

*Minutes of the June 3, 2019 Regular Meeting of the Planning Board*

**WELLESLEY PLANNING BOARD**

MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2019, 6:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL – GREAT HALL

MINUTES

*The Planning Board guides the Town of Wellesley in preserving and enhancing Wellesley's quality of life by fostering a diverse housing stock, multi-modal transportation options, valuable natural resources, resilient infrastructure, and a thriving local economy. The Planning Board achieves these goals through the creation and implementation of Zoning Bylaws, policies, long-term planning and by promoting citizen participation in the planning process.*

**Planning Board Present:** Chair Catherine Johnson, Vice-Chair Jim Roberti, Secretary Kathleen Woodward, Patricia Mallett, Frank Pinto, and Associate Member Sheila Olson.

**Staff Present:** Staff not present

1. **Call to Order**

Ms. Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. **Public Comments on Matters Not on the Agenda**

There were no public comments on matters not on the agenda.

3. **Continued/Previous Applications and/or Public Hearings**

4. **New Applications and/or Public Hearings**

*Materials distributed to, and considered by the Planning Board regarding this agenda item are retained with the official set of minutes available at the Planning Department Office.*

a. Consider LHR 19-07 Large House Review for 14 Strathmore Road–*Continued from 5-20-19*

Present: Attorney David Himmelberger, Principal/Owner Jessica Ye, Rivermore, LLC; Engineer Raouf Mankaryous, Alpha Omega Engineering, Inc.; Neighbors Paul and Patryce Goldman – 23 Strathmore Road; Dan Rubin – 18 Strathmore Road; Heidi Emerson – 19 Strathmore Road; and Randy Travis 14 Strathmore Road.

Mr. Himmelberger provided update of the project and mentioned that considerable plan modifications have been submitted, including detailed proposed landscaping. He noted that the applicant would be forwarding a reply to the Engineering Department comments to confirm addressing of Engineering remarks.

Ms. Johnson commented that the deadline for further application action is Wednesday, June 8, 2019. Ms. Johnson explained that with Large House review, the Board reviews stormwater management, screening, lighting, as well as, mass and scale.

In addition to hearing from neighbors this evening, Ms. Johnson commented that e-mails from neighbors have been sent to the Planning Department, which she has provided to the Board members.

Resident Dan Rubin, 18 Strathmore Road, stated that he was happy to see the vacant lot get developed and the design has improved from the initial rendering but the building is still too large and would allow for very limited open space. He added that he did not want precedent set with this home on the street and suggested that the home be approximately 3,100 square feet.

Ms. Johnson reiterated the six criterion involved with large house approval:

- Preservation of landscape
- Scale of the building
- Lighting
- Open Space
- Drainage – Stormwater considerations
- Circulation of project in terms of placement of walkways and driveways.

Mr. Roberti commented that he was fine with the landscaping and was more concerned about the scale of the plan.

Ms. Johnson noted that there was minimal lighting indicated on the plans and asked if the Board had any concerns about lighting. Mr. Roberti stated that Mr. Panak recommended approval in the area of lighting. Ms. Johnson concurred.

Ms. Johnson mentioned the aspect of open space and stated that with new larger development, that is always a factor. Ms. Johnson stated that Patrick Ahern, one of the more notable architects in Wellesley, states that space between the houses is more important than the houses themselves. Ms. Johnson stated that allowable lot coverage of the home has not been exceeded. Mr. Himmelberger confirmed the statement and is some 21% below the allowable coverage.

Ms. Woodward stated that she lived in the general neighborhood for twelve years and noted that the construction of this proposed home, will take up all of the available open space and will loom over neighboring homes even though falls short from the open space prospective.

Ms. Mallet commented that the rendering depicts the proposed house as being on a large lot and it is not. Ms. Woodward agreed and stated that this was not an accurate rendering and misleading.

Ms. Johnson stated that she was particularly concerned about the lack of enough open space on the right side of the structure around the driveway, which lacks proper screening.

Ms. Johnson stated that the drainage aspect appears to have been satisfactorily addressed with Engineering in terms of runoff. She did wonder if the water would pool in the back yard of the property.

Mr. Mankaryous stated that the infiltration system was constructed to handle the 100-year storm standard. He further detailed information regarding roof runoff and the driveway. Ms. Johnson noted that the proposed foundation is much larger than what was there before and will assume the space where water would have filtrated.

Ms. Mallett reiterated Engineering concerns which need to be answered before any decisions can be made. Mr. Mankaryous affirmed that the hydrology report supported all drainage methods. Mr. Roberti read that Engineering sought the addition of drainage swales or raingardens. Mr. Himmelberger stated that the applicant would be willing to re-examine these topics. Ms. Johnson added that annual maintenance reports would likely be mandated.

Ms. Woodward commended the applicant for maintaining various mature trees which was most beneficial in consideration with the stormwater management aspect.

Ms. Johnson queried about a retaining wall at the back of the property, very close to the lot line. Mr. Mankaryous answered that this rendering represented erosion controls which would be eliminated after construction and was not a permanent retaining wall.

Ms. Johnson suggested that the Board review the mass and scale aspect of the project and noted that there was not much to review when considering the circulation aspect.

Mr. Roberti stated that the Design Review Board (DRB) made several suggestions in consideration of mass and scale and two of those suggestions were not implemented: trying to make a wholesale reduction in the size of the building and replacing the center second-story window with a more decorative design. Mr. Roberti read that Mr. Panak wrote that staff has concerns relating to the scale of the house, which is not consistent with other houses in the neighborhood and DRB suggestions are an attempt to control that aspect. He added the neighborhood e-mails also reinforce that area of concern. Mr. Roberti asked why the applicant did not make an attempt to reduce the scale of the project.

Mr. Himmelberger responded that the applicant has made reductions in the area of the roof and stated that he disagreed with the sentiment that the building would loom over other homes and is only three feet taller than the next door home. He also detailed that the proposed driveway is replacing a driveway which ran as deep. Mr. Himmelberger reinforced that this plan has a TLAG of 4,815 sq. ft. and the Board has recently approved a 5,171 sq. ft. house on a 10,000 sq. ft. lot. He added that he did not feel that the related numbers with this project were any more significant than a number of homes that have recently been approved under the Large House Review. Ms. Johnson replied that each of those approved lots had different characteristics and neighborhoods have different characteristics and thanked the applicant for her intense search as well. She added that the average sq. ft. size for homes in the more immediate area of Strathmore Road (Strathmore and Poplar) 2,296 sq. ft. with the smallest at 1,312 sq. ft. and the largest being 3,458 sq. ft. which is just below the threshold of the by right build in a 10,000 sq. ft. district.

Ms. Johnson stated that she also researched the small WW II era home that was at 14 Strathmore Road and this represents three and one-half the size of the house that was there. She stated that the proposed house may not loom but does overwhelm the neighboring homes.

Ms. Ye stated that the proposed home has the same width as the original home and the original home had a very large deck which was almost double the size of the house and the original garage was right at the property line. Ms. Johnson responded that the deck was a flat surface at the first floor level.

Ms. Johnson emphasized that this is a huge house on one of the narrowest lots and mentioned that Mr. Himmelberger was involved in the development of 3 Strathmore Road, which modified its size considerably and is still on a small lot for its size but fits better into the neighborhood. Ms. Olson agreed with Ms. Johnson and stated that this house would reflect a “shotgun mansion” type and this is not the house for this lot.

Mr. Pinto mentioned that from the front the house looks good but as you walk down the street, the plantings do not screen that well and the perception is that the house keeps going and felt that if the house had one story instead of two towards the back of the house, it might present better. Ms. Ye responded that the roof on the back of the house was lowered.

Ms. Mallett commented that this is one of the few streets in Wellesley that has not been re-developed but the massing is much larger than was is there now and would stand out significantly and said that it would change the character of the neighborhood. She stressed that many neighborhood e-mails were sent to the Board asking that the owner make it smaller and suggested that the owner listen to the neighbors and make the house smaller. Ms. Mallett stated that if the owner did not make the house smaller, the Board would likely not approve the building.

Mr. Himmelberger asked if the neighborhood e-mails could be forwarded to him. Ms. Johnson agreed to do so.

Ms. Woodward said that the neighbor, Mr. Rubin, expressed exactly what she felt and was concerned that this could start a domino effect of mansionization for this neighborhood.

Ms. Johnson commented that making the house smaller would also help the stormwater aspect as well as the massing/scale, landscaping and open space considerations. She affirmed that the Board would be willing to continue the hearing if the plans could reflect perhaps one less bedroom and smaller size or sell it to one of your clients who might find the smaller size attractive.

Mr. Himmelberger suggested that more screening could be implemented. Ms. Johnson responded that the problem with more screening is with plantings takes a long time for maturity to occur. She added that the old house was 1,232 sq. ft. and that second story cannot be hidden and that the neighbor probably does not want a row of narrow shrubs which would darken his house and suggested that if the house was 33 feet wide instead of 35 feet wide, it might

provide for better space between the neighboring lots for plantings. Mr. Himmelberger noted that the applicant changed every request of DRB, except for decreasing the square footage and ultimately the Planning Board rules this decision.

Mr. Himmelberger stated that the owner would welcome the opportunity to modify the plans, rather than vote this evening and continue the hearing to June 17. Ms. Johnson was in agreement and affirmed that the action deadline would be continued as well.

**Mr. Roberti motioned to continue the LHR 19-09 Large House Review for 14 Strathmore Road to the next Planning Board meeting on June 17, 2019 and will also extend the action deadline, as well. Ms. Woodward seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.**

Ms. Johnson said that the Board would recess because they had to join the Board of Selectmen's Meeting and then would return to address the next Large House review. At approximately 7:25 p.m. the Planning Board meeting recessed for approximately one hour.

#### **4. Continued/Previous Applications and/or Public Hearings**

*Materials distributed to, and considered by the Planning Board regarding this agenda item are retained with the official set of minutes available at the Planning Department Office.*

a. Consider LHR 19-09 Large House Review for 7-11 Longmeadow Road

Present: Architect Elena Stancheva, Catalano Architects; Builders Sam and Ken Soderholm, Soderholm Builders; Landscape Architect Mike Coutu, Sudbury Design Group; Landscape Architect Scot Indermuele, Sudbury Design Group; Engineer Ardi Rrapi, Cheney Engineering; Marybeth Martello, Sustainable Energy Commission and owners Johanna and Dave Thorpe, 7-11 Longmeadow Road.

Mr. Sam Soderholm provided narrative regarding the progress of the project and stated that there was a previous builder involved in 2004 and some of that related stormwater operations and maintenance plan work is being integrated in concert with the current plan. Ms. Johnson asked if the builder felt that he could address all of the Engineering Department's related concerns. Mr. Soderholm replied in the affirmative and added that impervious is only being increased by 50 square feet. Ms. Johnson noted that this project will reflect the only house in Wellesley with two parking courts.

Ms. Stancheva presented the architectural considerations of the project. Ms. Johnson questioned the presented architectural aspects and the related step down. Ms. Stancheva responded that the step down was two to three feet down.

Mr. Soderholm stated that the Town recently approved the replacement of a diseased tree in front of the property and granted the owner's request to replace the tree with another mature tree.

There were no resident comments presented.

Ms. Johnson inquired about lighting aspects and landscaping. Mr. Indermuehle provided detail regarding retaining walls and specific landscape considerations, including information that the site plan composed lots 7 and 11 with heavy planted screening and a four foot retaining wall on the Grove Street side. He further detailed that the swimming pool would be removed and relocated to the west portion of the lot where #11 will be razed.

Mr. Indermuehle detailed fencing aspects on the property. Ms. Johnson commented that the Town asked other owners abutting wetlands to bring the fencing further away from wetland areas to allow for animal passage. We responded that there is existing fencing in place for that purpose.

Mr. Indermuehle stated that there are 126 trees on the property with 48 being slated for removal and 79 new trees will be added.

Mr. Indermuehle provided lighting detail and stated that approximately 12 architectural lighting will be preserved and four post lights be preserved as well. New lighting detail was explained. Related discussion took place. The Board members asked for further detail regarding well lights. He explained that the well lights were installed at grade level. Ms. Johnson asked the architect if he knew that lighting often harms trees over the lifetime of the tree. He replied that all the lighting is programmable and can be changed as needed. Ms. Johnson mentioned the tendency of homeowners keeping such lighting on throughout the night. He responded that all lighting would not be on concurrently.

Mr. Roberti asked if all the floodlights were needed. Mr. Indermuehle responded that the flood lighting on the house was installed for emergency and security events. Ms. Johnson commented that she had concern about the ten non-emergency flood lights. The property owner, Mr. Thorpe, stated that the flood lights are rarely in use and he only used them on one occasion in order to find the cat. Mr. Roberti asked if the flood lights were motion activated. Mr. Thorpe stated not.

Ms. Mallett noted that there is considerable engineering elements to consider and recommended that before the Board could make further comment, they would have to review the comments from Engineering.

Ms. Johnson recommended keeping the flood lights on the lowest wattage and assure that they are not motion activated.

Mr. Rrapi, project engineer, stated that he would be amazed if Town Engineering had any substantive comments since the property already utilizes an efficient drainage system which is being retained and the owners are adding a recharge system for the proposed cabana and swimming pool. Mr. Rrapi asked if the Board could grant approval of the project, conditioning any Engineering recommendations. Ms. Johnson responded that the Board would feel more comfortable about continuing the hearing and have Engineering produce the related report.

**Mr. Roberti motioned to continue LHR 19-09 Large House Review for 7-11 Longmeadow Road to the June 17, 2019 meeting. Ms. Woodward seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.**

## 5. Other Business

- a. Presentation from Sustainable Energy Committee on Sustainability Guidelines

Present: Marybeth Martello of the Sustainable Energy Committee (SEC)

Ms. Martello provided update regarding SECs involvement with the Facilities Management Department and the Hunnewell School feasibility study project over the past couple of years. She explained that Wellesley has been recognized as a Green Community and has won several awards in the environmental area and the Town goal is to reduce gas house emissions by 20% before 2020. She added that buildings are the biggest contributors.

Ms. Martello stated that building proponents must be the drivers to achieve the mentioned goal and she presented the governing equation:

Implementation = Proponents + Goals + Timing + Process

Ms. Martello stressed that studies have demonstrated that student performance increases with light and healthy building considerations which are built with a long-term life purpose and well as being built for the changing needs of the occupants. She spoke of the SBG Key Elements and the importance of sustainability considerations at the onset of any building project. Via graphics, Ms. Martello presented energy topics:

- Closer Look at Energy Use Intensity (EUI)
- EUIs For Wellesley Municipal Buildings
- Sustainability & MEP Considerations (including occupant usage behavior factor)
- Closer Look at Zero Net Energy (ZNE) including conservation, heat pumps and solar
- Sustainable Building Costs by Joe McDonough of Facilities Management Dept.
- Hunnewell Feasibility Study Process
- Green Building Policies in other MA Towns

Mr. Pinto asked if efficiency components (heating systems, insulation plans.etc.) were high in determining EUI. Ms. Martello responded affirmatively and noted that efficient mechanical systems and related air exchange was important.

Ms. Woodward asked whether there was a different way of measuring EUI (i.e., on an hourly basis) because some Town buildings are open for more hours per day than others then the Police Station because it is a 24-7 setup. Ms. Martello offered that an accurate breakdown must be studied.

Mr. Pinto spoke of cell-based insulation; particularly soy-based rather than petroleum based in consideration of long-term safety.

Ms. Mallett commented about the fact the Town Hall was actually rated fairly well with EUI consideration. Ms. Martello acknowledged that the findings were somewhat unexpected in regard to Town Hall considering the age of the building and the nature of its construction.

Mr. Roberti inquired about geothermal wells heating. Ms. Martello detailed that geothermal implementation is used at the administration office at the High School.

Mr. Roberti asked about offsite energy generation such as solar. Ms. Martello responded that the negative aspect of transferring such energy, as solar generation, can involve loss of energy due to downed transmission lines.

Ms. Johnson queried regarding user variance and those who are energy efficient and those who are not (those who can turn off switches and those who do not). Ms. Martello stated that a study of estimated needs is likely; but only an architect could make the assessment.

Mr. Pinto commented that in a town like Wellesley, union labor costs drive up the costs considerably and felt that piece was not accurately included in the displayed building cost estimates. Discussion followed regarding the financial/cost estimating aspect of the zero energy topic.

Ms. Martello stated that the goal of SEC is to present Energy Guidelines at the next Town Meeting for approval of these guidelines. She asked the Planning Board members to provide their feelings about the distributed guidelines.

b. Planning Board Chair Report

Ms. Johnson announced that planner Claudia had a baby boy over the week-end. She detailed that Mr. Panak's last day of staff employment is June 14<sup>th</sup> and suggested that on the evening of June 13<sup>th</sup>, the Board plan to celebrate with Victor at the Local Restaurant in Wellesley.

**Mr. Roberti motioned that the Planning Board appoint Meghan Jop, the Executive Director of General Services, as the Town Official who can sign official Board documents including payroll on behalf of the Planning Board beginning at the end of business on June 14, 2019; until a new Planning Director or Interim Director is chosen and starts employment with the Town. Ms. Woodward seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the motion.**

The Board had discussion regarding part-time planner position and the interim planning director HR posting.

## 6. Minutes

- a. The Board discussed the minutes of January 9, 2019, January 22, 2019 and May 6, 2019.

Ms. Woodward commented that the presented minutes were very good and suggested that the Board consider electronically distributing draft minutes for comment, going forward, as well as electronic distribution of meeting packets.

Ms. Woodward recommended that the pages of the minutes be numbered.

**Mr. Roberti motioned to approve the minutes of January 9, 2019, and January 22, 2019. Ms. Woodward seconded the motion. The Board voted (4-0) with one abstention.**

**Mr. Roberti motioned to approve the minutes of May 6, 2019 as amended. Ms. Woodward seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (5-0).**

**7. Adjourn**

There being no other business, Ms. Johnson adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:25 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED – JUNE 17, 2019

Catherine Johnson  
Chair