

**Meeting of the
Wellesley Historical Commission
11 February 2019 19:00
Great Hall, Wellesley Town Hall | Wellesley, Massachusetts**

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order 19:05. No member of the public asked to speak on topics not included in the Agenda.

Members Present: Shepsle, Lilley, McNally, Brown, Schaufler, Shlala (sitting for Gleysteen by designation of the Chair), Greco, and Fergusson (sitting for Goins by designation of the Chair);

Alternate Members Present: Racette

Also present: Joshua Dorin

2a. DR-2018-60: 84 Whittier Road:

David Himmelberger, Esq., appeared on behalf of the applicant, along with the applicant's builder, David Silverstein of Copperleaf Development, and Dustin Nolin, of Dustin Nolin Architects. Nolin presented the proposed design, stating that he attempted to capture some of the charm of the existing home, as reflected in things such as a steeply pitched gable facing the street, dormers. The height of the proposed home is approximately 2 feet higher than that of the existing structure, and is within approximately 1 to 2 feet of the height of either of the homes home of the immediate left and right abutters. Silverstein stated that no serious consideration has been given to renovation or expansion of the existing structure, given the reported determination that such efforts would not yield the intended profit the applicant seeks.

Lilley expressed a concern that the Commission not base its demo delay decisions on economics, because then the mission of the Commission would be lost. The goal of the Commission in this process should not be that we are simply accepting the tear downs of historic homes if they are replaced with nice-looking houses. Perhaps the applicant's model or idea of economic feasibility is not the right model for that particular house.

There was extensive discussion among the members of the Commission and the applicant's attorney, architect and builder, about the detailing of the proposed new home. Brown and Lilley expressed the observation that the existing home was one of the finest the Commission has seen, and that this application presents somewhat of a conundrum. While acknowledging the care and effort that the applicant has made to propose a thoughtful, interesting and aesthetically pleasing new home, concern was raised amongst many Commission members about losing the focus and goal of the bylaw and the Commission., should this application be approved. There was extensive discussion about the interpretation and intent of the bylaw. Lilley opined that part of the town and a neighborhood's history is lost when an existing home is totally replaced. These are subtle losses, which affect the town.

After further discussion, the applicant requested that its application be continued to the next hearing. McNally moved that the application be continued to the Commission's next hearing, of March 11, 2019. Shlala seconded it. The Commission unanimously approved that motion.

2b. DR-2018-46: 8 Riverdale Road:

Shepsle moved to continue the application to the next meeting. McNally seconded it. The Commission unanimously approved that motion.

3. Approval of Minutes. Discussion was open, but no Commission member had any suggested changes to the draft minutes. McNally moved to approve the minutes as presented. Fergusson seconded. The Commission unanimously voted to approve the previously circulated draft minutes of the last meeting.

4. House Plaque Approvals/House Plaque Research Contracts. Dorin provided an update. There are no new plaque applications to approve.

5. Project Updates. The Commission discussed the issue of standards to apply when reviewing waiver applications. There was general agreement that the Commission should generally not consider the costs of interior renovations, because this is a very subjective topic. Brown pointed out that most towns do not even have a waiver process, but Wellesley included one. By way of example, Milton just extended the delay under its bylaw to two years.

5. Project Updates.

HHU – Josh stated that the HHU process before the School Building Committee (SBC) is moving quickly, and it is not clear exactly how the current proposals of two potential renovation scenarios and two potential new building scenarios, will be whittled down, and exactly when. The sense is that the time is coming within a few months. SBC had done a feasibility study, and the consultants have stated that preserving the 1938 portion is feasible. The Commission should express its strong point of view to the SBC. There was discussion about drafting a letter to the SBC on behalf of the Commission at the appropriate time. There was also discussion that as many members of the Commission as are available should plan to attend an upcoming meeting with the SBC, to convey our position, collectively, as a board. Brown will contact the SBC to discuss the appropriate timing.

Beebe Plaque. McNally gave an update. He has some current samples and is waiting for other samples. We are not ready to present our proposal to the owner.

Historical Awards There was a conversation about "renovation" and "preservation," and what those terms mean.

Misc. Brown spoke with a town resident last week who had recently been before the Advisory Committee and the board of selectmen, with a proposal that Wellesley have a street and a square named after Sylvia Plath. She also suggested to the Commission, through Brown, that the Commission put a plaque on the Sylvia Plath house, which is at some point in a process of

being sold in the near future. There was some discussion amongst the Commission members of doing the same with other old historic homes of historic value to the town. This led to further discussion about implementing that "virtually" rather than by suggesting to local homeowners that a plaque be placed on their property.

6. **New Business**. Shepsle gave an update on the efforts to create an historic district in the Belvedere Estates area.

7. **Adjourned**. The meeting was adjourned at 21:04 p.m.