

MINUTES OF WELLESLEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING OF February 15, 2017.

Present: member Arvid von Taube, Chair; Lawrence McNally, Vice Chairman; Board Members: Peter Fergusson, Helen Robertson, Rise Shepsle; Alternates: Emily Maitin, Joel Slocum, Robert Carley, Michael Racette; Advisory member: Joshua Dorin

1. Von Taube called the meeting to order at 7:04 in the Great Hall, Wellesley Town Hall. Given the absence of two full members, von Taube designated Maitin and Racette in place of the vacant membership positions.
2. Minutes: It was moved by Robertson, seconded by Maitin, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes as amended of the WHC meeting of January 10, 2017.
3. Public Hearing on Demolition Review Bylaw: Von Taube announced the opening of the Public Hearing. A video recording was being made. The bylaw is a culmination of a two-year process and had been endorsed by the Planning Board, the Historic District Commission and the Natural Resources Commission with strong support (but not a formal endorsement) from Sustainable Wellesley. Last week the bylaw subcommittee met with Advisory and responded to questions from the Selectmen.

1<sup>st</sup> speaker: Jonathan Moll, Counsel for Babson College, representing Babson College and Wellesley College. He emphasized that both colleges were preservation oriented, planned their construction in advance and therefore did not need to be part of the demolition review process. The only buildings that should be reviewed were the single-family residences. He suggested using each institution's master plan as a basis for review rather than review each project. Ferguson inquired about Babson's process for identifying historically significant buildings. Moll explained the process.

2<sup>nd</sup> speaker: Steven Bocamaso, resident, 272 Oakland Street. He expressed concern that the Demolition Review Bylaw would limit the amount of money for which he could sell his home. He had spent significant funds in renovating his home. Younger families desire the amenities of new homes. For many their house is their largest asset. He asked why 1949 was chosen as the cut-off date. Von Taube noted that in other communities the bylaw did not impact the sale price or range of buyers. He said that the cohesiveness of Wellesley was still apparent to the late 1940s. Carley explained that not all homes built before 1950 would be considered preferably preserved.

3<sup>rd</sup> speaker: Janet King, resident, Upland Road. She asked what happened to house materials after demolition. Many of the materials were toxic. Can a house be detoxed before the demolition process begins? Von Taube noted that Portland Oregon has a law that the house needs to be taken down piece by piece. In Wellesley environmental groups are supporting the proposed bylaw. Carley suggested presenting the issue to the Natural Resource Commission.

It was moved by Fergusson, seconded by Robertson, and passed unanimously to close the public hearing at 8:10 p.m.

4. Demolition Delay Processing fee for houses built after 1980: It was moved by Ferguson, seconded by Robertson and passed unanimously that there will be no fee charged to houses built from 1980 to the present.

5. Citizen Speak: None
6. House Plaque Approvals: Dorin provided copies of research profiles for 1 property: 17 Leighton Road. After discussion it was moved by Robertson, seconded by Fergusson, and passed unanimously to authorize Dorin to send WHC plaque application materials to the homeowner of the residence.
7. House Plaque Research Contract: Dorin submitted research for the WHC plaque program totaling 38 properties and an invoice for \$3,800. Dorin noted that 650 properties have been uploaded to the database. Carley commented that several individuals had commented on WHC's well-designed website. Von Taube is the WHC's webmaster.
8. State Historic Register Listing for 323 Washington Street: Wellesley Historical Society has purchased the building. Von Taube explained that Kathleen Fahey, Curator, Wellesley Historical Society, has asked about placing the building on the State Historic Registry. The purpose is to allow the Society to apply for state grants. Dorin noted that the Wellesley Historical Commission should be part of the process. The house was built in 1916 for Doctor Frederic Stanwood and had been in that family for decades. The Wellesley Historical Society bought it December 31, 2012. Von Taube will be in touch with Fahey. Fergusson suggested that we present the Historical Society with a house plaque. Members enthusiastically supported the idea and Von Taube took it under advisement until the next meeting.
9. Proposed creation of Single Building Historic Districts for 108 Abbott Road and 167 Benvenue Street, Wellesley. Having spoken to the owners of these properties, Robertson said they were interested in taking the next step. Dorin will prepare a letter for the owners to sign giving the Historic District Committee permission to proceed. Catherine Johnson, liaison, Planning Board, explained that the Historic District Committee asks WHC to appoint a Study Committee to evaluate the worthiness of the two buildings. WHC appoints three members to the Study Committee and the Planning Board appoints one member. The WHC and the Planning Board bring a joint article to Town Meeting.
10. Norfolk County Registry of Deeds/Famous Residents Blurbs: Von Taub requested that any member who would like to write a blurb for the Registry should let him know.
11. Wellesley Wonderful Weekend: Scheduled Saturday and Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Dorin reviewed WHC's participation last year: Fergusson gave a tour of Wellesley College, open houses were held at both library branches, Town Hall, and substations; a table with WHC information was located on Hunnewell field, and assistance with parade participation. Suggestions for this year: information table on the lawn of the Wellesley Historical Society, creation of a float, buttons resembling historical house plaques, and open houses at historical buildings. Dorin is WHC liaison.
12. Researching Historic Homes: Wellesley Historical Society and the Wellesley Historical Commission, in partnership with the Wellesley Free Library will be hosting a lecture on how to research historic homes. Von Taube and Kathleen Fahey, Curator of the Wellesley Historical Society, will be presenting on Tuesday, February 28 at 7:00 p.m., Wakelin Room, Wellesley Free Library.

13. Wellesley Hills Railroad Station: Von Taube submitted the application for the sign permit to the Building Department. He will inquire about the status.it i
14. Beebe Plaque: No update.
15. Hardy, Hunnewell & Upham Committee: Dorin reported that the Master Planning Committee will make a recommendation to the School Committee in March. There may be a Special Town Meeting to approve feasibility funds. There may not be enough space for a field and parking if it is decided to demolish all but the original section of Hardy and build a new school behind the original. WHC would speak to the designer if the plan is to tear down the original section. Dorin will update the Committee after the next meeting which is February 16. Von Taube noted that HHU would be the main item on the WHC agenda for the March meeting.
16. It was moved by Robertson , **seconded** by Ferguson, and **passed unanimously** to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rise Shepsle