

Minutes of the November 4, 2019 Regular Meeting of the Planning Board

WELLESLEY PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 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

Absent: Associate Member Sheila Olson

Staff Present: Planning Director Don McCauley

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. Other Business

Review ZBA Cases for 11/7/19 Public Hearing

18 Aberdeen Road

Mr. McCauley explained that the stair footing on a new deck is in violation of setback and applicant is seeking a waiver. Ms. Johnson commented stated stairs could go into the setback and not be in violation. Ms. Woodward commented that she had concerns regarding approval in consideration of possible building “creep”. Mr. Roberti commented that this appeared to be an error and not intentional. The Board agreed.

55 Williams Street

Mr. McCauley stated that the petition concerned re-issuance of an outdoor patio permit, which needed renewal every three years.

Mr. Pinto asked if the renewal was part of the zoning bylaw. Mr. McCauley replied in the affirmative. Ms. Johnson noted that such re-issuance was reviewed on “a case by case basis.” Ms. Woodward suggested including a condition regarding littering.

39 Washington Street

Mr. McCauley stated that this case reflected renewal of a patio in front of Café Nero.

Ms. Woodward mentioned that there has been lettering with many flyers and addition of a pole tent which represented a violation of conditions. Mr. McCauley agreed with the assessment. Ms. Johnson added that there was a large sign on the sidewalk as well, which was in violation. She noted that there was an individual distributing advertising under the unpermitted/authorized canvas adding that the signage was not present the next day. She stressed that such unauthorized activity could have been a deterrent to ADA access and pedestrian passage.

Ms. Johnson suggested that the owner of Café Nero be told not to sublet in such fashion, which is a condition of the special permit for outside dining.

Mr. Roberti agreed with the violation status. Ms. Woodward recommended that Café Nero be monitored. Mr. McCauley agreed. Ms. Johnson noted that consideration should be given to implementing improved signage regulations, to include temporary signage, as well.

5 Brookfield Road

Mr. McCauley explained that this case represents a patio that has been enclosed with an added second story. Mr. McCauley recommended that it might be best to approve such addition rather than having to consider the possibility of demolition and rebuilding. The Board agreed.

10 Rice Street

Mr. McCauley stated that the applicant is seeking addition to the proposed new house, which would be closer to the street and abuts the townhouses on Grant Circle.

Ms. Johnson stated that currently, the house is an unmanageable home to occupy because of a complicated stairway to the second floor and the only bathroom being situated on the first floor and potentially dangerous for occupants. She added that she was not in favor of the proposed new structure in consideration of side setbacks and the inaccuracy of the indicated TLAG.

Ms. Johnson recommended that a certified architect be used to submit a more acceptable plan to the Board and affirmed that she would not recommend approval, as it is.

Ms. Woodward queried about the neighbors. Ms. Johnson responded that at the public hearing, the abutter spoke against demolition of the existing house. The Board agreed that demolition of the house was appropriate due to safety considerations, but expressed concern regarding a newly constructed home.

Mr. McCauley summarized the Board's sentiment by saying that the Board is in favor of a new house but wanted to see less side setback impact and strongly recommended that a professional architectural plan be presented in order to minimize the adverse impacts. The Board agreed with such recommendation.

37 Pine Street

Mr. McCauley explained the petition which seeks to increase the size of an existing garage with an enlarged second story and encroaches on the side setback.

Ms. Johnson added that the applicant is also seeking to enlarge the curb cut. Ms. Johnson indicated that such addition would overwhelm the existing house. Mr. Roberti noted that the proposed garage would be 20 ft. by 33 ft., which is oversized. Ms. Woodward mentioned that the petitioner might consider altering the proposed garage windows. Mr. McCauley detailed the massing aspect and emphasized that there was no reason to construct a garage of this size on this lot.

Ms. Johnson recommended denial of the petition. The Board was in agreement.

5 Damien Road

Mr. McCauley stated that there is an existing shed which encroached further into the setback and the owner requested approval to build a larger shed in the same location as the existing shed. Ms. Johnson acknowledged that the existing shed is dilapidated, and the proposed shed would be a great improvement but is far more substantial in size and reflects considerably more of an encroachment.

The Board discussed possible relocation of the new shed on the site.

Ms. Johnson recommended denial of the petition. The Board agreed.

Ms. Johnson recommended that there be a scheduled joint meeting between the Planning Board and ZBA to review various areas involved in ZBA cases, especially considering zoning re-codification.

12 Intervale Road

Mr. McCauley stated that the petitioner was seeking to build above a porch. The Board had no major issues with the proposal.

259 Weston Road

Mr. McCauley explained the two-story addition as proposed with an existing front yard intrusion which would not be increased. The Board had no problems with the proposal.

4. Other Business

Planning Board Chair Report

Ms. Johnson mentioned the Senior Planner search process. Mr. McCauley recommended implementation of a new search process to commence in January 2020, noting that the upcoming holiday season is not the best time to conduct a search. Ms. Johnson agreed and added that it is preferred to build this team of four Planning Board staff personnel before adding a new employee.

Mr. McCauley detailed that staff has started working on the zoning re-codification project. Ms. Johnson stressed the importance of completion in consideration of Special Town Meeting in December. Mr. McCauley acknowledged that such project has priority at this time.

Ms. Mallett joined the meeting at approximately 7:25 p.m.

Ms. Johnson noted that Mr. McCauley attended the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness workshop today, with a primary focus on aspects of climate change. Mr. McCauley explained that there was sizable participation from various departments, and residents and included various climate change presentations. He concurred that there will be a second session scheduled for Thursday for an additional four-hour session. Mr. McCauley stated that MVP is a state grant program.

Ms. Johnson mentioned that stormwater management will be an important consideration when reviewing MVP topics in relations to large house review and accessory housing options. Mr. McCauley emphasized that strategic management of such areas will become more critical. He added that the transportation topic was given much attention during the MVP session that he attended. Mr. McCauley detailed that he will become more involved with the Wellesley Mobility Task Force. He also mentioned the significance of the Town tree bylaws and necessary assessment and improvement.

Ms. Woodward asked if Wellesley would be able to coordinate MVP considerations with neighboring towns, such as Natick. Mr. McCauley recognized such merit and stated that he would further investigate that aspect during the Thursday MVP session.

Annual Town Meeting Articles

Ms. Johnson distributed the 323 Washington Street Study Committee executive report. She detailed that the Historic Society came before the Historical Commission to include 323 Washington Street into the Historic District as a single building. Ms. Johnson stated that such change would require change to the zoning map.

Ms. Johnson provided a historical narrative of 323 Washington Street property and stated that the home was previously owned by Dr. Stanwood who was the Wellesley Board of Health physician in the early 1900s. She stressed that Dr. Stanwood's contribution to the Town should be recognized and remembered.

Ms. Johnson detailed that the executive report should be completed in a week or so for Board's co-sponsoring and then will be submitted to the MA Historical Commission.

Ms. Johnson reviewed the Natural Resource Protection Bylaws. She detailed a suggested change which maintains that more than five contiguous lots must retain 50% as open land. Ms. Johnson provided the example of the 40B project at 135 Great Plain Avenue and maintained that related lot size and maximum house size could easily be changed; with the applicant to provide two plans.

Ms. Johnson explained that the second potential bylaw revision concerns the continuation of off-street parking considerations. She detailed the proposed two areas for change:

- Maximum and Minimum Spaces based on floor area or use.
- Allowable percentages for compact cars and study future parking projections in consideration of drop-off parking, electric vehicle parking and the infrastructure.

Ms. Mallett mentioned the school bus inclusion aspect.

Mr. McCauley mentioned that the off-street parking bylaw changes would likely be addressed in 2021. The Board agreed with the timeline.

Ms. Johnson suggested that a more formalized submission time guidelines be enforced, especially in consideration of continuation of public hearings. The Board agreed with the suggestion.

There being no further business, Ms. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, November 18, 2019

Minutes Approved: Monday, December 2, 2019

Don McCauley
Planning Director