

**WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
CALLED MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING  
FEBRUARY 4, 2020, 6:45 PM  
GREAT HALL – WELLESLEY TOWN HALL**

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**Members Present:** David Smith, Chair; Eric Cohen; Emily Maitin; Thomas Paine. **Absent:** Lisa Abeles, Vice-Chair; Edwina McCarthy.

**Staff:** Dana Marks, Planner.

**Others Present:** Beth DeSombre (32 Weston Road).

**Call to Order:** David Smith called the meeting to order at 6:45pm.

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**Executive Session.** Mr. Paine made a motion: Pursuant to: M.G.L. ch.30A, § 21(a)(1) – To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual. Specifically: Open Meeting Law Complaint filed by Peter Litman regarding actions taken by the Commission that relate to the proposed Belvedere Estates historic district. Discussion with Town Counsel Tom Harrington and vote regarding response. The HDC intended to return to the Open Meeting after Executive Session. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was conducted: Mr. Smith voted “aye;” Mr. Cohen voted “aye;” Ms. Maitin voted “aye;” and Mr. Paine voted “aye.” With the motion receiving a 4-0 vote, the Commission moved into Executive Session.

Mr. Smith made a motion to end the Executive Session and re-open the Public Meeting. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was conducted: Mr. Smith voted “aye;” Mr. Cohen voted “aye;” Ms. Maitin voted “aye;” and Mr. Paine voted “aye.” With the motion receiving a 4-0 vote, the HDC approved the motion to end the Executive Session and return to the Open Meeting.

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**Public Hearing: HDC 20-01 – 32 Weston Road – Certificate of Appropriateness.** Mr. Smith opened the Public Hearing for HDC 20-01 – 32 Weston Road regarding a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Applicant, Ms. DeSombre, was present to discuss her application.

*All documents from the Commission meeting are on file in the Planning Department.*

Ms. DeSombre’s application included the following elements:

- Replace the front door
- Replace six windows visible from the public view
- Uncover and replace two windows that are currently covered and visible from the public view
- Add a portico to the front entrance of the house

The HDC invited Ms. DeSombre to explain her application. Starting with the door, Ms. DeSombre noted that the HDC had previously granted a Certificate of Appropriateness for a replacement door, and this new

proposed door is an even closer match to the existing door with the same design, and will be made entirely of wood. The proposed exterior changes are part of a larger interior renovation, which is outside of the HDC's purview. As part of this project, Ms. DeSombre explained that they wish to update some of the windows that will be affected by the interior updates. Six windows that can be seen from the front will be replaced with exactly the same model and frames made of wood. There are two windows on the west side of the house that are covered with slats on the outside. As part of the remodel, Ms. DeSombre intends to open them up to be functioning windows that match the existing window adjacent to them. Ms. DeSombre also explained that they wish to add a portico to the front of the house. 32 Weston Road is currently the only house within the general vicinity that does not have a portico. Working with their architect, they are working to design a portico that would be historically accurate and be in keeping with the rest of the neighborhood.

Mr. Smith noted that the photo of the existing door and the photo of the proposed door look identical. Ms. Maitin asked about the color of the finished door. Ms. DeSombre replied that no particular decision has been made. Paint and/or finish colors are not under the purview of the HDC. Mr. Cohen asked about the condition of the existing door and door frame, to which Ms. DeSombre replied that it is severely damaged. Mr. Cohen further asked if it was possible to fix the frame and door jamb to fit the existing door instead of replacing the door. Ms. DeSombre's intention was to have a new door and door jamb designed and built at the same time in order to be more weather-tight. Mr. Cohen did not believe that they needed to be constructed at the same time, as long as one was designed to fit the other (i.e., reframing the door jamb to fit the existing door). Mr. Paine commented that the existing and proposed doors look so similar that they would look identical from the street.

Mr. Smith asked Ms. DeSombre to identify the six windows that will be replaced. Within the drawings submitted with the application, all of the windows labeled "NEW" will be replaced (which includes the two proposed to be uncovered on the west side of the house). There are several types of windows present on the house with various sash configurations. Ms. DeSombre is proposing to replace the different windows with what already are there; the sash configurations would remain the same. The existing windows are from various eras, and are made of wood. The proposed new windows will also be made of wood.

Spec drawings by the manufacturer (Marvin) were provided in the application materials. Mr. Cohen asked to clarify that these were not just replacement windows, and that the frame would be replaced as well. Ms. DeSombre confirmed that was correct. Ms. Maitin asked whether the muntins would remain in place or if they could snap off. Members of the Commission wanted clarification whether the windows were true divided lights with multiple panes of glass or one large pane of glass. Ms. Marks directed the HDC to the spec sheet that included a cut-through drawing of the glass and muntin, and explained that these proposed windows were a simulated divided light.

The two covered windows that Ms. DeSombre is proposing to uncover and replace are located on the second story of the west elevation. The design proposal includes replacing these windows to match the other second-story window adjacent to them to have three identical windows with 8-over-8 sash configurations. A discussion about the evolution of the house and window and door configurations ensued.

Mr. Cohen circled back to the windows, explaining the difference between true divided lights and simulated divided lights. Mr. Smith recalled that the HDC has approved Marvin windows before, however it was unclear whether they were true divided lights or simulated divided lights. Mr. Smith added that the view from the street would be quite similar regardless of which type of window was installed.

A discussion then followed regarding the proposed portico constructed entirely of wood with a slightly pitched asphalt shingle roof. The proposed design includes recessed panels on either side of the door. Mr. Smith commented that the side panels “dress up” the design and add prominence to the front of the house. Ms. Maitin commented that the design was not in keeping with the rest of the house, and Mr. Paine agreed. Mr. Smith and the HDC asked how the wood gutter would be connected to downspouts. Mr. Smith postulated that the downspouts could be within the columns. Ms. DeSombre stated that she could consult with her architect. There was disagreement among the HDC members regarding the recessed panel elements of the design. Ms. DeSombre asked and clarified that if the panels were no longer part of the design, the existing aluminum siding would continue underneath the portico.

Mr. Smith suggested taking action on the elements of the proposal that the HDC was in agreement on, namely the windows and door replacement, and then ask for a continuance with the permission of Ms. DeSombre to revisit the portico design at a later date.

Mr. Smith then asked about the proposed stoop, which is currently crumbling concrete and would be replaced with brick. The HDC was unclear about the configuration of the brick stoop; the drawing has a small lip on top of the brick stoop, and the materiality of that lip was not indicated on the drawing. HDC members were curious what material would be on top of the brick stoop drawn as the two thin lines on top of the stoop landing.

Mr. Smith requested that the applicant’s architect provide specification about what would be on top of the landing of the brick stoop, a design option without the proposed panels, and further explanation about the drainage from the wood gutters; and the materials of the stoop, landing, and downspouts. Mr. Smith reiterated that they could make a motion to approve the elements of the proposed project that the HDC is comfortable with, and revisit the portico with further explanations from the architect. Ms. DeSombre asked if that could be continued to the next meeting or if that requires a whole new application. Ms. Marks answered that it would not require a new application. Ms. DeSombre would need to request that portion of the application be continued to the next HDC meeting, and send Ms. Marks an email to confirm that request, which is scheduled for March 10, 2020. Ms. Marks added that this would be the process as long as Ms. DeSombre is okay with the application being continued to the next meeting. Ms. DeSombre confirmed she would be okay with this, and then asked when Ms. Marks would need supplemental materials submitted to the HDC for review. Ms. Marks answered that Ms. DeSombre should submit revised plans one week before the next meeting.

Mr. Smith made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of the front door with the proposed wood door that is nearly identical, replace the six windows visible from the public view with the Marvin windows as specified, replace and uncover the two windows that are currently covered by slats with the Marvin windows as specified. Mr. Paine seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-1, with Mr. Cohen having the one dissenting vote.

Mr. Smith then made a motion to continue the discussion on the proposed portico on the front of the house with the agreement of the Applicant to the next HDC meeting on March 10, 2020, where the Applicant will provide more detail from their architect concerning the downspout, materials on the front, and a re-drawn design without the side panels. Ms. DeSombre agreed to a continuance. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed 4-0.

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**Public Hearing: HDC 19-10 – 20 Cottage Street – Certificate of Appropriateness.** The Applicant was not present for the Public Hearing regarding their application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a wrought iron railing to a set of exterior granite steps from the side of the house leading to the driveway.

*All documents from the Commission meeting are on file in the Planning Department.*

Ms. Marks summarized the application. The full scope of the project includes two sets of steps to each have a wrought iron railing installed. One set of steps is in the rear of the house and not visible from the public view, therefore not subject to the HDC's review. The application materials included images of each set of steps where the applicant has proposed to install a railing, a project narrative written by the applicant which indicates the manufacturer of the railings, an image of a design of the proposed railing, and images of other houses along Cottage Street that have wrought iron railings on exterior steps. The HDC discussed design details and the amount of vertical elements or balusters to be included in the proposed railing at 20 Cottage Street.

Mr. Cohen made a motion to approve a design identical in rail shape and baluster design, attached directly to the steps at no more than one every other step, as shown in the example with the curved rail and the bluestone steps (The example image indicated in this motion was provided as part of the application, and was not an image of an existing house along Cottage Street). Mr. Paine seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed 4-0.

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**New Business: HDC Vacancy.** Mr. Smith brought up the news that Amy Griffin resigned, leaving a vacancy on the Historic District Commission. Ms. Griffin was also acting as the Chair of the Belvedere Estates Historic District Study Committee, therefore also leaving that position vacant. Mr. Smith encouraged the current remaining HDC members to have someone step in to fill the Study Committee Chair role, as well as the need to find a new member for the HDC.

Ms. Marks provided a draft of the vacancy announcement to the HDC for review, and after their approval of the draft, she would circulate it where appropriate to advertise interested persons to apply. Ms. Marks further explained the application and appointment process for a new member to join the HDC. After the HDC reviews applications, appointment is made through the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Smith expressed their support of the announcement in its current form.

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**Approval of Minutes.** Mr. Smith asked the Commission members if they had a chance to review the past minutes from December 3, 2019 and January 7, 2020. The January meeting did not attain a quorum. On the minutes from December 3, 2019, Ms. Maitin suggested adding further clarification regarding dollar amounts and number of Form B's to the discussion under "Citizen Speak." Ms. Maitin made a motion to

approve the minutes from December 3, 2019 as revised. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed 4-0.

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**New Business: wellesley.ma.gov email addresses.** Due to time constraints, this Agenda item was not discussed.

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**New Business: Historic Preservation Design Guidelines draft review meeting scheduled.** This meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at 6:45pm in the Recreation Department, Room 008 of the Warren Building (90 Washington Street).

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**New Business: March meeting rescheduled.** The regular March meeting of the HDC has been rescheduled to Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 6:45pm in the Great Hall. It was originally scheduled for Tuesday, March 3, 2020.

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**Citizen Speak.** No one was present for Citizen Speak.

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**Adjourn.** Mr. Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:20pm.

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**Next Meeting:** March 10, 2020

**Minutes Approved:** April 7, 2020

**Minutes Compiled by:** Dana Marks, Planner