

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

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at approximately 19:00.

Members Present: Brown, McNally, Schauffler, Lilley, Goins, Greco (sitting for Shepsle by designation of the Chair); Loccisano (sitting as a voting member by designation of the Chair)

Alternate Members Present: Carley, Maitin, Shlala, Racette

Advisory Member: Dorin

2. Public Hearings – Preservation Determination

2a. DR-2019-08 – 10 Rice St.

McNally moved to continue the hearing until 10 June 2019; Goins seconded, unanimous in favor.

2b. DR-2019-10: 35 Clifford St.

Mr. Panak delivered the report and recommendation of the planning department that the building be preferably preserved.

Melissa Arronte, former owner of the subject building, spoke on her family's history in the home and the significant historically sensitive renovations that her family made to the home, including only a 7-year-old kitchen and a 13-year-old addition. She made particular mention of retaining the flooring in the home, as it still bears the indentations from the shoes of persons who used to visit from the nearby Reliance Club to dance after hours. She has submitted a letter to the Commission.

Joe Indresano (51 Smith) appeared. He commented on the goings on at the old Reliance Club, opining that they would not be acceptable today, and as such, he was not sure why anyone would give the building's proximity to the former location of the club any credence.

Mr. James Tau, Owner, appeared and spoke. He noted that when he bought the home, he did not intend to demolish the home. After purchasing the home, he realized that all of the things that wanted to change (floors, ceiling heights, etc.) would be more costly than a complete demolition and rebuild. Believes there is no architectural significance to the building.

Mr. Dorin spoke. The house was formerly on the corner of State and Washington. The home was constructed as vernacular architecture in the 1860s. The home was relocated to its present location later to the heart of what was once one of Wellesley's Italian immigrant community of the early 20th Century. He indicated that there are a small number of houses left in town that pre-date the founding of the town in the 1880s and this is one of them.

Racette asked questions about the prior owner's stated plans, and the Owner's change of feeling about the home with respect to the need for improvement.

Mr. Brown spoke on the age of the home and it fitting into that section of the neighborhood.

Goins added similar comments.

McNally indicated that the age of the home in and of itself is a significant factor.

Lilley noted that a house this old but in such good condition is unusual.

Goins moved that the building be preferably preserved; seconded Schauffler. Unanimous in favor.

2c. DR2019-11: 40 Old Farm Road

Mr. Panak delivered the report and recommendation of the Planning Department.

Ms. Suzanne Pasko (neighbor) spoke on environmental concerns about the proposed demolition (e.g., removal of trees and damage of wetlands from blasting).

Mr. Shind spoke on the reasons that he believed the home should not be preferably preserved.

Mr. Sheth spoke on his family's reasons for selecting the house and the reasons for wanting to demolish the home.

Mr. Chris Pasko challenged the assertion that many of the houses on Old Farm had been torn down and replaced with new construction.

Ms. Cynthia Strauss (36 Old Farm) spoke on the historically sensitive renovation that they conducted at the house. She also took issue with the perceived assertion that the construction in the neighborhood has eviscerated any historic significance of the neighborhood.

Mr. Paul Zai (6 Ravine) appeared and spoke as a direct abutter. Indicated that he reached out to the new owners and has been happy with their responsiveness. He is happy that the environmental issues are being taken into consideration. Indicated that his family took significant measures to preserve their home. Opined that many of the large new homes are changing the character of the neighborhood.

Mr. Dorin spoke on the history of the neighborhood.

Goins moved that the building be preferably preserved, seconded Greco. Unanimous vote in favor.

2d. DR-2019-24: 98 Brook St.

Mr. Panak presented the report and recommendation of the Planning Department.

Liz Grover Harrington read her letter to the Planning Board. She is a direct abutter to the property. She expressed her belief that the home should be preferably preserved and expressed concern about ongoing diminishment of the historical integrity of the neighborhood and its natural surroundings.

Dorin spoke on the history of the neighborhood. He noted that the oldest home in Wellesley is at the corner of Brook and Benvenue St.

Mr. Greco offered some general observations on the propensity for teardowns in Wellesley.

It was noted that the house was under contract and had recently sold. The seller had applied for the demolition permit, but the new buyers were not present at the meeting. There was some uncertainty as to the status of the home's ownership and applicant status. As the new buyer, or current homeowner, was not present, there was discussion about continuing the hearing. Ms. Shlala suggested that the hearing be continued as a courtesy to the owner.

McNally moved that hearing be continued to June 10, 2019; Lilley seconded. Unanimous vote in favor.

[Note, subsequent to May 15 hearing, the demolition permit was withdrawn by current owner.]

2e. DR-2019-25: 52 Valley Road

Attorney Himmelberger appeared on behalf of the Applicant.

Mr. Panak delivered the report and recommendation of the Planning Board.

Mr. Bill Bramen appeared. He is a neighbor abutting the subject property, and also 87 Hundreds Rd. (*next hearing*). Indicated that both houses are under common ownership at the time of the hearing. He spoke to the significance of the architects involved in the design and to the current extremely good condition of each house.

Peter Marx (60 Valley Rd.) lives adjacent to the properties. Spoke to the need to consider the subject property together with 87 Hundreds Rd.

Mr. Patrick Ahearn spoke. He lives on Hundreds Road. He is an architect who works in town and in this neighborhood. He spoke to the character of the Farms neighborhood and its dimensional aspects, e.g., the spaces between the buildings being an important aspect.

Mr. Himmelberger spoke. He disputed the assertions that the subject building and 87 Hundreds Road would be torn down. Indicated that nothing has been decided at this time.

Mr. Lilley commented on the resplendent character of the subject property and on the dimensions of the neighborhood at large.

Goins moved that the property be preferably preserved; seconded McNally. Unanimous in favor.

2f. DR-2019-26: 87 Hundreds Road

Mr. Himmelberger appeared on behalf of the Applicant. Indicated that he does not believe that the zoning requirements would allow for the kind of subdivision that the audience seemed to be concerned about.

Chairman Brown reminded everyone that the Commission is not looking to what might come next at this time.

Mr. Panak summarized the report and recommendation of the Planning Department.

Mr. Theodore Parker spoke. He is the great-grandson of the Niles family who originally built the house. Hundreds Road and Hundreds Circle are based on his family's original 100-acre farm. He discussed the history of the family and its contributions to the Town. It is believed that Frederick Law Olmsted designed the original grounds.

Mr. Eisenstein appeared. He indicated that he is the former owner of 87 Hundreds Rd. He indicated that the subject property was the "Manor House" of the Niles estate. Mr. Eisenstein discussed how he took great care to make historically sensitive renovations during his time as owner, including a full reconstruction of the slate roof after the extreme winter of 2015. He reiterated that the home is in pristine condition and was disappointed that anyone would consider it for demolition, especially as he took great care to try to ensure that the next owner, the current Applicant, would be a "steward of the property" and reiterated his plans to live in the home prior to the purchase.

Anna Braman spoke. She lives at 99 Hundreds Road (next door). She discussed how the loss of the home would detrimentally affect the neighborhood.

Mark Sullivan – 44 Valley Road. Expressed environmental concerns.

McNally moved that the home be preferably preserved; Greco seconded. Unanimous in favor.

Mr. Brown discussed the potential scenarios going forward for the benefit of the audience and the townspeople at large.

There was a request from an audience member to the Planning Department to notice homeowners for either the subject property or 52 Valley Road, even if only one property was to be discussed.

3. Waiver Hearings

3a. DR-2018-46 – 8 Riverdale Road

Mr. Himmelberger appeared on behalf of the Applicant. The Applicant is back before the Commission because they had to make small changes as a result of the rest of the permitting process.

Lilley indicated that the changes were minor and historically sensitive.

Lilley moved to approve the waiver; Goins seconded. Unanimous vote in favor.

3b. DR-2019-06 – 183 Walnut Street

Fardid Fahner, Owner/Applicant appeared. Described trying to retain the main house with a contemporary addition to the main house.

Mr. Lilley made some comments on the proposed design. He discussed some guidance of when “old meets new.” He indicated that the connector between the two is often the most important point. He offered some comments on that meeting point in the proposed design. He also provided some additional comments and suggestions.

Applicant’s architect appeared with owner and indicated that he would take on the recommendations.

Chairman Brown summarized some of the recommendations.

Mr. Greco offered some comments on the relative sizes of the original house and the proposed addition.

McNally moved to continue the hearing to June 10, 2019; seconded Schaufler. Unanimous vote in favor.

3c. DR-2019-06 – 18 Jefferson Road

Robert Clasby and Jonathan Asburne appeared for Applicant.

Mr. Panak provided the report and recommendation of the Planning Department.

Mr. Ashburne recounted the numerous additional efforts since the prior meeting.

Ms. Schaufler indicated that the house has been on the market for 93 days. She commented on the overall challenging state of the property.

McNally moved that waiver be granted, seconded Goins. Unanimous vote in favor.

3d. DR-2018-56: 38 Windsor Road

Motion to continue to June 10, 2019 meeting made by McNally; seconded by Greco. Unanimous in favor.

4. Denton Road Neighborhood Conservation District Appointments

Goins moved to appoint the nominated persons McNally seconded; Unanimous in favor.

5. FY 2020 Commission Calendar

A meeting for August 5, 2019 instead of August 12, 2019 was suggested. Commission to vote on calendar edit at its next month.

6. Approval of Minutes

McNally moved to approve minutes of the April meeting as edited, seconded by Goins. Unanimous in favor.

7. House Plaque Approvals

3 Hewins Farm Road
45 Brook Street
9 Avon Road

Motion to approve plaques for 3 Hewins Farm Road, 45 Brook Street and 9 Avon Road made by Lilley; seconded McNally. Unanimous in favor.

8. Project Updates

- a. Fells Library Roof Article discussion.
- b. HHU Update given by Brown.
- c. Beebe Plaque Goins and McNally to move
- d. Historical Articles and/or Awards 3 candidate properties identified. Chairman to circulate survey.

9. New Business

Discussion of the Wonderful Weekend parade and the Commission's placement in the parade.

There was a discussion of some older homes on Weston Road.

There was a discussion of recommendations for a new member to replace Mr. Gleysteen, who has resigned from the Commission.

10. Chair adjourned the meeting at 22:15