighborhood. This determination does not require a house to be “small.”

References were made to past applications considered by the Commission, as examples of the Commission's thought process.

WHC members had a general discussion regarding the waiver application. Gleysteen made several suggestions for additional changes or considerations with respect to the revised plans. There was discussion concerning the feasibility of some of the suggested changes, or how such changes might affect other aspects of the design. The applicant expressed an opinion that the Commission's suggestions about specific design modifications were clear and easy to follow. Brown re-iterated the Commission's concern that proposed homes fit into the character of the immediate neighborhood.

Motion (McNally) to continue the waiver application to the February 12, 2018 Commission hearing (Schauffler seconded). Vote: 7 - 0 in favor.

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-31 was continued, to the February 12, 2018 Commission hearing.

7. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw :
6 Nobscott Road (Application DR-2017-35)

Owner, Yen-Chen Kuo, 6 Nobscott Road, Wellesley, MA, addressed the WHC. The owners have lived in the house since 2009. They have had yearly maintenance problems. They desire a larger home for their growing family.

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present.

Alan Sidman, 29 Leewood Road, Wellesley, has lived in the neighborhood. He stated that what was once a neighborhood of small homes has turned into an amalgam of differently-sized homes. In his opinion, the development over the years has improved the neighborhood. He supports the applicant's application.

Claudia Zarazua, Planner, Town of Wellesley Planning Department, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure not Preferably Preserved.

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. Dorin commented that the architect of the original house was well-regarded. Brown observed that the existing house fits in well with the existing neighborhood. Racette opined that the fact that a prior owner had been appointed and served for five years as the Commissioner of the Commonwealth's Racing Commission was not significant enough for the Commission's purposes. Loccisano stated that the extensive new construction in the neighborhood over the years has rendered the subject house an outlier in the neighborhood. Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, stated

that the Planning Department's consideration of an existing structure's architecture is done with a view to whether the architecture is important from an historical perspective.

Motion (McNally) to determine that the structure be deemed not Preferably Preserved.
(Gleysteen seconded)

Vote: 5 - 2 in favor.

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

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-35 was closed.

8. McNally left the meeting. Brown designated Carley as McNally's replacement as a Voting member.
9. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw:
8 Lowell Road (Application DR-2017-36)

Brown invited comments from any neighbors present.

Annette Pein, 113 Cliff Road, addressed the Commission. She stated that she was in attendance because she was curious what the owner's plans were, because they would directly affect her.

Claudia Zarazua, Planner, Town of Wellesley Planning Department, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure Preferably Preserved, due to its association with B.A. Behrend, the original owner and designer. Mr. Behrend is a notable historic figure.

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property. The original owner, B.A. Behrend, was very important to the town's history. The second owner, Ruth Hill Diggers, the Cliff Estates development is important to the town's history.

Owner, Charlene Oliver, and David Himmelberger, attorney for the owner, addressed the WHC. Attorney Himmelberger Stated that the owners bought the property in the fall of 2017 and worked with an architect to determine whether they could modify it. There is no basement. There are significant interior limitations. The ceilings on the first and second floor are low. The interior stairs are steep and narrow. The entire interior utility infrastructure needs replacement. A 1930s addition expanded the footprint by 50%. The house is not entirely visible from the road. He questioned whether the original owner was

of significant enough historical importance to the town. Mr. Himmelberger asked that the Planning Department withdraw from its report its suggestion of a possible Single House Historic District designation, likening the suggestion to a threat to be carried out in the event that the applicant does not come to an agreement with the Commission. Michael Zehner, Town of Wellesley Planning Director, reiterated the recommendation. Brown stated that the only issue before the Commission at this hearing was whether the existing structure should be deemed Preferably Preserved.

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. Brown stated that the existing home's uniqueness adds character to the neighborhood because of its distinctiveness. Other comments from Commission members included that the house was "one of a kind," "architecturally outstanding," "very unique," and contained "very studied architectural details." Being visible from the road is not a requirement in order to be deemed Preferably Preserved.

Motion (Carley) to determine that the structure be deemed Preferably Preserved due to its association with one or more persons of historic importance to the town and because of the historic importance of its architecture. (Shepsle seconded). Vote: 7 - 0 in favor:

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-36 was closed.

10. Loccisano left the meeting. Brown designated Fergusson as Loccisano's replacement as a Voting member.
11. Public Hearing – Demolition Review Bylaw:
6 Pinevale Avenue (Application DR-2017-38)

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

Claudia Zarazua, Planner, Town of Wellesley Planning Department, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure not Preferably Preserved.

The owner's attorney, Laurence Shind, addressed the WHC. The current house is less than 900 square feet in area, on an oversized lot. The immediate surrounding homes, except one, are all substantially larger than the subject house. Many are of recent construction.

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property. The house was part of the "Wellesley Manor" subdivision, which was marketed to urban owners as country farmhouses.

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. Directly across from the house are two larger houses. The neighborhood does not have a “sameness” feel. There is a mixture of homes in the surrounding neighborhood.

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

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-38 was closed.

12. Public Hearing – Waiver Review:
11 Fife Road (Application DR-2017-39)

The owners, Jan and Wayne Johnson, and the owners’ builder, Robert Ouellette, addressed the Commission.

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

Claudia Zarazua, Planner, Town of Wellesley Planning Department, provided a brief overview of the Planning Department review of the application. The Planning Department recommends that the WHC deem the structure not Preferably Preserved.

Dorin provided historical information about the subject building and property. This property was part of an 11-acre development which was developed in the 1890’s – 1950’s. So, the development never took on a uniform character.

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. Several members voiced agreement with the Planning Department’s recommendation.

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

The Public Hearing for Application DR-2017-39 was closed.

13. Municipal Light Plant: Discussion was tabled until the next Commission meeting. In the interim, Brown will meet with representatives of the Municipal Light Plant, and will explain their presentation to the Commission at the Commission’s next meeting.

14. After discussion and review of the draft minutes of the WHC meeting of December 11, 2017, it was moved by Goins, seconded by Shepsle, and passed unanimously (6 – 0), with Carley abstaining, to approve the minutes as amended of the WHC meeting of December 11, 2017, as amended.
15. House Plaque Approvals: Discussion was deferred to the next WHC meeting.
16. CPC Projects: Historic House Research: Brown received the first batch of research from the vendor, and will circulate them to Commission members for discussion at the Commission's next meeting.
17. CPC Projects: Fells Branch Library Roof: Shepsle presented to the CPC last month. The CPC will meet tomorrow and will decide whether to seek approval of allocation of CPC funds for the difference in the costs of an asphalt roof and cedar roof shingles. The Commission had further discussion about potential suitable materials for gutters and downspouts for historic character purposes.
18. Project Updates: Beebe Plaque: McNally recently obtained the current draft language for the plaque.
19. Project Updates: Historic Articles and/or Awards: There was general discussion about a possible article on the Commission's experiences, so far. Brown reported that he recently presented something similar to the Board of Selectmen. Brown asked Commission members to make suggestions for potential candidates for historic preservation awards.
20. Miscellaneous: There was general discussion about creating a document to provide some guidance to the community and potential applicants regarding what the Commission takes into account when deciding whether a house should or should not be Preferably Preserved.
21. Upcoming Meeting: February 12, 2018 at 7 p.m. in the Great Hall, Wellesley Town Hall.
22. It was moved by Brown, and seconded by Shepsle, and passed unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 11:07 p.m.