

Minutes of the October 21, 2019 Regular Meeting of the Planning Board

WELLESLEY PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 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, James Roberti, Kathleen Woodward, Frank Pinto, Patricia Mallett and Associate Member Sheila Olson

Staff Present: Interim Planning Director Laura Harbottle

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. 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. Continuation of Public Hearing – Proposed Amendment to the Zoning Bylaw for 2020 Annual Town Meeting to Amend Section 4 by placing limits on the size of structure that may be constructed, altered, or enlarged in the General Residence District – *Cont'd from 9-16-19*

Ms. Johnson stated that the proposed amendment reflected limitations on properties that can be built in the general residence district.

Resident Stanley Brooks, Precinct E, stated that the petition in his opinion goal could discourage construction of multi-family living units. Ms. Johnson affirmed that Delanson Circle and 148 Weston Road were zoned into the general residence district subject to overlay districting incentive which allowed for greater density. Mr. Roberti commented that within the general residence areas, there are very few available parcels that do not currently have houses on them.

Ms. Johnson mentioned that approximately half of those parcels currently being studied by the Board, are non-conforming lots (under 10,000 square feet). Mr. Brooks stated that restricting development in the general residence district is contrary to the goals/intentions of the Housing Production Plan.

Ms. Johnson stated that consideration might be given to parcels of certain square footage within a general residence district, rather than restricting them.

Ms. Woodward opined regarding large house review being applied to homes of a certain threshold.

Mr. Brooks responded that the petition as presented, did in effect, impose large house review in the general residence district and felt that was inappropriate. He stated that the overall theme of the builders' proposal at the 2016 Annual Town Meeting was to take steps to visually decrease the size of a particular house, by limiting large dormers, etc. Ms. Johnson emphasized the aspects of stormwater management, massing, landscaping and lighting as being of critical importance.

Ms. Mallett commented that a particular duplex that was recently built very expensive and did not increase the affordable housing inventory.

David Himmelberger, 387 Linden Street, stated that density applies to the number of units and not the size of a particular unit. He mentioned the Citizen's Petition does not alter the density in terms of number of units, but seeks to equalize the treatment that a general residence lot of 10,000 square feet would have when compared to a single-family residence lot of 10,000 square feet. He maintained that without such limitations, mansionization would likely occur.

Mr. Brooks stated that the general residence district is not a single-family district and indicated that it would not be prudent to impose the same standards and suggested rezoning of the general residence district to a single-family zoning district. Related discussion continued.

Ms. Olson commented that if the Town seeks affordable multi-units, the location for those units is the general residence district and those structures should be uniformly treated the same way that other new construction in the town is addressed.

Ms. Woodward suggested that the character of properties within the general residence district should be maintained and not subject it to the effects of mansionization, which could cause shadowing and drainage problems for other properties. Mr. Brooks commented that the zoning laws do not advocate for keeping things the same. Ms. Johnson affirmed that part of the Unified Plan advocates for maintaining the character of Wellesley neighborhoods and that maintenance likely involves implementation of measures, such as special permitting or restrictions on "by right" building.

Mr. Roberti moved to close the public hearing regarding the proposed Amendment to the Zoning Bylaw for 2020 Annual Town Meeting to Amend Section 4 by placing limits on the size of structure that may be constructed, altered, or enlarged in the General Residence District. Ms. Woodward seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.

a.continuation of Public Hearing – LHR 19-07 Large House Review for 14 Strathmore Road – cont'd from 10-7-19

Present: Attorney David Himmelberger, Wilder, Shea & Himmelberger, LLP; Principal/Owner Jessica Ye, Rivermore, LLC; Joan Rubin and Dan Rubin

Mr. Himmelberger detailed the changes made on the plans, as requested by the Board:

- Elimination of shutters
- Three alternative plans to address the dormer configuration
- Landscape plan stamped by registered architect

Ms. Johnson noted that the plans still displayed some inconsistencies, especially in regard to the dormer and hip roof configuration. Mr. Himmelberger agreed with the assessment of Ms. Johnson.

Ms. Woodward suggested some alterations to Option Plan B that included the pergola. Mr. Roberti stated that he preferred the original roof drawing. Mr. Pinto noted that he was fine with all three roofing options.

Ms. Mallet questioned if the height of the windows was amended as the Board suggested at the last meeting. Mr. Himmelberger responded that the height of the windows was addressed in option B.

Dan Rubin, 18 Strathmore Road, stated that he only previewed Option C of the plan and asked to see options A and B as well, and added that the options showed improvement. He stated that he was in favor of the pergola over the garage.

Per request of Mr. Rubin, the Board summarized their recommendations regarding the gable roofing and presented the applicant's three options, which addressed this aspect. Ms. Johnson suggested that Option C with inclusion of the pergola of the garage, was the preferred option.

Ms. Woodward noted that one of the trees proposed was not native. Mr. Himmelberger responded that the applicant would be willing to provide a native species. Ms. Woodward recommended installation of native holly bushes as well. Mr. Himmelberger and the applicant were in agreement.

Joan Rubin, 18 Strathmore Road, commented about the proposed bay window in the rear of the home.

Ms. Woodward noted that feathery birches at property corners helped to soften the angular presentation and asked if the applicant would consider planting such birches at the front corners of the house.

Mr. Rubin asked if additional shrubbery could be planted around the bay window. He inquired about the driveway composition. Ms. Johnson replied that the composition was asphalt.

Ms. Woodward added that there was a strip of land between the house and the driveway where some dwarf plantings could be incorporated.

Mr. Roberti motioned to approve LHR 19-07 Large House Review for 14 Strathmore Road with additional conditions to include: add pergola to the Option C plan; final plan will be reviewed by the Planning Department prior to issuance of Building Permit. Applicant shall check with Brandon Schmitt regarding planting of native tree replacing the Paper Bark Maple. Copy of landscape plan shall be provided to the Planning Department. Applicant will check to ensure the Japanese Holly has suitable berry production, and if not, shall substitute another holly bush.

Ms. Woodward strongly recommended that the installation of three bushes around the bay window be added to the motion. Ms. Woodward stressed the proposed house was still too big for the area and not consistent with the Board's findings, but was voted acceptable with offered mitigation.

Mr. Roberti amended the motion by adding that the proposed house is large for the neighborhood but with mitigation, the Planning Board finds it acceptable. Three columnar shrubs on the east elevation of the house in proximity to the bay window, will be installed. Ms. Woodward seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.

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 New Major Revision for Large House Review 19-01 for 26 Oakridge Road.

Present: Matt and Caitlin Guigli, owners

Mr. Guigli summarized the proposed changes to the project including window changes, portico, alteration to garage doors and doghouse dormer alteration.

Mr. Roberti inquired about the major change revision. Mr. Guigli stated that the major change was the 12 square feet of TLAG. Mr. Guigli indicated that because the driveway is being repositioning closer to the house, there would be a significant reduction in impervious area.

Ms. Woodward commented about the broad expanse of clapboard at the east elevation. Mr. Guigli stated that there is mature screening between his property and the neighbor.

Mr. Roberti motioned to approve the new major revision for Large House Review 19-01 for 26 Oakridge Road. Ms. Woodward seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.

5. Other Business

- a. Planning Board Articles for 2020 ATM

Ms. Johnson stated that Ms. Woodward and the Natural Resource Commission are currently studying the Tree Bylaw.

Ms. Woodward informed the Board that she and the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) agreed that the Bylaws is fundamentally well-written and combines public interest with private rights.

Ms. Woodward spoke of overuse of the hazard tree exemption. She explained that if a tree is considered hazardous, then it is removed from the protected tree category and taken down with no mitigation (i.e., no replanting of a replacement tree and no contribution to the Town's tree fund). She stated that the NRC is not convinced that the hazard use exemption is utilized appropriately. Ms. Woodward stated that she is conducting a survey of other Towns' tree bylaws.

Ms. Johnson mentioned the idea of a part-time tree enforcement officer. She added that quality control and selection of native trees is very important.

Ms. Woodward commented that the associated fee schedules need to be reviewed. Ms. Johnson noted that such fee schedules were set in 2011 when the tree bylaw went into effect. Ms. Woodward also mentioned the need for public awareness in this area.

Mr. Pinto stated that there is a town arborist. Ms. Woodward explained that the NRC is Wellesley's "Tree Warden." Ms. Olson noted that there is a tree hotline number for Wellesley residents, as well. Ms. Johnson noted DPW hired a horticulturalist, specifically for the Brook Path.

Mr. Pinto asked if a 40B development has the rights to cut down all trees, as done with the Great Plain Avenue project. Ms. Johnson replied that 40B status overrides all zoning aspects, including the Tree Bylaw.

Ms. Johnson noted that the off-street parking would be brought before Town Meeting. She mentioned that the parking thresholds regarding number of parking spaces might be considered, noting that best practice included maximum and minimum amount of spaces.

A transportation and parking discussion took place.

Ms. Johnson explained that the Sisters of Charity are seeking a special overlay for the property, as presented by Mr. Himmelberger at a previous meeting. She noted that there will be a meeting next week to address an increase in size of the nursing home with zoning change. Ms. Johnson stated that the building would be retained as a senior living center.

7. Minutes

Mr. Roberti moved to approve the minutes of October 22, 2018, as amended by the Board. Ms. Woodward seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the motion.

The Board thanked Ms. Harbottle for her service as interim planning director.

There being no further business, Ms. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, November 4, 2019

Minutes Approved: Monday, December 2, 2019

Don McCauley
Planning Director