

Minutes of the September 3, 2019 Regular Meeting of the Planning Board

WELLESLEY PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, September 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, Patricia Mallett, Frank Pinto and Associate Member Sheila Olson

Staff Present: Interim Planning Director Laura Harbottle

Absent: Vice-Chair Jim Roberti and Secretary Kathleen Woodward,

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 – Citizen Speak

There were no public comments.

3. Pre-Application Discussion

Wellesley Office Park Residential Project

Present: Peter Tamm, Goulston & Storrs, on behalf of John Hancock Co. and Hanover Company, Brian O'Connor, Goulston & Storrs and David Hall, Hanover Company.

Mr. Tamm provided an update on the project, with focus on architecture and timeline in particular, recognizing the Town for timeliness in securing reduce size of # adoption of the 40R Overlay. He noted that there would be a meeting with the ZBA next week before filing for site approval.

Mr. Tamm itemized the Site Plan Review Process and WPC Filing/Process to take place in September and October 2019. He detailed that ZBA approval was anticipated by December 2019. He stated that Wetlands and WPC filing will take place.

Mr. O'Connor spoke of design challenges including: highway and ramp proximity, varying land grades, wetland buffer zone and floodplain and mixed-use parking demands. He stated that opportunities for the site included: minimal impact on the environment by replacing existing buildings, redevelopment of existing parking areas, providing recreation along the Charles River

with walkways and trails, easy access to the highway and potential to expand a transportation demand management plan with the provision of a shuttle to transit sites.

Mr. O'Connor presented the initial plans and detailed that the 350 units would be comprised of 11% studio apartments, 49% one bedroom apartments, 33% two bedroom apartments, 7% three bedroom apartments with 25% affordable units. He noted that there would be a 591 open space parking garage. He added that there would be a retail and amenity component.

Mr. Pinto asked about the inclusion of sidewalks in consideration of accessing trails. Mr. O'Connor responded that a wide sidewalk would run along Williams Street and cross connections (360 degree sidewalk) would likely be proposed.

Ms. Johnson asked if the parking garage would serve both residents and the office building. Mr. O'Connor responded affirmatively. Ms. Johnson queried about bicycle lanes on the proposed street. Mr. Tamm replied affirmatively and stated that the bicycle lanes would run along Williams Street.

Ms. Johnson asked about the proposed private courtyard. Mr. Tamm mentioned that the court is for the residents only. Ms. Johnson questioned the accessibility to the courtyard. Mr. O'Connor responded that the access to the courtyard would be through the opening between the building and by the sidewalk going around the proposed building.

Mr. Pinto asked about a cafeteria located in the Wellesley Office Park complex. Mr. Tamm stated that representatives from the Hanover Company could provide further information, and indicated that the restaurant/cafeteria would be a beneficial amenity. Mr. Hall stated that the cafeteria is in another building and the plan would be to provide safe accessibility to the site. He noted that the retail space would be self-contained/convenience retail and intended for residents and the office park employees. Ms. Mallett asked if people outside of the Office Park would not likely be coming to the retailers on site. Mr. Hall affirmed that.

Ms. Johnson asked if there would be space for visitor parking if a resident was having a party. Mr. O'Connor responded that such parking would have to be approved by management beforehand and all parking is based on unit size ratio – about 10%.

Ms. Mallett questioned if there would be 24-hour manned front desk attendants. Mr. O'Connor responded that such determination had not been made yet (though he thought not) and noted that there would be on-site management that lives there. Ms. Olson confirmed that there would be sufficient staff, especially for senior residents.

Mr. Pinto asked how local preference for housing might work. Mr. Tamm responded that local preference would be administered via eligibility and in all instances, local preference might not be applicable, but there would be an advantage given to local residents.

Ms. Olson asked when the Town might receive 40B “safe harbor” surety. Mr. Tamm replied that would be determined by ZBA and upon their approval, safe harbor would be implemented by December or sooner and the official hearing would be opened in late October.

4. ANR Plans

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.

PBC 19-04 – Endorsement, ANR Plan for 194-200 Pond Road

Present: David Humphrey, PLS of DGT Associates

Mr. Humphrey stated that the plan was prepared by Joe Sullivan who has retired and DGT Associates are continuing with the project. He noted that the plan affects two properties (194 and 200 Pond Road) with proposal to re-divide the land in these two lots to create three lots, reflective of one new lot.

Ms. Harbottle stated that 95% of the time, ANR plans are simple and in this case, the road conditions are unusual. She noted that the properties are included on the accepted street listing and 600' is accepted in this regard. In 1992 the Board of Selectmen voted to make the road public and normally Town Meeting votes on such classification.

Ms. Johnson stated that an ANR plan does not necessarily give permission to build on the lots and because Pond Road is a scenic road, stone walls and trees are to remain and a public hearing between NRC and the Planning Board would make determination regarding curb cuts, or a driveway. She posed questions about maintenance of a private way and what necessary frontage might be. Ms. Harbottle stated that the lot line dictates such frontage.

Ms. Mallett commented that Town Meeting voted on this determination, which did not pass. Ms. Harbottle confirmed the statement. Related discussion took place.

Ms. Harbottle suggested that the proposal be presented to Town Council and suggested eliminating the word "public" from the plan, which might support DPWs property listing. She maintained that the site did not qualify as a public road. Ms. Johnson maintained that she would want more information provided from Town Council before eliminating the word "public." Ms. Mallett and Mr. Pinto agreed with Ms. Johnson in light of several inconsistencies.

Mr. Humphrey agreed with continuance of ANR endorsement to the next Planning Board meeting on September 16, 2019. Mr. Humphrey stressed that his company could not make changes to the plan because they were not the original surveyors of the property.

Ms. Mallett motioned to continue application PBC 19-04 – Endorsement, ANR Plan for 194-200 Pond Road to the Planning Board meeting on September 16, 2019. Mr. Pinto seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the motion.

5. Continued/Previous Applications and/or Public Hearings

Consider LHR 19-07 Large House Review for 14 Strathmore Road – *Cont'd from 6-17-19*

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.

Present: Attorney David Himmelberger, Wilder, Shea & Himmelberger, LLP, Bonnie Tam, Designer, Principal/Owner Jessica Ye, Rivermore, LLC; Engineer Raouf Mankaryous, Alpha Omega Engineering, Inc.; Neighbors Joan Rubin, Cynthia Chapin, and several others who did not sign in.

Mr. Himmelberger presented project update and maintained the revised plan reduced the TLAG from 4,833 to 4,184 square feet and reduced total living area to approximately 3,600 square feet. He detailed that the concerns of Town Engineer George Saraceno were addressed with the exception of the cut and fill calculation.

Ms. Johnson recognized that the revised plan had been reduced by approximately 15% (some of which comes from the attic space) which did not reduce the footprint. She requested a calculation to indicate how much smaller the revised plan footprint is with regard to the stormwater calculation. Mr. Himmelberger indicated that the decreased footprint calculation reflected 442 square feet.

Ms. Mallett commented about windows in the proposed west elevation. Mr. Himmelberger responded that the window wells were below grade. Ms. Mallett commented that the windows did not appear to be emergency sized for egress. Ms. Tam stated that the windows were egress size (3x5) windows and were compliant. Ms. Johnson inquired about the size of the window well. Ms. Tam affirmed the well was 3'6" x 3'6" and the top of the window was flush with the grade.

Ms. Johnson stated that the reduction in mass and size was a step in the right direction and queried if the reduction in massiveness was enough.

Ms. Olson noted that the revised design was right up to the setbacks and appeared to be a long massive wall and had concerns about a half roof on the left side facing the neighbors. She emphasized that she was unhappy with the proposed rendering.

Mr. Pinto stated that because the garage was recessed, that helped mitigate the impact of the length significantly better than the original design. Ms. Mallett commented that it was only 6.5 feet shorter, which was not reduced enough in her opinion. Mr. Himmelberger noted that an elevation never provides a three dimensional look and the garage is setback significantly. Ms. Olson reiterated that it still presented a massive wall look and represented too large a house for a small lot in a neighborhood of much smaller houses. Mr. Himmelberger responded that there are numerous houses in the neighborhood that are this size or larger and the proposed reduction of 15% was significant, especially in consideration of screening and landscaping.

Mr. Pinto indicated that there appeared to be adequate screening/buffer on the east side but not on the west side of the plan.

Ms. Johnson outlined several Board concerns:

- Landscape screening on both sides of the house.
- Low pitch of the garage and suggested different dormer design

Resident Joan Rubin, 18 Strathmore Road, stated she represented the neighborhood and echoed the Board's comment's regarding the massing of the building and the comparison homes in the neighborhood on Poplar Road were 3,100 square feet and 3,500 square feet with a size difference of some 600 square feet. Ms. Johnson noted that both those houses were built before the current thresholds for large house review, with garage space not counted.

Resident Cynthia Chapin, 10 Strathmore Road, stated that she had concerns about the runoff and the massing of the structure with absence of trees to provide buffer. Ms. Johnson acknowledged that trees would help the runoff concern somewhat and inquired about exterior steps leading to lawn or impervious surface. Mr. Himmelberger added that the proposed steps lead to lawn. Mr. Mankaryous stated that the former home was draining to the back and side yard and the proposed home is much improved with a drainage/infiltration system.

Ms. Rubin commented about drainage. Ms. Johnson guessed that the grate reflected a simple drywell application.

Ms. Mallett mentioned that the Board did not have a final response from DPW/Town Engineer and a large house review had never been approved without a formal response from DPW. Mr. Himmelberger understood the concern and advised his client of such, confirming that a detailed letter of plan description will be forwarded to the Town Engineer and expressed confidence that Mr. Saraceno, Town Engineer, would approve the proposed plan.

Mr. Himmelberger asked if the Board could provide indication that they might consider approval of the plan if the side of the house was changed in consideration of massiveness. Ms. Mallett responded that two Board members were not present tonight and their comments should be included. She added that she felt that the lot size and location could not likely support a five-bedroom home.

Mr. Himmelberger acknowledged the importance of the absence of two Board members. Ms. Johnson stated that this house would stick out in consideration of the two modestly sized houses on either side of it. She also indicated that the proposed house was far too massive for its location and dormer alteration might help. She noted that the absence of sufficient screening was an important factor, as well as, DPW response.

Mr. Himmelberger requested example of preferred screening vegetation. Ms. Johnson responded that several trees that would grow to provide canopy such as Maples and noted that low growing shrubs would make for good fillers. Mr. Pinto suggested the use of evergreens, which are very hardy. Ms. Mallett suggested that some neighbors were suggesting fencing. Ms. Mallett mentioned the importance of an irrigation watering system to maintain the health and growth of such vegetation.

Ms. Mallett moved to continue the public hearing for LHR 19-07 Large House Review for 14 Strathmore Road to the September 16, 2019 Planning Board meeting and extend the action deadline to September 17, 2019. Mr. Pinto seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the motion.

6. New Applications and/or Public Hearings

Consider Major Revision, LHR 19-01 Large House Review for 26 Oakridge Road

Present: Matt Guigli and Caitlin Guigli, applicants and owners of 26 Oakridge Road

Mr. Guigli itemized the proposed revisions to the project:

- Change of front setback from 49' to 38.8' to provide for better backyard
- Increase width of garage by 2' and increasing the TLAG by 96 square feet
- Change transom window above garage
- Eliminate two first-floor windows on rear of garage, east elevation
- Move second floor window to end of shed dormer, east elevation

Ms. Johnson asked why the applicant wanted to eliminate the rear garage windows on the east elevation. Mr. Guigli responded that the mature trees would not provide much lighting so the windows could be eliminated. Ms. Johnson indicated that she had concerns about absence of windows on that side of the house and asserted that removal of windows was not visually appealing.

Mr. Pinto asked about rear abutters. Mr. Guigli responded that the rear abutter was Mosher Landscaping, which is a pre-existing non-conforming use.

Ms. Mallett queried about ledge and possible blasting. Mr. Guigli indicated that he did not anticipate any blasting. Ms. Mallett stated that she would be fine with the driveway work but would not be in favor of the change if blasting was required. Ms. Johnson stated that consideration might require moving the driveway or reducing the size of the parking court. Mr. Guigli responded that he was not opposed to moving the northern boundary of the driveway back a bit, but did not want to agree to not touching the ledge.

Ms. Johnson motioned that the Planning Board approve the modifications for LHR 19-01 – 26 Oakridge Road with the following conditions: that the applicant submit a landscape topography plan that indicates the location of the parking court relative to the ledge in a way that does not chip into the ledge, which would be subject to staff approval and that two windows be added to the east elevation of the garage. The Board grants modification of the front setback from 49' to 38.8' to increase the width of the garage by two feet thereby increasing the TLAG by 96 square feet, to change the transom window above the garage in the west elevation from a four part to a five part Nantucket style dormer and move the second floor window to the end of the shed dormer on the east elevation. Ms. Mallett seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the motion.

7. Other Business

a. Planning Board Chair Report

Ms. Johnson introduced the Advisory liaison Bill Maynard. Ms. Johnson explained that the bylaws which were changed at Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting last spring are being reviewed by herself and Ms. Woodward for completion.

Ms. Johnson stated there is a need to have a special Planning Board meeting sometime early next week regarding the interviewing of Planning Director position and one of the candidates would not be able to present at the September 16th meeting. Scheduling of such meeting was discussed.

Ms. Johnson commented about the status of 900 Worcester Street – The Wellesley Center – in regard to the traffic light installation as conditioned for occupancy permit within the PSI. She added that the state is seeking to take approximately 60 square feet of Town land for the

purposing of the light. She stated that Ms. Harbottle would be following up with Town Counsel and the applicant regarding traffic detail and/or reports regarding functioning of the Center. Ms.

Mallett commented about a traffic counter and Ms. Olson mentioned the status of a related impact study. Ms. Johnson responded there would be an impact study post-light installation and with school now in session, there is more use and one of the requests made was that the applicant provide the Town periodic updates; one to be submitted immediately after school began.

Mr. Pinto asked when the light is scheduled to be installed. Ms. Johnson replied in November and if not installed by that time, more traffic detail would have to be included at both Weston Road and at the entrance of 900 Worcester Street. She noted that there have been a couple of near traffic misses in this area recently, one involving with Planning Board members.

Ms. Olson confirmed that in advance of Certificate of Occupancy, the Center did not operate on a full schedule and the traffic light would be mandated for full schedule operation of the Center. Ms. Johnson responded that the Center's schedule was greatly reduced during the summer and the fitness center for example, would not be scheduled to open until mid-October.

b. Interim Planning Director Report

Ms. Harbottle mentioned NRC selected consultant Kim Lundgren Associates to educate the community on the effects of climate change and would establish a brand or symbol for Wellesley and climate change.

Ms. Harbottle stated that Wellesley Plaza Whole Foods will be installing a new drainage system in the parking lot and will be appearing before the Wetlands Committee with a revised plan including rain gardens, swales and underground drainage. Ms. Johnson informed the Board that the plan will be coming before ZBA shortly and recommended that people go to the Town website for those dates.

Ms. Johnson noted that the League of Women Voters "Meet Up" event will be held on October 17.

c. Planning Articles for 2020 ATM

Ms. Johnson stated that at the September 16th meeting there will be continuation of the public hearing regarding the Citizen's Petition on the General Residence District. She mentioned that she had been researching the general residence properties (10,000 and 15,000 square foot lots) in Wellesley. Ms. Johnson added that Ms. Woodward is working with the NRC regarding revisions to the tree bylaw.

d. Review ZBA Cases for 9/12/19 Hearing (Cases may be reviewed on ZBA webpage under meetings)

Ms. Johnson noted that two of the six cases are not fully completed applications

Case #2019-73 95 Russell Road

Ms. Johnson recommended that ZBA ask the applicant to find another location for the ac compressor.

Case #2019-74 1005 Worcester Street

Ms. Johnson stated that the application may be incorrect due to the location of the parking of 15 cars on the east side of the building. She asserted there was not enough information to determine where the cars are going to be stored. Ms. Johnson recommended that ZBA require the applicant to provide a clear and complete application before anything further could be considered and withdrawn at this time or completely deny the request due to increased detriment of the neighborhood.

Case #2019-75 4 Bryn Mawr Road

Ms. Johnson commented that the case was not adequately described in the staff report and did not address additional nonconformities and if it was more detrimental to the neighborhood. She suggested that the staff report be redone and submitted as the staff report.

Case #2019-76 38 College Road

Ms. Johnson commented that she did not understand language within the report.

Case #2019-77 96 Worcester Street

Ms. Johnson noted the case went before Design Review Board (DRB) which should be noted in the staff report. She stated that 96 Worcester Street is likely fine if compliance with DRB is met.

Case #2019-65 15 River Glen Road

Ms. Johnson stated the applicant is seeking change to a retaining wall which was already approved and DRB did review the new wall and recommended terracing the wall.

8. Minutes

Ms. Johnson recommended that the approval of December 17, 2018 and August 19, 2019 minutes be postponed to the September 16th meeting in consideration of two absent members. She noted that Mr. Roberti was not present at one of those meetings and Ms. Woodward was not present at the other, thus quorum status was not met.

There being no further business, Ms. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, October 7, 2019

Minutes Approved: Monday, October 7, 2019

Laura Harbottle, Interim Planning Director

