

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

TOWN HALL • 525 WASHINGTON STREET • WELLESLEY, MA 02482

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ZBA 2021-75
Petition of Wellesley Historical Society
323 Washington Street

Pursuant to due notice, the Special Permit Granting Authority held a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 7:30 pm, in the Juliani Meeting Room, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, on the petition of Wellesley Historical Society requesting renewal of a Special Permit pursuant to the provisions of Section 2 A 8 c and Section 25 of the Zoning Bylaw to allow the use of the structure at 323 Washington Street, in a Historic District and a General Residence District, for storage and care of collections, office, work and meeting space, and permitted activities on site.

On August 3, 2021, the Petitioner filed a request for a hearing before this Authority, and thereafter, due notice of the hearing was given by mailing and publication.

Present in behalf of the petition was Jared Parker, President, Wellesley Historical Society, who said that the request is for the fourth renewal of the special permit since the property was purchased in 2013. He said that the only change is that the property is now located in a single building historic district. He said that the Historical Society had a very successful campaign during the pandemic and were able to pay off the mortgage and now own the property outright. He said that they plan to use the property as originally decided.

A Board member said that in the earlier applications, there was discussion about the use of the property for third graders and events that might have as many as 75 people. He said that there was a long discussion about parking and what would happen in those instances. He said that there was also discussion about triggering ADA compliance.

Mr. Parker said that discussions regarding those issues are ongoing. He said that they plan to get people in the building when they can do it safely. He said that they have an agreement with the Unitarian Universalist Church that any Historical Society related parking does not interrupt church events. He said that Historical Society's events will be held during off peak hours for the most part. He said that they may return to in person meetings in the next year or so, and that will involve 12 members at 6 pm. He said that the collections cannot be moved to the house until some capital improvements are made. He said

that the ADA bathroom has been completed and there is discussion of adding an ADA ramp when the time comes. He said that the upgrades are being done piecemeal so as not to trigger ADA and Building Code compliance that they are not ready to handle.

There was no member of the public who wished to speak to the petition.

Statement of Facts

The Wellesley Historical Society is a 501 (c) charitable organization, formed in 1925 and incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1965. It is the Historical Resource Center for the Town of Wellesley.

The Wellesley Historical Society is the primary archival repository for the Town of Wellesley, and is responsible for the archives of several non-profit organizations. Collections include manuscripts, photographic images, maps and plans, art pieces, costume collections, butterflies, individual artifacts, and a significant textile and lace collection. In addition, the Society annually awards scholarships to Wellesley students to "inspire public involvement in and appreciation of Wellesley's heritage and culture by Wellesley youth in their endeavor to further their studies" via higher education.

The Society is currently located in the Dadmun/McNamara House at 229 Washington Street at the intersection of Routes 16 and 9.

The current collections of the Society occupy almost all the current usable space in the Dadmun/McNamara House (1,760 square feet) leaving insufficient work space for the care and ongoing cataloging of the collections, and monthly meetings of the Board of Directors.

The Society's continued use of 323 Washington Street reflects the organization's desire to fulfill its mission to a degree that it is unable to do within the confines of the Dadmun/McNamara House at 229 Washington Street. The Society intends to continue to use the space at the Dadmun/McNamara House for storage and research activities.

The Petitioner is requesting renewal of a Special Permit pursuant to the provisions of Section 2 A 8 c and Section 25 of the Zoning Bylaw to allow the use of the structure at 323 Washington Street, in a General Residence District, for storage and care of collections, office, work and meeting space, and permitted activities on site.

On October 5, 2021, the Planning Board reviewed the petition and recommended that the special permit be renewed.

Decision

This Authority has made a careful study of the materials submitted and the information presented at the hearing. The subject structure does not conform to the current Zoning Bylaw, as noted in the foregoing Statement of Facts.

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It is the opinion of this Authority that renewal of a Special Permit pursuant to the provisions of Section 2 A 8 c and Section 25 of the Zoning Bylaw to allow the use of the structure at 323 Washington Street, in a General Residence District, for storage and care of collections, office, work and meeting space, and permitted activities on site shall not disturb or disrupt the customary character of the residential neighborhood, and is in harmony with the intent and purpose of Section 25 of the Zoning Bylaw with respect to Vehicular Circulation, Driveways, Vehicle Queuing Lanes, Compatibility with Surroundings, Pedestrian Safety, Noxious Uses and Intensity of Uses.

Therefore, renewal of a Special Permit is granted for the requested use, as voted unanimously by this Authority at the Public Hearing, subject to the following conditions:


1. There shall be no overnight living in the premises.
2. Researchers who presently go to the Dadmum-McNamara House at 229 Washington Street shall be allowed to go to this building. It is anticipated that will consist of five people per week or one person per day.
3. The Historical Society may host the third graders in Wellesley Public Schools for seven days in June between 9 am and 1 pm for their Butterfly Program. The children will arrive via school bus that will drop them in the Unitarian Church parking lot where there is a connecting pathway to the Wellesley Historical Society property.
4. Hosting workshops for members of the Historical Society of no more than 30 people up to six times a year, typically from 7 to 9 pm on a weekday night and holding two special event fundraisers for less than 75 people in the evening shall be deferred until completion of building improvements for handicapped access and other pedestrian circulation.
5. This Special Permit shall expire two years from the date time stamped on the decision.


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APPEALS FROM THIS DECISION,
IF ANY, SHALL BE MADE PURSUANT
TO GENERAL LAWS, CHAPTER 40A,
SECTION 17, AND SHALL BE FILED
WITHIN 20 DAYS AFTER THE DATE
OF FILING OF THIS DECISION IN THE
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK.


Robert W. Levy, Acting Chairman


David G. Sheffield


Derek B. Redgate

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Applicant Wellesley Historical Society
Address 323 Washington Street

NOT VALID FOR RECORDING UNTIL CERTIFIED BY TOWN CLERK

In accordance with Section 11 of Chapter 40A of the Massachusetts General Laws, I hereby certify that twenty (20) days have elapsed after the within decision was filed in the office of the Town Clerk for the Town of Wellesley, and that no appeal has been filed, or that if such appeal has been filed, that it has been dismissed or denied.

Date:

Attest:

Cathryn Jane Kato
Town Clerk

cc: Planning Board
Inspector of Buildings
lrm