

Meeting of the Wellesley Historical Commission
11 June 2018
Great Hall, Wellesley Town Hall
Wellesley, Massachusetts

Voting Members Present: Schaufler, Goins, Brown (Chair), McNally, Lilley, Shepsle, Shlala (sitting in Gleysteen's stead by designation of the Chair)

Advisory/Alternate Members Present: Dorin (Advisory Member), Maitin (Alternate Member), Fergusson (Alternate Member), Racette (Alternate Member) and Carley (Alternate Member)

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 19:07.

Demolition Review Bylaw Preservation Determinations

2a. **DR 2018-06 120 Edmunds Road**

Mr. Michael Zehner, Planning Director, presented the planning department's report recommending that the building be preferably preserved.

Atty. Larry Shind, owner's representative, presented reasons why the owner believes that the house should not be preferably preserved from an architectural standpoint. Mr. Shind also presented reasons why he believed that Mr. Cronin, cited by the planning department as a significant historical figure and former owner/occupant of the house, was not a historically significant figure.

Brown read from the bylaw to indicate that persons of historic significance to the town, Commonwealth, or United States are relevant to the determination.

Dorin provided a short historical overview of the subdivision.

Racette asked for Mr. Lilley (Commission Member and architect) to comment on the architecture.

Lilley gave an overview of the architecture and indicated that it was a patchwork quilt of styles.

Kristin Whittaker (30 Woodcliff), a neighbor, spoke. Indicated that she believes the house is "ugly." Spoke in favor of demolition and indicated that "whoever bought this house has plans for it and should be able to [pursue them] without delay."

Dorin commented that nowhere in the bylaw is architectural purity is required and expressed concern that purity is somehow creeping in as a standard or somehow becoming significant to the analysis.

Goins indicated that he was on the fence and discussed some reasons why he could see a preservation determination issuing or not.

Shepsle talked about how building fits into the neighborhood.

Fergusson commented on proportionality, but also the status of the house. Commented on the status of the owner to have built this home, especially during the time period (during the Great Depression).

Goins moved that the building be preferably preserved; Schauffler seconded. McNally, Brown, Goins, Shepsle, Shlala, Schauffler voted yes. Lilley voted no.

2b. **DR-2018-22- 323 Oakland Street**

Mr. Zehner presented the report of the Planning Department.

Mr. Donald Hollings (owner) and Martha Castro (applicant) appeared. Mr. Hollings did not offer comment.

Ms. Castro is also a neighbor who lives next door and supports the demolition.

There was discussion of the fact that the property straddles the Needham/Wellesley line.

Mr. Dorin provided a history of the property.

Carley asked whether the property was properly before the Commission given that less than 50% of the structure was in Wellesley. The question was tabled.

Shepsle moved that the building NOT be preferably preserved; Shlala seconded. Unanimous vote that the building NOT be deemed preferably preserved.

2c. **DR-2018-27- 7 Sprague Road**

Mr. Zehner presented the report of the Planning Department recommending that the building be preferably preserved.

Attorney Himmelberger appeared on behalf of the Applicants, Ms. Anne Surmar and Mr. Edward Surmar who were with him. Mr. Himmelberger presented other examples of other area homes designed by Mr. Ramsay (architect of the home). Those examples were submitted as more historically significant homes.

Mr. Dorin provided an overview of the history of the subdivision and the role of Isaac Sprague in its development. Mr. McNanty (builder) was described as an “average” builder. Mr. Dorin challenged the Applicant’s assertion that there has been a lot of change in the neighborhood and presented information about the previous listing of the property for sale.

Atty. Himmelberger further discussed some of the listing and real estate information.

Ms. Schauffler discussed the real estate market situation vis-à-vis the subject home.

Atty. Himmelberger emphasized that this home is not significant on its own merits.

Mr. Surmar spoke on the appropriateness of talking about the real estate marketing approach and his belief that the demolition and reconstruction of the home would improve the street.

Brown commented on the other homes on the street and how the subject home fits in with the neighborhood.

Ms. Surmar commented on the history of the home and the family history with the home. She added that the home has had two separate additions already.

McNally moved that the building be preferably preserved; Brown seconded. Brown and McNally voted yes. Goins, Shepsle, Shlala, Schauffler, Lilley voted no. Motion Failed.

Shepsle moved that the building NOT be preferably preserved; Lilley seconded. Schauffler, Shlala, Shepsle, Goins and Lilley voted yes. Brown and McNally voted no. Motion Carried.

Public Hearings – Waiver Applications

3a. DR-2017-20: 8 Old Farm Road

Voted to continue the hearing at the WHC’s subsequent July 9 meeting pending further actions of the Planning Board on or about July 2018 and the Design Review Board perhaps sooner than that.

Motion to continue by McNally, Seconded Goins. Unanimous in favor.

3b. DR-2018-05: 7 Priscilla Road

Attorney Himmelberger appeared on behalf of and with the Applicant/Owners Maria Anna and Joseph Fanning. Owner’s architect Dustin Nolin appeared.

Architect gave an overview of the proposed home and discussed the parameters and sensitivities applied with respect to massing and the neighboring properties.

There was a discussion of the placement of and other details concerning the stonework on the new home.

The Commission members seem rather impressed with the efforts of the Applicant/Owners and their team on creating plans for a new home that would fit into the historic neighborhood in which it will lie, and several members commended the Applicant/Owners for their effort.

Lilley moved to approve on basis of the presented plans and the conditions in the staff report (read into the record by the Planning Director. Seconded McNally. Unanimous in favor.

Maitin designated in Gleysteen’s stead after Shlala had to depart.

4. Minutes:

Motion to approve Schauffler, Maitin seconded. Unanimous in favor.

5. **Town Hall Visioning and Space Utilization Study**

Consultant Wendall Kalsow appeared to explain the initiative. The plan will have to go before the Architectural Access Board because the renovation will cost more than 30% of the assessed value of the Town Hall.

Carley commented that the area shown for an addition is really the only area that would not destroy the view and perception of the existing historic building from most sides.

Brown commented that Town Hall is the town's most historic building. Advocated either for exact style reproduction or something so new and modern that it is clearly different and will stand out as a later renovation.

Lilley commented that this discussion – how to renovate iconic buildings – happens all of the time. Lilley's perspective was that were an addition to be considered, that it would be something highly contrasting.

Fergusson asked about the "recycling of buildings," i.e., uses of spaces are changing. He gave the elimination of books from libraries and the space it liberates as an example.

Carley pointed out that the HPDR bylaw does not cover the Town Hall.

Dorin stated his belief that this is a poor idea and should be stopped before it goes too far down the line. Expressed significant concerns that an addition would not be done well because it would be too expensive to do well.

Brown summarized the comments and indicated that he would draft a letter to the Selectmen and circulate it from comment to the other members of the Commission.

6. **House Plaque Approvals/Research Contract**

No subcommittee to be formed. Brown gave an overview of the outstanding plaques and other aspects of the plaque program.

Consideration of eligible properties for which the research has been completed:

12 Appleby Road, 15 Bird Hill, 14 Cottage St., 5 Crown Ridge Road, 24 Livermore Road, 9 Oakland Street, 39 River Ridge, and 38 Windsor Road.

Lilley moved to approve issuance of plaques to the above-identified properties, McNally seconded. Unanimous vote in favor.

Discussion followed about moving forward on other backlogged requests.

Discussion concerning research. Consultant has provided 8 samples. Deficiencies were discussed.

Motion to cancel the contract with the researcher made by Schauffler, Goins seconded. Unanimous vote in favor.

7. **Update – Fells Library Roof**

Gleysteen working directly with FMD on downspout issues.

8a. **8 Lowell Rd**: working to set up a meeting with the owners in an effort to preserve the house.

8b. **Beebe Plaque**: report coming next month.

8c. **Historical Articles/Awards** – Four certificates signed tonight and will be distributed. Brown to reach out to media outlets to try and coordinate the presentation with them.

8d. **Planning Department Update** – Brown met with Planning staff. Discussed revenue collected vs. hours expended by planning staff. Planning working on putting this information together. Also seeking metrics of demolitions, renovations, etc.

A brief discussion of the Draft Commission Retreat Agenda occurred.

9. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Maltin, seconded Shepsle. Unanimous in favor.