

**WELLESLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
CALLED MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
AUGUST 6, 2019, 6:45 PM
GREAT HALL - WELLESLEY TOWN HALL**

Members Present: Chair David Smith, Eric Cohen, Amy Griffin, Emily Maitin, Edwina McCarthy, Tom Paine

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

Others Present: Peter Crabtree

Call to Order. David Smith called the meeting to order at 6:46 pm.

Public Hearing HDC 19-05 – 638 Washington Street – Certificate of Appropriateness.

Documents:

- Application for Certificate of Appropriateness
- C-1 Site Plan
- Notice of Public Hearing

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

Mr. Smith introduced the Public Hearing for the Certificate of Appropriateness for stone retaining wall at 638 Washington Street and asked that Peter Crabtree of Northland Residential give the Commission a run down of the project.

Mr. Crabtree said that he was before the Commission for 638 Washington Street, which is also known as Lot 4; that, when Northland was before the Commission for their Certificate of Appropriateness to build the house with their site plan and landscape plan, they did not realize that there would be a utility manhole in the back corner of the property. This manhole provides access within a 10-foot easement for the electric service corridor that serves all five properties on the Rollins lot. He explained that when the Municipal Light Plant (MLP) was running the wires, both the MLP and Northland's contractor located the manhole near the edge of the easement to avoid a tree at the rear of the property. The original plan was to simply grade the lot, but now – because of the position of the manhole – a retaining wall was necessary to catch the grade.

Mr. Crabtree added that the retaining wall would be 20 feet long, 8 feet on the short leg, 2 feet in width and 32 inches high. He showed the Commission member several photographs of the site.

Mr. Smith asked for confirmation that the electricity came from the rear of the properties, but that the water and sewer came at the front, from Washington Street. Mr. Crabtree confirmed that. Mr. Smith questioned whether the position of the manhole and the new retaining wall would be satisfactory when electric service has to run to the fifth property [636 Washington Street] at the corner of Washington and Cottage Streets. Mr. Crabtree confirmed this. The discussion also noted that the electric meters would be on the rear of both houses.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Crabtree to define the grading at the top of the wall and also asked whether there was any additional fencing. There is not.

Mr. Paine asked Mr. Crabtree about the type of masonry that will be used for the wall. Mr. Crabtree said that Northland planned to build the wall to match what exists at 52 Cottage Street and showed the Commission a photograph of that property. Mr. Paine, noting that his question was random, wanted to know if there would be a problem with snow removal. Mr. Crabtree said that Lots 2 and 3 [650 and 652 Washington Street] have similar long driveways and seemed to copy with last year's snow.

Ms. Griffin asked whether the wall would be all fieldstone or whether it would be a veneer. Mr. Crabtree said that it would be fieldstone, not a veneer.

Hearing no other questions, Mr. Smith asked for a motion to approve the wall as proposed. Mr. Paine made the motion. Mr. Smith seconded it. The Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the retaining wall, as presented.

Minutes. Mr. Smith said that the next item was to approve the minutes from the July 10, 2019 meeting. Ms. Griffin noted that the name of the applicant's architect for 29 Cottage Street had two different forms [spellings] and that this was confusing to her. Ms. Johnson said that the correct name of the architect was Royer and that this would be corrected throughout. Ms. McCarthy corrected the wording of her comments, noting that she believed that there were no attached garages on *historic* houses in the District.

There was a brief discussion about one subject in the minutes, 29 Cottage Street. Mr. Smith said that this property might be before the Commission at a number of its meetings and that this would require application of the Mullin Rule. Ms. Johnson explained that Commission members could miss one meeting during the application hearing process, read the minutes and/or watch the Wellesley Media recording, then sign an affidavit stating that a particular member had done this, and participate in subsequent hearings. If a Commission member missed more than one meeting, then that member could not participate in the discussion or vote going forward. She said that the Planning staff would provide the Mullin Rule forms at any meeting where it was needed. In September, when 29 Cottage Street is scheduled to return to the Commission, Mr. Cohen, Ms. Abeles, and Ms. Griffin would need to sign an affidavit.

Ms. Maitin noted that she was uncertain that the minutes reflected her exact words regarding "permitting" rather than "permitting process", but was generally satisfied with the context.

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Ms. McCarthy seconded the motion. The Commission approved the minutes as corrected unanimously (6-0).

Mr. Smith asked whether the Commission should discuss the Belvedere Study Committee ongoing work. Ms. Johnson explained that the Study Committee was not on the agenda, but that the Commission could discuss scheduling. She suggested that it might make sense to have the Commission meet to hear applications and act as the Study Committee at separate meetings. Each meeting would be shorter but more efficient and less subject to interruption. Mr. Smith remarked that Mr. Cohen and he, as an assistant, would be drafting questions that could be part of the first survey to the neighborhood. Ms. Griffin [as Chair of the Study Committee] said she had no updates but would work with Planning staff to send out a doodle poll to pick a date in September for a meeting.

Ms. Maitin added that several of the members are working individually or as a group of two, called by staff, to work over the summer to start drafting some of the introductory material. Ms. Johnson explained that the research needed to produce the Study Report and the Form B for each

property included was difficult, even arduous, and could be done individually on line or in the dark corners of the Library. Mr. Smith asked whether residents could provide information on their own properties without concern that they were violating the Open Meeting Law. This was confirmed.

There was discussion of the most appropriate way to create a draft survey in time for the September Commission meeting. The most logical way would be for staff to convene a 2-3 person working session to assemble a list of questions that could be revised and refined by the full Commission at its September meeting, noting that the revisions and refinements would be accomplished at the table. Mr. Smith said it would be good to publish the survey in October.

The best date and time for a working session called by staff would be Tuesday, August 20, 2019 at 6:45. Planning staff will facilitate this.

At the request of Ms. McCarthy, Ms. Johnson updated the Commission on the staffing for the Planning Department. She said that Ms. Zarazua would be returning from maternity leave on Thursday [August 8, 2019] and that interviews for the Planning Director position were next week. She added that Planning has hired a new Part-time Planner and is still looking for a Senior Planner.

Adjourn. Having no other business, Mr. Smith asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. McCarthy made the motion; Mr. Smith seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Next Meeting: September 3, 2019

Minutes Approved: October 1, 2019

Minutes Compiled by
Catherine Johnson, Planning Board Chair