

**Meeting of the
Wellesley Historical Commission
14 January 19:00
Great Hall, Wellesley Town Hall | Wellesley, Massachusetts**

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at approximately 19:04.

Members Present: Brown, Shlala, Lilley, McNally, Schauffler, Shepsle and Racette (sitting for Greco by designation of the Chair).

Alternate Members Present: Carley, Maitin, Charney

Advisory Member Present: Dorin

2. Citizen Speak

No speakers

3. Public Hearings on Applications for Demolition

3a. DR-2019-68: 9 Wilson Street

Attorney David Himmelberger appeared on behalf of the Owners of record, one of whom, Ms. Anne Carter, appeared with him.

Attorney Himmelberger provided an overview of why the Applicant believes the building should not be deemed preferably preserved.

Ms. Dana Marks, Planner from the Wellesley Planning Department, provided the report of the Planning Department, which recommended that the building be preferably preserved.

Mr. Dorin provided an overview of the original subdivision of which the building was part. He noted it was the first large-scale modern type subdivision in town. He noted the building construction date of 1854, and that the structure was built by the original subdivision proprietor, Daniel Ayer.

Atty. Himmelberger made some additional comments about age not being dispositive of a preferably preserved determination, and also provided, as a matter of historical interest, a copy of the original subdivision plan.

Mr. Racette made some comments in support of a preferably preserved determination.

Mr. McNally also made some comments in support of same.

Ms. Carter offered some comments about her experience growing up in the house.

Mr. Lilley asked whether the house has been put on the market in an effort to preserve it. Ms. Carter indicated that it had not, as she and her husband intend to move into the property, which is not well-suited to age in. She indicated that their preference would be to retain the house while making modifications, yet no specific plans are yet in place.

Mr. Charney asked about the dormer that appears on the home and its origin. Attorney Himmelberger did not have any information on that.

In response to some questions from the Commission, Atty. Himmelberger provided a primer on some aspects of special permits and variances.

McNally moved that the building preferably preserved. Racette Seconded. Unanimous in favor. Delay was imposed.

3b. DR-2019-69: 65 High Ledge Avenue

Mr. Himmelberger appeared on behalf of the record owner of the building. He offered comments on why the Applicant believes that the home should not be deemed preferably preserved.

Ms. Marks gave the report of the Planning Department, which recommended that the building NOT be preferably preserved.

Mr. Dorin provided some additional commentary about the bungalow/camp nature of the original homes in the neighborhood.

Ms. Shepsle offered comments tending to support the recommendation of the Planning Department.

Dr. Shlala offered comments also tending to support the recommendation of the Planning Department.

McNally moved that the building NOT be preferably preserved. Seconded Schaufler. Unanimous in favor. No delay imposed.

3c. DR-2019-70: 31 Elm Street

Applicants Ms. Adriane Shilmover and Mr. Fred Shilmover appeared.

Ms. Marks offered the report of the Planning Department, which recommended that the property be deemed preferably preserved.

Mr. Dorin provided some additional information concerning the subdivision, and that this particular home was built at the same time that the Hills Village really came into its own. There was significant commentary about the prior persons who lived in the home and their importance to the Town (with particular attention to the McLeod and Graves families). He also offered some commentary on the architecture of the home, and in particular, the "stick style", which is quite rare in present day Wellesley.

A member of the audience, who did not identify herself, indicated that there was another similar structure immediately next door, which was torn down and replaced by contemporary center-entrance home.

Mr. Jim Bosland, who lives at 10 Elm St., indicated that the home has been essentially abandoned for five years, and that while he would be sad to see the home go, he understands that it might have to be demolished.

Ms. Lucienne Davidson also appeared and echoed the remarks that the home was essentially abandoned and not maintained for the past few years.

Jan Gleysteen, a neighbor, also appeared and indicated that he had unsuccessfully tried to preserve this property and even conducted a feasibility study. He recommended that the home be preferably preserved.

Ms. Jackie Hempel, who is a neighbor appeared and spoke in support of a preservation determination.

Mr. Gregg Myles Levin of 26 Elm St. also appeared and indicated that the house appears to be abandoned and that the home is in very poor shape.

Mr. Shilmover recounted their reasons for buying the home and indicated that they have offered to “donate” the structure (i.e., allowing someone to pick up and relocate the structure). He also indicated that the home is uninhabitable, as none of the building systems are functional. He indicated that very little of the home is actually susceptible to preservation because of its condition. He provided a petition signed by many people in the neighborhood in support of their application to demolish, and spent some time talking about their future plans for the site.

Mr. Charney provided some comments concerning his experience of renovating houses like this. His comments tended to indicate that many of things that the Applicants indicated they needed to fix were quite typical for renovations of historic homes.

Mr. Dorin added some commentary about the architectural and historic value of the home, the possibility of preserving portions of the house (or integrating those portions into any new structure) but recognized that a renovation of the home would be costly.

Owners have indicated that they are willing to donate any aspects of the house if no one takes the whole structure.

Dr. Shlala offered comments that the making of a preservation determination would allow the Commission to start a conversation about what preservation means in the context of this home.

Chairman Brown echoed Dr. Shlala’s comments.

McNally moved that the building be preferably preserved. Seconded Shepsle. Unanimous in favor. Delay was imposed.

4. Waiver Hearings

4a. DR-2019-28: 11 Woodland Road (Continued)

Mr. McNally moved to continue the hearing to the February 10, 2020 meeting of the Commission. Seconded Shlala. Unanimous in favor.

Ms. Strawbridge appeared and indicated that the applicants are often not presenting plans until the last moment and that the hearings are proceeding. She indicated that this is not convenient or fair in her view.

A discussion followed about the logistics of when information is provided to the Commission and how that ties into the noticing and other aspects of the public hearing. There was a discussion of implementing a deadline for submittal of materials.

5. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 18, 2019 meeting were considered. Minor changes were made.

McNally moved to accept the November 18, 2019 minutes as edited; Shepsle seconded. Unanimous in favor.

The minutes of the December 16, 2019 meeting were also considered. Minor changes were made.

McNally moved to accept the December 16, 2019 minutes as edited; Schauffler seconded. Unanimous in favor.

6. Discussion of Planning Board Request for Community Preservation Committee Funds to Restore Town Atlases

Dr. Shlala asked whether the atlases were digitized. Ms. Johnson indicated that the 1897 Atlas has been, but the 1935 has not been because it is in such rough condition.

Ms. Maitin asked whether the digitization would be pursued prior to the rebinding. There was additional discussion.

Shlala moved to support the Planning Board's application for Community Preservation Committee Funds to Restore the 1897 and 1935 Town Atlases; seconded Schauffler. Unanimous in favor.

7. Project Updates

7a. Beebe Plaque project. Mr. McNally indicated that he has been in electronic communication with the current property managers about mounting the plaque in a particular location and manner.

7b. Historic Awards Article. Dr. Shlala working on this.

7c. Virtual Plaque. No update.

8. New Plaque Request - 12 Upland Road

Dorin provided an overview of the attributes of the home.

McNally moved to approve the issuance of a Historical Commission plaque for 12 Upland Road. Shepsle seconded. Unanimous in favor.

9. New Business

Chairman Brown raised the issue of making a list of documents for Applicants to bring w/r/t other town processes through which their projects might be moving.

Dorin raised the issue of promulgating rules and regulations with respect to the Historical Commission's procedures.

Brown reminded folks of the two open positions on the Commission.

There was a discussion of a successor Chairperson to Mr. Brown.

Ms. Maitin asked about the status of the CPC funds previously granted for the research on the Village Centers. A discussion ensued about the status of the project.

There was unanimous agreement that the WHC should participate in the 2020 Wellesley Wonderful Weekend parade.

10. Adjourn

Chairman Brown adjourned the meeting at 9:20.