

**WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
CALLED MEETING
JUNE 25, 2019, 6:45 PM
JULIANI ROOM - WELLESLEY TOWN HALL**

Members Present: Chair David Smith, Vice Chair Lisa Abeles, Amy Griffin, Emily Maitin, Edwina McCarthy, Tom Paine

Staff: Catherine Johnson, Chair Planning Board, facilitating as staff

Others Present: George Dewitt, Linda Ceremsak

Call to Order. David Smith called the meeting to order at 6:50 pm. He told the District Commission members that Ms. Johnson was staffing the meeting because the Planning Department is without its regular staff.

Mr. Smith reminded the Commission members and the audience that this was a public meeting rather than a hearing. Commission members could dialogue but that members of the public should hold any questions until the end of the meeting when the Chair could call upon the audience for questions.

Ms. Johnson thanked him and re-iterated that this procedure was the correct one under Open Meeting Law when a quorum of the Historic District Commission met. She said that because the Commission wore two hats, that of the Commission – which held public hearings on the applications for Certificates of Appropriateness, and that of the Study Committee – which researched and discussed the research within public meetings, the members of the Historic District Commission needed to separate the type of business before them. The research can be one off-line by individuals, groups of two, or even a hired researcher, but that this work should be brought to the Study Committee for discussion and approval. Ms. Johnson also recognized that the Commission members already knew this, but that this was important to state for the benefit of the audience.

Ms. Johnson added that some of the research areas include the creation of the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Form B profile for each house, although this could be broken down into sections where one person writes about the architecture, another researches the house and personal history, another develops the historical narrative, while some else takes the photographs; other research will involve local background, the significance of Belvedere, methodology, economics, etc. She said that the Form B is essential for the Study Report, as an Appendix, and that more houses would have to be researched than would end up in the district. Ms. Abeles reinforced that the Commission had decided to start with a small number of houses, perhaps 15 or 16. Ms. Johnson concurred, allowing that the initial work might increase as needed over time. She said that Ms. Griffin would be the best source to talk about the scope of the work and where the Study Committee starts.

Discuss Belvedere Estates Historic District Study Committee. Ms. Griffin introduced some of the research she has begun, distributing copies of a 1990 area study of the Belvedere Estates written by K. K. Broomer. This document is available on the Massachusetts Historical Commission's website. She suggested, if possible that a link to this area study be posted to the Belvedere portion of the HDC website.

The Commission began to discuss what information they might need as they begin their research. Ms. Griffin said that the Commission/Study Committee members could work individually or in groups of two or in tandem with members of the community who might have an interest in participating in the study. She added that there are three initial areas for research: history and background for the Belvedere Estates, the significance of the Belvedere Estates, and the methodology for the report. Ms. Griffin said that she would take the lead in working on the significance, that Ms. Maitin had volunteered to take the lead on the history and background, and that Ms. Johnson had volunteered to take the lead on methodology. Ms. Maitin added that she would ask a member of the Historical Commission to work with her.

Mr. Smith and Ms. Abeles asked if anyone would be working on possible questions for the various surveys that the Study Committee would need. Both indicated that Mr. Cohen (not present) had volunteered and that this was appropriate because his professional work dovetailed with how to solicit survey responses with fair and balanced questions. Mr. Smith volunteered to work with Mr. Cohen over the summer in order to produce a list of questions.

Ms. Griffin discussed timing. She stated that much of this could be done over the summer in order to bring research and ideas to the Study Committee at a meeting in the fall. September or October was possible, but no date was specified. There was agreement that this process might take longer.

Mr. Smith and Ms. Abeles indicated that the Historic District Commission would continue to meet for application hearings according to the schedule that was voted at the June 11, 2019 meeting, but that the Study Committee work would be quiet for the summer.

Mr. Smith asked if there were any questions from the floor.

George Dewitt, a resident from Abbott Road, asked more about the process and when the neighborhood could expect a survey that would allow residents to express their opinions. Mr. Smith and Mr. Dewitt had a short dialogue that expressed agreement that any historic district needed grass roots support to move forward.

Adjourn. Mr. Smith, ascertaining that there were no further questions, made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Maitin and Mr. Paine seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:55 p.m..

Minutes Approved: July 10, 2019

Minutes compiled by
Catherine Johnson, Planning Board Chair