

Minutes of the December 2, 2019 Regular Meeting of the Planning Board

WELLESLEY PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 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, Kathleen Woodward, Frank Pinto, Patricia Mallett and Associate Member Sheila Olson

Absent: James Roberti

Staff Present: Planning Director Don McCauley, Also: Bill Maynard, Advisory Liaison

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. 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.

LHR 19-12: Large House Review for 34 Willow Road

Present: Architect Mark Gluesing and Jonathan Thomas, Owner; Barbra Thomas, Owner.

Mr. Gluesing provided narrative regarding the LHR for 34 Willow Road and distributed photos of the pre-existing home. He stated that the new house would be set back from the front yard, when compared to the pre-existing home. He detailed landscaping aspects.

Ms. Johnson asked which tree in the front of the property was being removed. Mr. Gluesing responded that the tree was a pine tree. Mr. Thomas provided a more extensive listing of trees/vegetation.

Mr. Pinto requested that the presenters turn on their microphone since they could not be clearly understood.

Mr. Thomas stated that there were three trees being removed, in very poor condition; as noted by the arborist. Mr. Gluesing commented the trees on the rear property line would remain, per neighbor request.

Mr. Gluesing stressed that extensive regrading was not being done. Mr. Gluesing presented several comments made by the Design Review Board; and affirmed that such changes were implemented in the amended plan.

Mr. Gluesing described the proposed lighting and stressed that light does not escape the property and because there is limited street lighting, a lamp post was included in the plan.

Mr. Thomas addressed drainage on the site and stated that Engineering was not in favor of any drainage connections to the catch basins. He affirmed that the drainage plan would be amended soon.

Mr. McCauley stated that the major concerns regarding the project dealt with TLAG of almost 5,500 sq. ft., reflective of a 10% increase. He spoke of the constraints due to the high-water table and possible mitigation. Mr. McCauley indicated increasing TLAG with projects going forward was not the intent of the Town.

Mr. McCauley affirmed the importance of the Design Review Board recommendations. He reiterated that the major concerns are drainage-related and noted that the owners will observe the recommendations of Engineering. Mr. Thomas stated his engineers would be completing the total runoff calculations.

Mr. Thomas affirmed that he had met with as many neighbors as he could (not only abutters) and obtained a letter of support signed by eight neighbors. Ms. Johnson asked for a copy of the letter. Mr. Thomas responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Johnson commented that there was a basement level bedroom and asked where the egress was for that area. Mr. Gluesing responded that the window was the egress since there was plenty of head room. The owners agreed that the egress was an emergency exit at 3 feet by 5 feet and fully opens out.

Ms. Johnson indicated that she did not particularly like dormers on this house and felt that elimination of such dormers would keep the design more classic. She also added that she was not in favor of the garage and asked if there was up lights attached to the trees. Mr. Thomas responded that there were two lights in each planting bed, which would shine up on the house and below the two bays. Ms. Johnson stressed that a condition in the staff report, itemized that such lighting should not be higher than the first floor. Mr. Thomas responded that the shine was below the first-floor window. Ms. Johnson asked if there were any possible options to the flood light and suggested that a down light could replace it. Mr. Thomas commented that when his 80ish mother comes to visit he does use a floodlight due to her poor vision. Ms. Johnson commented that path lighting might serve the same purpose. Mr. Thomas suggested using a single-head floodlight without a motion sensor.

Ms. Johnson affirmed that the Board would want to see the revised plans that are being amended in consideration of Engineering comments regarding stormwater management and the elevated water table.

Mr. Pinto asked if the Design Review Board (DRB) commented on the design of the structure on the top of the garage and the small window. Mr. Gluesing responded not. Ms. Woodward commented that she liked the affect presented on the plan and felt it helped to minimize the massing aspect.

Ms. Woodward queried about amount of clapboard over the top of the garage bays and the overhang. Mr. Gluesing responded four feet. Ms. Woodward opined that detail within that four feet might be preferred. Ms. Johnson affirmed that a small pergola might help that extended space over the garage. Ms. Woodward noted another significant expanse of clapboard on the plans, which might be more apparent to the neighbor at 36 Willow Road. Ms. Johnson stated the Japanese Maple tree on that side of the house helps mask those clapboards. Mr. Gluesing commented that a window could be added, if the Board preferred. Mr. Thomas agreed that he could include something over the garage in consideration of clapboard massing and could add a window in the master closet.

Mr. Gluesing requested conditioned approval of the project. Ms. Mallett complimented the applicant on the presented plans and mentioned that the process mandates that Engineering receive resolution to comments before a conditional approval could be granted. She emphasized that drainage is an important consideration. She thanked the applicants for working with their neighbors in the process and asked that they include a planting plan. Mr. Roberts confirmed there was a landscape plan and that the only tree added would be the dogwood tree to replace the Japanese Maple. He detailed other plantings to be included.

Ms. Woodward also thanked the owners for initiating communication with neighbors and maintaining trees on the property. She noted that the proposed landscape plan looked good.

Ms. Johnson confirmed the applicant would come back to the Board in consideration of the Engineering aspect and would also amend the plan to include the one light over the garage, window change within the dormers, something over the garage to balance the mass, as discussed. She added the inclusion of metal-type fencing for trees or shrubs in consideration that snow fences get lost with snow. Ms. Johnson offered that the Department could send the applicant a copy of the mentioned conditions.

Ms. Woodward motioned to continue LHR 19-12 – Large House Review for 34 Willow Road to December 16, 2019 and to extend the action deadline to December 17, 2019; with inclusion of final engineering reports and other materials requested. Ms. Mallett seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the motion.

LHR 19-13: Large House Review for 194 Pond Road and LHR 19-14: Large House Review for 196 Pond Road

Present: Larry Shind, Attorney; Joe Hassell, Owner; Tim Houlihan, Landscape Architect – Zen Associates; Marc Sullivan, Architect – Choo and Company; Joseph Losanno and Bert Corey; Engineers from DGT Associates, Pond Road residents: Lisa Howe, David Howe, Will Iselin, Walter Hunnewell, Emily Hunnewell and Frank Hunnewell.

Mr. Shind provided overview of the project, highlighting that the structures are being built on the proposed cleared area on a scenic road. He recognized that the two lots being developed (194 and 196 Pond Street) were purchased from the owners at 200 Pond Street, whose official address is Natick. He provided detail about other large homes in the area, as well as, property owned by Wellesley College. He mentioned that the drainage and stormwater management aspects had been tailored to the septic system proposed and that property lighting would be minimal.

Mr. Shind mentioned some comments presented by the DRB and the inclusion of those recommendations in the revised plans.

Mr. Sullivan presented detail about the architectural aspects of the proposed property at 194 Pond Road. Mr. Sullivan included revisions made per DRB recommendation.

Mr. McCauley referred to the staff report and indicated that Pond Road is a unique neighborhood on a scenic road and the proposed properties were not consistent with that character nor the related LHR criteria. He emphasized the 500-foot setbacks and the total clearing of the front setback, were not consistent with preservation of landscape standards. He further noted that the mass and scale of the homes, which are 40 feet from the roadway, are vastly different than other homes in the neighborhood.

Mr. McCauley affirmed that the lighting would have to be further examined to include intensity and proximity of such lighting. He read the bylaw regarding open space. He noted that Engineering had comments regarding drainage/runoff and construction management.

From a project-conditioning aspect, Mr. McCauley itemized areas of prime concern:

- Preserved vegetation (less clearly, especially in the front of the property)
- Elimination of upward-facing lighting
- Need for additional information regarding any increased water runoff
- Boundary setback detail as requested in the November 25th communication
- Construction management plan to be approved by Engineering
- Close adherence to other Town bylaws; LHR provides no exemptions
- Inclusion of scenic road hearing with Natural Resources Commission
- Adherence to standards within the Water Protection District
- Aspects involved with the proposed retaining wall
- Blasting prohibited

Mr. McCauley asked about the depth of buildings and the size of proposed basements; as well as, any blasting considerations.

In regard to the basements, Mr. Corey stated that blasting of ledge was not a consideration.

Neighbor David Howe, 110 Pond Road, asserted that the proposed structure would not be able to meet the preservation of landscape guidelines and the scale of the buildings well exceeded that 12,000 square foot requirement. He noted that in consideration of the minimally sized lots, the open space factor is not being followed. He suggested that conditional criteria should include the visual aspect and approach to the proposed properties being fundamentally different than the surrounding properties. He expressed concerns about drainage in consideration of 20% of the properties being impervious and are downhill from his property. Mr. Howe detailed the physical attributes of the two plots of land being proposed for extensive development, noting that much drainage currently directs to the land depression. He stated that 27 trees were proposed to be removed and USDA states that a medium sized tree would remove 2,380 gallons of water per year, and when multiplied by 27; the result would be over 64,000 gallons of water.

Mr. Howe expressed concern regarding the runoff of the proposed septic systems, including fertilizer, which would ultimately make its way to Lake Waban. Mr. Howe emphasized that he did not see how these projects could work and did not dispute the fact that the neighbor had the right to sell the properties. He suggested that the two lots be combined for the building of one house which could be relocated towards the back of the property.

Mr. Howe stressed that there has been no neighborhood engagement regarding the proposed plans. Mr. Corey responded that he had no awareness of that situation and apologized; he maintained that going forward, there would be inclusion.

Resident Frank Hunnewell, 37 Pond Road, stated Pond Road was created in 1770 and all who use the road are beneficiaries of the natural, scenic, largely undeveloped aspect of the area. He suggested the developers and owner regard the area in that context. Mr. Hunnewell further maintained that such development did not save or enhance the landscape which was not consistent with the bylaw.

Mr. Hunnewell affirmed that the scale of the proposed structures was inconsistent with the other properties in the neighborhood and are very close to the road. He indicated that the two houses were basically the same, just positioned differently. He noted the square footage of the two proposed homes is significantly larger than other existing properties on Pond Road.

Mr. Hunnewell suggested that a smaller house with increased setback, might help solve the problems and mentioned concerns. Mr. Hunnewell had great concern about the presence of effluent and fertilizers going into the Charles River Watershed and Paintshop Pond.

Resident Will Iselin, 100 Pond Road, stressed that the proposed houses are very large in consideration of the size of the lots, and far too close to the road. He echoed the comments of the other residents and suggested that the proposed homes be greatly decreased in size and shielded from the road. He reiterated the natural beauty of the Pond Road area and noted that a significant amount of the land there is held in conservation, as well as, part of his own property.

Resident Walter Hunnewell, 30 Pond Road, indicated that other neighbors have captured the concerns that he had. He stated that he would be interested in the TLAG calculations for both proposed properties and the existing TLAG associated with other homes close to the proposed properties. He stressed that the proposed houses seem disproportionately large in relation to the lots they are being built on.

Ms. Johnson noted that this LHR was not complete when considering Town Engineering requests and noted that the Scenic Roads Public Hearing with NRC was another aspect to be considered. She referred to the seven scenic roads in Wellesley and stressed that Pond Road is the pinnacle of those scenic roads and maintains National Historic District status at the Washington Street end. She detailed that the character of preservation goes far beyond landscaping and the proposed LHR projects did not contribute to the preservation aspect in any way.

Ms. Johnson stressed that this area is also classified as a Water Protection District, which is a very critical designation with Town wells on the Wellesley College campus and closer to Morses Pond. She stressed possible polluting of the drinking water. She stated that the septic system had not been designed yet, which was not appreciated by Town Engineering. She further noted that there are rooms in the plans which are not identified; per septic regulations there is approval for a five-bedroom home, only, which limits the room count to a total of ten (10) rooms.

Ms. Johnson questioned why there is a TLAG of 2,000 square feet in the attic. Mr. Sullivan responded that the attic space was double height and was based on the wall height only. He maintained that there were no plans for usable space in the attic. Ms. Johnson asked about the

purpose of the dormers on the attic level. Mr. Sullivan responded the dormers provided for enhanced aesthetics and extra lighting.

Ms. Johnson asked about the method of heat. Mr. Losanno responded that propane heating was likely. Ms. Johnson asked where the propane tank would be housed. Mr. Losanno replied underground. Ms. Johnson said that such underground placement would not be allowed in the Water Supply Protection District. Ms. Johnson stated that there were many considerations that needed to be addressed before there would be further consideration.

Mr. Shind noted that runoff had been addressed in the plans.

Mr. Losanno stated that the plan was implemented based on existing conditions and stressed that the drainage tests displayed that the soil was sandy and the water was absorbing well.

Mr. Losanno noted that water would be directed to three infiltration systems composed of 4x4 structures surrounded by stone. He added that there was no demonstration of net increase of volume or peak flows to Pond Road or the abutting properties, based on the performed analysis. Ms. Johnson asked how the differential would be calculated when mature trees are downed. Mr. Losanno responded that there was a guiding system which evaluates the existing vegetation on the property with an associated run-off coefficient. He emphasized that some of the 27 trees to be taken down were in poor condition and added that he did not know how much of the root system was effectively operating at this time.

Ms. Johnson acknowledged that other homes around the proposed properties were very large, but because the existing structures are adequately set back on the lot, they do not appear as large.

Ms. Woodward stated that she loves the “old New England” feel of the existing road and the proposed design plan was “in one’s face,” and completely opposite of what characterizes the road now. She affirmed that major changes would have to be done before endorsement could take place.

Ms. Woodward stated that she was very concerned that the sewer/septic system plan had not been included. Mr. McCauley mentioned that septic plans were submitted shortly before Thanksgiving and are in process. Ms. Woodward commented that the applicant’s representatives should not be presenting tonight without such septic plans.

Mr. Losanno stated that the two septic plans and leaching fields were designed before the building plans were completed and were shown on the plan, which was submitted to the Board of Health. Ms. Johnson queried about the septic system being far away from the house at 196 Pond Road and should be a distance of ten to twelve feet. Mr. Losanno commented that it was approximately 20 feet from the house, but because of the bump-out, it was easier to have the discharge pipe leave the house from another wall.

Ms. Johnson asked about the Board of Health timeline. Mr. Losanno responded that such septic approval had not been received yet.

Ms. Woodward questioned the content of a letter from DGT Associates to the Board of Health which stated: “there is no feasible location to design a leaching bed system on 194 Pond Road due to the existing hillside at the rear and required setbacks.” Mr. Losanno clarified the statement in that communication. Ms. Woodward thanked Mr. Losanno for his provided explanation.

Ms. Woodward indicated that she was very concerned about the indicated categorization of groupings of “hazardous” trees and all those trees are at the front of the property at 194 Pond Road.

She maintained that she wished to see strict scrutiny applied to the determination of trees being hazardous or not. She found it unlikely that all the trees designated for removal, were hazardous.

Ms. Mallett reiterated what Ms. Woodward, Mr. McCauley and Ms. Johnson had stated and indicated the Great Plain Avenue 40B project had sparked an outcry of opposition to extensive tree cutting, which was out of the town's control. She maintained that this project is within Town control. She commented that the presented Pond Road project package submitted had glaring omissions for such substantial projects. Ms. Mallett agreed with one of the neighbors who indicated that the two houses looked like the same plan and were not architecturally interesting. She stressed that the projects did not look favorable at this point.

Mr. Pinto stated that the proposed houses should be set back on Pond Road to be consistent with the other homes there and stressed that the two houses were too similar. He mentioned a lack of "architectural creativity."

Ms. Johnson suggested that Mr. McCauley provide the applicant and his team with other LHR applications that have been approved by the Board in the last two or three years, which have been as large as 15,000 square feet. She stressed that "articulation" can help make a large house appear less massive. She suggested that prospective buyers might not want that large a home, especially in consideration of the heating system. She recommended a more holistic approach with the plans.

Ms. Woodward commented about an unnamed room in the plan. Mr. Corey responded that it was more of a flex space, a possible library, billiards room, or an extension of the office. Ms. Woodward indicated that the look of the houses was institutional, each side being a mirror image of the other with very little architectural interest. She commented that the amount of windows was the only favorable aspect. She stressed that receiving a packet of revised plans on the day of the meeting, did not work for Board members and suggested that plans be submitted the Thursday or Friday before the meeting so members can review.

Mr. Schind stated that the team was working as expediently as possible in order to respond to the recommendations of DRB.

Mr. McCauley stated that the plans were submitted the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and there was no chance for review; the best option available was to distribute them to the Board the morning of the meeting. He further indicated that the submitted plans were not easy to follow and a comprehensive set of plans should have been submitted.

Mr. Losanno asked if an Engineering response was available. Mr. McCauley stated that he would get those comments sent tomorrow. Ms. Johnson mentioned that Engineering had concerns about everything from the small to the large; including placement of driveway pavers relative to the edge of the property and proximity to scenic road, absence of septic system plan and the absence of stormwater management plans.

With regard to wastewater management, Mr. McCauley stated the Engineering Department wanted to see additional calculations. Ms. Woodward noted that the applicant should consider the EPA general stormwater management permit application considering the development is over an acre in size. Mr. Cory responded that the team was doing so.

Mr. McCauley spoke of the "ponding" aspect previously mentioned and asked whether a Wetlands Commission review of such, would be necessary. Mr. Losanno stated that there were no hydric soils detected. Ms. Johnson added that a wetlands delineation would need to be included. Mr. Losanno affirmed that the area did not "pond" water but there is a depression (lower than the properties in the rear and lower than the street and the water drains).

Ms. Woodward commented that this might be a good time to check with NRC to confirm the hydric soil aspect.

Ms. Woodward motioned to continue LHR 19-13: Large House Review - 194 Pond Road and LHR 19-14: Large House Review – 196 Pond Road, to January 6, 2020 and the action deadline for both LHR 19-13 and LHR 19-14 be extended to February 4, 2020. Ms. Mallett seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the motion.

4. ZBA Cases for December 5, 2019 ZBA Hearing

17 Allen Road – 2019-92

Mr. McCauley detailed the Special Permit for proposed additions to a non-confirming structure and stated that the staff recommends ZBA approval of the Special Permit.

33 Dover Road/Wellesley College – 2019-93

Mr. McCauley stated that this request involves renewal of Special Permit for Wellesley College student housing and stated that staff recommended ZBA approval of a Special Permit with the same conditions as the existing Special Permit.

629 Washington Street/Wellesley College – 2019-94

Mr. McCauley informed the Board that this request involves renewal of Special Permit for faculty member housing, adding the staff recommended that ZBA approve the Special Permit.

828 Washington Street/Wellesley College – 2019-95

Mr. McCauley detailed the request involved renewal of Special Permit for use dwelling as an institute/center for Wellesley College – Wellesley Centers for Women. He added that staff recommended ZBA approval of the Special Permit.

Ms. Woodward asked why these Wellesley College properties were not grandfathered. Ms. Johnson commented that boarding housing, college dormitories and any rental on a room-by-room basis, required the use permit; and the use by Wellesley College may not have predated 1925.

16 Fells Road – 2019-96

Mr. McCauley stated the request was for a Special Permit to build a conforming 2-story addition on a non-confirming structure on a non-confirming lot. He stated that staff recommended that ZBA approve the Special Permit.

102 Abbott Road – 2019-97

Mr. McCauley detailed the request for Special Permit to replace three air-conditioning compressors in the existing location. He stated that staff recommended that ZBA approve the Special Permit but is concerned about some other aspects of the request.

Ms. Woodward stated that she felt rather perplexed by the request regarding tree removal, etc. Mr. McCauley agreed. Ms. Woodward suggested the Board recommend continuance until the other issues are addressed. Ms. Johnson agreed with a follow-up inspection of the property. Mr. McCauley stated that he would supply discussed comments to ZBA.

22 Cavanagh Road – 2019-98

Mr. McCauley introduced the request for Variance for lot area and side yard widths and the petitioners are requesting permission to replace an existing non-confirming rear addition with one no

more conforming. Mr. McCauley then recused himself. Ms. Johnson led discussion on the project and confirmed staff is recommending the ZBA approve the Variance.

17 Atwood Street – 2019-99

Mr. McCauley informed the Board that a Special Permit for side yard width in consideration that the existing structure does not comply with side yard setback and has a garage that does not meet the rear yard setback. The petitioners are proposing an addition which would extend the non-conformance and request demolition of the existing garage, build a new garage with living space above it. Mr. McCauley stated that staff recommended ZBA approve the Special Permit, but raised concern about the new living space above the garage could contribute a separate dwelling unit.

Ms. Johnson suggested the Board could recommend that the addition could not be used as a rental unit.

9R Locust Road – 2019-100

Mr. McCauley stated that the property is on the Weston/Weston Town line and the petitioner is seeking variance to allow a reduction in the offset of a side-facing garage from 30' to 22.3'

5. Other Business

Planning Articles for 2020 ATM

Mr. McCauley outlined the Planning Articles for 2020 ATM:

- Amendments to Tree Protection Bylaw
- Amendments to General Residence Bylaw and associated definitions
- Amendments to Natural Resource Protection Bylaw
- Creating Historic District for 323 Washington Street
- Expected petition for rezoning 125 Oakland Street (Sisters of Charity)

Mr. McCauley asked Board members to provide any further comments/suggestions to the Articles for Advisory Committee presentation.

Mr. Pinto inquired about the Fair Housing Officer's relationship to the Planning Board. Mr. McCauley was recognized as the Fair Housing Officer. Ms. Johnson mentioned that she had included a summary of the Fair Housing Officer's responsibilities within the annual Planning Board Report and the Selectmen will appoint Mr. McCauley to this position, officially. She detailed that there is a Fair Housing Committee composed of three members. She detailed that two of those members have moved out of Town. Mr. McCauley affirmed that the necessary appointments would be made shortly.

Ms. Woodward commented that there was continued work to be done on the Tree Protection Bylaw including revisions. Ms. Johnson noted that the Warrant Articles have to be submitted by December 27 and the Board could discuss/edit the Planning Articles, to include the Tree Protection Bylaw before that time. Mr. McCauley confirmed that after the proposed outline is presented to the Advisory Committee, then the drafting of the Planning Articles would take place and working drafts would be available for the December 16th Planning Board meeting. The current bylaw documentation was distributed to Board members.

FY2021 Planning Department Budget Discussion

Mr. McCauley distributed additional budget information and organizational chart to the Board, as the Selectmen wanted department organizational charts for inclusion in the Town budget book.

CPC Request

Ms. Johnson mentioned the 1897 Atlas of Wellesley and the 1935 Atlas of Wellesley needed extensive refurbishing and suggesting applying for a CPC grant to rebind and fix the pages of the two Atlas. She mentioned that the 1935 Atlas had never been digitized and said that the 1975 Atlas had no binding at all, which would be more expensive than rebinding. Ms. Johnson stated that the 1897 Atlas had already been digitalized and was available on various online sites.

Mr. Pinto recommended seeking CPC funding for the mentioned projects. Ms. Johnson stated that she would research the cost for digitization. Mr. McCauley commented that the book would have to be repaired before it could be digitized.

Planning Board Chair Report

Ms. Johnson thanked Mr. McCauley for the completeness of the meeting packets.

6. Minutes

Ms. Woodward moved to approve minutes dated October 21, 2019; with changes and corrections as noted by Catherine Johnson and Kathleen Woodward. Ms. Mallet seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the motion.

Ms. Woodward moved to approve minutes dated September 17, 2018; with corrections as noted by Kathleen Woodward. Ms. Mallet seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the motion.

Ms. Woodward moved to approve minutes dated November 4, 2019; with corrections as noted by Don McCauley and Kathleen Woodward. Ms. Mallet seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the motion.

There being no further business, Ms. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 9:52 p.m.

Minutes Approved: Monday, January 6, 2020

Next Meeting: Monday, December 16, 2019

Don McCauley, Planning Director