

**REPORT OF THE PLANNING BOARD
For the Period July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 (FY2014)**

Board Membership

As of July 1, 2013, the membership of the Planning Board was L. Deborah Carpenter, Jeanne S. Conroy, Neal Glick, Catherine Johnson, and Sara Preston. On March 4, 2014, L. Deborah Carpenter was reelected to a 5-year term and Catherine Johnson was reelected to a 3-year term. On June 17, 2013, the Board elected Jeanne S. Conroy as Chair, Sara Preston as Vice Chair, and Deborah Carpenter as Secretary, and these members continued in these roles through June 30, 2014. Absent the reelections, there were no changes in the membership of the Board through the course of the year. The Board does have a vacant Associate Member position, a position which has been vacant since June 2013.

Planning Staff

The Planning Staff consists of a part-time secretary/technical assistant, a planner, an assistant planning director and a planning director. The Planning Staff serves as professional staff to the Design Review Board, Historic District Commission, Housing Development Corporation, Denton Road Neighborhood Conservation District, and Fair Housing Committee. The Planning Staff also assists the Community Preservation Committee and Historical Commission with certain activities, as approved by the Planning Board.

During the reporting period Meghan Jop resigned as Planning Director, accepting a position as Deputy Executive Director for the Town; Michael Zehner was hired as Planning Director, beginning in December 2013.

Web Site

The Planning Board maintains a web site at the following address: www.wellesleyma.gov. This web site includes updated information on the regular activities and special projects of the Planning Department.

Citizen Inquiries

The Planning Department Office is open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. The Staff assists citizens with questions concerning zoning requirements, setbacks, and the process of project approval and scheduling of meetings with the Planning Board, Design Review Board, Historic District Commission, and the Denton Road Neighborhood Conservation District Commission. Frequently people are referred to the Planning Department by other Town Departments. It is estimated that the Planning Department handles approximately 100 such inquiries per week with approximately 25% of these involving in-office visits.

Meetings

During the reporting period the Planning Board held 27 meetings; ten (10) of these meetings included public hearings.

Regional Liaison

Former Planning Board member Frank S. DeMasi served for many years as Wellesley's representative to the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (RTAC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the MBTA Advisory Board, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). In the Spring of 2014 Mr. DeMasi resigned from these roles.

A Planning Board member is a member of the Metrowest Regional Collaborative (MWRC). The Town's membership in MWRC is vital to keep informed on state legislation and programs affecting our community and to participate collectively with neighboring communities in promoting our interests and needs before State agencies. Catherine Johnson served as the Board's appointee to the MWRC during the reporting period.

Special Town Meeting

Two (2) Special Town Meetings were held on December 9, 2013. The Planning Board did not sponsor articles for these two meetings; however, the Planning Board was required to hold a public hearing and issue a report and recommendation on Article 10 pertaining to the amendment of the Zoning Map to rezone a portion of the Cochituate Aqueduct from the Single Residence District - 10,000 Square Foot Area District to the Single Residence A District, to allow the property to be transferred to the adjacent Dunkin Donuts property at 951 Worcester Street and accommodate redevelopment of the business. Three (3) members of the Board recommended approval of the amendment, two (2) members were in opposition to the amendment. The amendment was approved by Town Meeting, and subsequently by the Massachusetts Attorney General.

Annual Town Meeting

The Planning Board cosponsored the following two (2) articles for 2014 Annual Town Meeting:

Article 33 - Single Building Historic District

The Planning Board cosponsored this Article with the Wellesley Historical Commission. The Article established Single Building Historic Districts at 26 Elmwood Road (the Sylvia Plath House) and 126 Woodlawn Avenue (the Fiske House), and amended the Zoning Map to include the properties in the Historic Districts overlay zoning district. The Article was approved by Town Meeting, and subsequently by the Massachusetts Attorney General.

Article 34 - Registered Marijuana Dispensaries

The Planning Board cosponsored this Article with the Board of Selectmen. The Article, approved by Town Meeting, amended the Zoning Bylaw to define and allow Registered Marijuana Dispensaries in certain zoning districts with the issuance of a Special Permit, additionally establishing specific requirements for the location and

operation of such uses. In addition, the Article repelled the yearlong moratorium on such uses adopted by Town in 2013. The adoption of these provisions was consistent with the mandate associated with the Statewide referendum adopted in 2012 and various opinions rendered by the Massachusetts Attorney General. The Article was approved by Town Meeting, and subsequently by the Massachusetts Attorney General.

Special Projects, Studies, and Comprehensive Plan Implementation

In 2007, the Planning Board completed the 2007-2017 Comprehensive Plan. Since the completion of the Plan, the Board has been working towards implementing goals, objectives and projects recommended by the plan. A copy of the Comprehensive Plan can be found online at www.wellesleyma.gov.

In the past year, the Board and Staff have worked on several tasks outlined in the Comprehensive Plan and initiated by the Board. These include the following:

Transportation Advisory Group

The Comprehensive Plan recommends the Town actively participate in regional transportation planning and explore the possibility of a shared-use shuttle bus system. On September 14, 2011, the study titled "Developing Fixed-Route Bus Service in the Town of Wellesley, A Report and Recommendations of the Public Transportation Working Group" was released. The two key findings of the report were to recommend the Town join the Metrowest Regional Transportation Authority (MWRTA) and to establish a Transportation Advisory Group to respond to transportation related questions and concerns and to advise the MWRTA representative should the Town join. The Board of Selectmen voted to join the MWRTA in January 2012, and the TAG was created to begin work on finding funding opportunities to create fixed route bus service in Wellesley. In March of 2013, the Town was awarded a Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Federal Grant \$400,000 to fund a pilot bus program for two years. In October 2013 the MWRTA began service of the route (Route 8). The Planning Director and Assistant Planning Director continue to work with the Transportation Advisory Group to assess the status of and look for opportunities to improve and extend MWRTA service to the Town.

Wellesley Commercial Initiative

The Comprehensive Plan recommends the Town try to preserve the character of village commercial districts and maintain a diverse array of independent businesses. To try and reinvigorate the Town's primary village, Wellesley Square, the Wellesley Square Initiative was formed in 2011 and includes members of the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Executive Director, and Planning Staff; the mission of the Initiative is to evaluate Wellesley Square and to begin coordination between the Town, merchants, and property owners. In May and June of 2013 the initiative was expanded to include Wellesley Hills. A number of interviews have been conducted of both merchants and property owners. Since the concept has expanded from Wellesley Square, the Town has renamed the initiative to the Wellesley Commercial Village Initiative. The intent of the initiative is to take a measured, collaborative

approach to pursuing current problems, identifying solutions, and taking actions that are beneficial to the commercial villages of Wellesley Square, Wellesley Hills, Lower Falls, Linden Square, and the Fells, its stakeholders: merchants, property owners, residents, and the Town.

Off-Street Parking Study

The Comprehensive Plan recommends seeking to implement new parking management tools in Town parking lots, encouraging housing development where feasible in commercial districts, and to strengthen zoning regulations and guidelines to ensure continuity of Town character. In efforts to improve out of date off-street parking provisions, the Planning Board hired Howard/Stein-Hudson in April 2013 to begin an Off-Street Parking Study to investigate ways to maintain the village character of the commercial districts while bringing the parking provisions up to date with innovative provisions such as shared parking, valet parking, and parking management. The Consultant completed their work on the Study towards the end of the reporting period and has provided the Board with a Final Report for consideration; it is expected that the Board will work to advance the policies and recommendations contained in the Report in FY15.

Noise and Outdoor Lighting Study

The Board initiated a Noise and Outdoor Lighting Study in the Spring of 2014, appointing a multidisciplinary committee to study the issues associated with excessive noise and light, and ultimately present recommendations to the Board. This Study will continue in FY15.

Wellesley College North 40

Wellesley College announced its intent to sell several “fringe” properties in the Spring of 2014. Staff and members of the Board have been appointed to a Town Committee tasked with studying the viability of the Town’s acquisition and eventual use of the property. The Study will continue in FY15.

Future Initiatives

In the upcoming fiscal year, the Planning Board will continue work on the Off-Street Parking Study, the Noise and Outdoor Lighting Study, and the study of the potential Town acquisition of the North 40. The Board has identified that they intend to use Special Project Consultant funds on a study of the Route 9 corridor. Additionally the Board and Staff will be working on updates to several of the procedural Rules and Regulations and recodification of portions of the Zoning Bylaw.

Projects of Significant Impact

The Project of Significant Impact (PSI) regulations mandate an assessment of the impacts of developments on the Town’s infrastructure. Under this provision, any new project exceeding 10,000 square feet of floor area, and building renovations exceeding 15,000 square feet for a change of use, requires the issuance of a Special Permit by the Planning Board. The Planning Board is authorized to approve a project if it deems

that there are adequate municipal services available. If the services are not adequate an applicant may propose off-site improvements (e.g. street and sidewalk improvements, new storm water drainage systems) to correct the inadequacy and/or to ensure that the development does not overburden the roads and other municipal facilities. The cost of necessary mitigation is borne by the applicant.

During the reporting period, the Planning Board considered one (1) new PSI for the Town's Tolles-Parsons Senior Center. The Special Permit did not garner the necessary super-majority approval vote of the Board, and was therefore denied based on a vote of 3 members in favor and 2 opposed.

Additionally, the Board considered modifications and/or determinations associated with previously issued PSI Special Permits for the Wellesley Inn project and a new First-Year Residence Hall at Babson College.

Inclusionary Zoning

On a motion jointly developed between the Housing Development Corporation and the Planning Board, the 2005 Annual Town Meeting adopted Inclusionary zoning as a requirement for Projects of Significant Impact in commercial districts. This requirement was extended to residential subdivisions at the 2006 Annual Town Meeting. These projects are required to provide a ratio of affordable housing units based on the size of the proposed development.

The Planning Board considered a single Inclusionary Zoning action during the reporting period, an amendment to the Inclusionary Zoning provision associated with the Wellesley Inn PSI.

Review of Unaccepted Streets

The Zoning Bylaw authorizes the Planning Board to determine whether an unaccepted street provides adequate frontage prior to the issuance of any building permits for construction on lots located on such streets. There are 105 unaccepted streets in Wellesley comprising approximately 12 miles of roadway. A number of inadequate ways have been upgraded at no cost to the Town since this provision was adopted.

During the course of the year the Planning Board received two (2) new applications proposing to build new or expand existing houses whereupon the above described review was triggered; these applications were for properties on Dearborn Street and Twitchell Street. The Board also reviewed aspects of previously considered and/or approved proposals along Kimlo Road, Hopkinson Road, Pinevale Road, Edgemoor Road, and Caroline Street.

Scenic Roads

There are seven roads in Wellesley that have been designated by vote of Town Meeting as Scenic Roads under the State Act; these include Benvenue Street, Cartwright Road, Cheney Drive, Pond Road, Squirrel Road, Brookside Road and Waterway/Brookway. The Act grants the Planning Board approval authority, at a public

hearing, to review the proposed removal and/or alteration of trees, stone walls or portions of stone walls along any designated Scenic Road. During the course of the reporting period there were no Scenic Road applications submitted for the Planning Board's consideration.

Large House Review

The Planning Board received 4 Large House Review applications during the reporting period. Two (2) of the applications were for new houses (400 Worcester Street and 15 Croton Street) and two (2) were for additions (92/98 Livingston Road and 33 Pine Street). The Board also considered major revisions for two (2) previously approved applications and considered an application material waiver request for a future application.

Review of Zoning Board of Appeals Petitions

The Zoning Bylaw authorizes the Planning Board to review and recommend action on all petitions before the Zoning Board of Appeals. Recommendations are made on cases based on planning principles, legal requirements, fairness, maintaining the integrity of the Zoning Bylaw and Map, and what the Board believes to be in the best interest of the Town. The Board submitted comments recommending approval, conditional approval or denial for 83 petitions during the year. Of the 83 recommendations, the Planning Board recommended denial of 25 petitions of which 16 were granted by the ZBA. The Planning Board also reviewed 3 Site Plan applications for the Babson College First Year Residential Hall, the Wellesley Inn, and the Fuller Brook Park Project.

Subdivision Control

There were no new subdivisions submitted for the Board's consideration during the reporting period. The Planning Board continued its administration of two active subdivisions which are in various stages of development: Polaris Circle (7 lots) and #15 - 27 Pembroke Road (3 lots).

The Planning Board reviewed seven (7) Approval Not Required (ANR) plans during the reporting period. Five (5) of these plans were endorsed by the Board, the Board accepted the withdrawal of one (1) plan, and denied endorsement of one plan. Litigation against the Board and the Town was initiated by the applicant for the plan denied endorsement by the Board.

Street Construction Bonds

The Planning Board requires surety bonds for work to be done by private contractors in conjunction with new subdivision streets and for work to improve unaccepted streets to minimum standards (Review of Adequacy). At the end of the reporting period the Board was holding \$173,000 in surety bonds associated with outstanding subdivision street construction work. Additionally, at the end of reporting period the Board was holding \$82,463 in street construction surety bonds associated with Review of Adequacy petitions.

Project Review and Submission Fees

The Planning Department collects project submission fees associated with the application types noted herein; fees offset the cost of copies, mailings, advertising, and staff time associated with the review and preparation of reports, plans and other materials. The Planning Department received \$164,057.80 in submission fees in FY14.