75-23

TOWN OF WELLESLEY MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF APPEAL

~~THEODORE C. MERLO~~
F. LESTER FRASER
WILLIAM O. HEWETT
Henry H. Thayer

KATHARINE E. TOY
Administrative Secretary
Telephone
235-1664

Board of Appeal

Petition of the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association

Pursuant to due notice the Board of Appeal held a public hearing in the hearing room on the second floor of the Town Hall at 8:25 p.m. on June 26, 1975, on the petition of the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association (a charitable corporation) requesting permission to enlarge its building at 219 Washington Street by the construction of an addition thereto, and to use the same for a semi-public institution of a philanthropic character as provided under Section II, paragraph 8 (c) of the Zoning By-law.

The addition to 219 Washington Street is to be leased to Wellesley Center, Inc., a charitable corporation, and is to be used for a meeting place for all ages, a drop-in center for Senior citizens, a comprehensive information and referral agency for all social services, and a center for hobby and recreational programs for the entire community.

Under date of June 2 , 1975, peititioner filed its petition for a hearing before this Board and thereafter due notice of the hearing was given by mailing and publication.

The petitioner filed a memorandum at the time of the hearing.

Irving I. Medoff, a lawyer, of Natick, Massachusetts, represented the petitioner at the hearing.

The following persons from Wellesley spoke in favor of the petition:

Dr. Delbert L. Jackson, Jr. of 182 Winding River Road.
C. Joseph Grignaffini of 16 Fells Circle
Frank R. Shaw of 65 Arnold Road
Mrs. Ernest Henderson, 3rd, of 171 Edmonds Road
Richard L. Gardiner, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, of 9 Livermore Road
Felix Juliani, Selectman, of 6 Sylvester Terrace.
John W. Kaufmann of 8 Commonwealth Park
Stephen R. Burtt, Chairman of the Recreation Committee, of 24 Birch Road, Wellesley

Also speaking in favor of the petition were:

Larry Bearfield of the Nourmbega Council of the Boy Scouts of America, 2044 Beacon Street, Newton (Waban)
Joseph Strazulla, head of the Wellesley High School's

Key Club, of 47 Page Road, Newton.

Lawrence H. Stone, Director of the Wellesley Chapter of the American Red Cross, of 90 Fairbanks Avenue, Wellesley, filed a letter from the Chapter, which letter was generally favorable towards the petition. However, he expressed his concern over the terms of the proposed lease from Friendly Aid to the entity that would operate the proposed community center. He also inquired about the proposed annual funding of the program.

Sumner H. Babcock, moderator of the First Congregational Church, of 113 Abbott Road, Wellesley, stated that the Church supported the petition in principle.

Mr. and Mrs. Edmund J. B. Doherty of 33 Woodlawn Avenue, Wellesley, spoke in opposition to the petition and stated that they were worried about possible vandalism and about the effect of the proposed activity on the tax rate.

William D. Stewart of 37 Woodlawn Avenue, Wellesley, expressed concern over the funding for the activity, the need for architectural control, and the hazards to children occasioned by the traffic.

The Board was informed that the following organizations have expressed interest in and support of the Wellesley Center and may wish to use its facilities for various meetings and activities:

American Association of University Women
American Legion Auxiliary
Boy Scouts of America, Norumbega Council
Church Women United of Wellesley
First Church of Christ, Scientist, Wellesley
Friendship Circle
House and Garden Club of Wellesley
Italo-American Educational Club-Women's Auxiliary
Kiwanis Club of Wellesley
League of Women Voters of Wellesley
Newcomers Club
Postcomers Club
Quota Club of Wellesley
Republican Women of Wellesley
St. James the Great Church
St. John the Evangelist Church
St. Paul's Parish
Temple Beth Elohim Sisterhood
V.F.W. Auxiliary #5190
The Village Churchwomen-Wellesley Congregational Church
Wellesley Arts and Crafts, Inc.
Wellesley Chamber of Commerce
Wellesley Circle-Florence Crittendon League
Wellesley Garden Club
Wellesley Garden Study Group
Wellesley Gardner's Guild
Wellesley Girl Scout Troop #703
Wellesley Girl Scout Troop #722

Wellesley Hills Junior Women's Club
Wellesley Hills Women's Club
Wellesley Jaycees
Wellesley Society of Artists
Wellesley Stitchers
Wellesley Youth Center
Women of St. Andrew's

Statement of Facts

The premises in question are within a single residence district. The cited By-Law provision permits a use for a public or semi-public institution of a philanthropic, charitable or religious character, if permission is obtained from the Board of Appeals as provided in Section XXIV of the By-Law. Subsection D of Section XXIV states that no permission sought under Section II, paragraph 8, shall be granted unless the Board of Appeal shall, after investigation in each case, make a written finding, which shall be filed with its records, that the proposed use will not substantially reduce the value of any property within the district, and will not otherwise be injurious, obnoxious, or offensive to the neighborhood. This decision constitutes such a written finding.

The petitioner has furnished the Board with a memorandum of the history and background of the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association.

The Wellesley Freindly Aid Association was founded during the Christmas season of 1898 when a family, left destitute by a devastating fire, received help from a committee of three women appointed by the Wellesley Hills Women's Club. This committee (or their successors) withdrew from the Women's Club and Friendly Aid was incorporated under the Laws of Massachusetts "for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the poor, the suffering, and the friendless in Wellesley". By 1909, many activities had developed: a clothing department, an employment bureau, a free bed at the Newton Hospital and, at the request of the selectmen, a committee paid visits to the Poor Farm (now the Wellesley Country Club).

It was not until 1924 that Friendly Aid had its first headquarters at 1 Grantland Road, and this expansion led to the development of both Family Service and Nursing & Health departments.

During the next quarter century, many programs and activities were developed including the Well-Child Conference, the Eye Clinic and a Motor Corps.

Friendly Aid established the Wellesley Community Chest & Council (which later became part of United Fund), and developed a program of preventive psychiatry which was to become the Human Relations Service.

By 1950, a need for new and larger quarters was felt, and the present Friendly Aid property at 219 Washington Street was acquired. The new Friendly Aid home was dedicated on June 10th, 1950, to be a "a home for the Friendly Aid and a center to meet the future needs of the community".

The purposes of the Association, as incorporated, are to serve the community of Wellesley and other communities in the West Metropolitan Boston area, by offering to individuals and families, friendly assistance for the maintenance of good health, social adjustment and wholesome family living, and providing visiting nursing service and material assistance when otherwise unavailable.

Present activities of the Friendly Aid include providing a home and focus for Family Counseling Service (Region West), a professional social service agency now serving Wellesley, Weston, Wayland, Sherborn and Natick from the Friendly Aid office. Although a separate entity, this operation is an outgrowth of the original Family Service Committee of 50 years ago.

Programs directly operated by Friendly Aid include the Camp Committee which raises funds for and provides camping experiences for Wellesley youngsters.

Friendly Aid works very closely with the Council on Aging. For the past 25 years, Friendship Circle, a group of Senior ladies, has met weekly in the Association living room. The size of the group must be limited to 25-30 active members due to the size of the present facility.

A plan entitled "Topographic Site Plan Wellesley, Mass." dated February 27, 1973, by Harry R. Feldman, Inc., shows that the proposed building is to be an addition to the existing building of the petitioner which is known as and numbered 219 Washington Street. This plan shows 62 parking spaces. The driveway which enters the property from the Route 9 ramp and which, according to the plan, is of varying width to a minimum of about 11 feet, is noted on the plan as being "Existing drive to be abandoned". A new driveway entering from the ramp is shown on the plan. It has a minimum width of 20 feet of paved area.

There have also been filed with the Board detailed elevations and floor plans for the proposed addition which are entitled "Wellesley Civic Center" and are dated December 3, 1974.

The front elevation shows an attractive colonnaded building which has an entrance ramp for the handicapped.

The first floor plan shows the layout (extending from the 219 Washington Street building to the northwest end of the addition) of a central corridor and, on either side, an arts and crafts room, a woodworking room, hobby studio, a cafeteria, a

photographic laboratory, rest rooms and utility areas, a youth office, and at the end of the corridor a youth hall and stage.

The second floor layout shows a central corridor and, on either side, offices for the Council on Aging and the Center Director, a creative workshop, a sewing room, solarium, rest rooms, a card room, a kitchen, a coat room, and at the end of the corridor, a meeting room.

The Board has viewed the premises and has observed the following conditions:

The property involved is in a "vee" between Town of Wellesley land (Department of Public Works), Washington Street and the one-way ramp leading from Washington Street down to the westbound lanes of Worcester Street.

By reason of its location in the "vee" it is somewhat isolated from any nearby residences. The land features surrounding the site are the American Red Cross and the Congregational Church on the northeast, Washington Street and the ramp on the southeast and south, and the Public Works yard on the west.

Access will be over the existing driveway to the present building at 219 Washington Street and over the new driveway to be built which will lead to and from the ramp to Worcester Street.

Traffic along the right lane of Washington Street and down the ramp to Worcester Street, while not bumper-to-bumper, is continuous since the controlling traffic signal displays a right turn green arrow even when through traffic (in the left westbound lane) on Washington Street is stopped by a red signal. On the other hand, the visibility from the petitioner's premises at the present point of exit to the right hand Washington Street land and the ramp is good since it lies across the Friendly Aid Association's lawn.

There is on file with the Board a letter of 19 June 1975 from Lieutenant Thomas J. Keefe, Jr. of the Wellesley Police Department, in which Lt. Keefe stated that the Department did not foresee any traffic problems in the area that would be caused by the operation of the Center.

There is also on file a letter from the Director of the Board of Public Works dated 17 June 1975, by which the Board of Public Works granted preliminary approval for the use of its parking lot below and adjacent to the petitioner's property, subject to the following limitations:

1. The lot would not be available on days of heavy snowfall.

2. The lot would be available only during the evening or on weekends; but, not during daytime working hours.

3. Only adults would be allowed to park there.

4. The Department of Public Works would be contacted prior to each proposed use of the lot.

5. In each instance in which the lot was to be used, a police officer would be detailed.

Decision

In order to grant the permit sought by petitioner the Board must find as follows (Zoning By-Law; Section II, paragraph 8(c) and Section XXIV, paragraph D):

1. that the use is that of a semi-public institution of a philanthropic character,

2. that the use will not substantially reduce the value of any property within the district, and

3. that the use will not otherwise be injurious, obnoxious, or offensive to the neighborhood.

The Board finds that the petitioner is a semi-public institution. All members of the Wellesley community are entitled to avail themselves of the petitioner's services. The operating entity for the Center, Wellesley Center Inc., meets the same criteria. As for their philanthropic quality, the Board finds the following definitions of philanthropy, among others:

1. "goodwill to fellow men; especially active effort to promote human welfare" (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, G & C Merriam Company, 1963)

2. "an action or institution designed to promote human welfare" (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969)

The Board finds that the purposes of the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association and Wellesley Center, Inc., as exemplified by the stated purposes of the Center, will promote the welfare of the Town's inhabitants and are, therefore, philanthropic.

The Board finds that the petitioner's proposed use will not substantially reduce the value of any property within the zoning district. As noted above, the premises are surrounded by the Red Cross, the Congregational Church, the Public Works yard, and Washington Street and the ramp road. On one side there are nearby residences; but, they are intermingled with the Red Cross, Human Relations Service, a church, and various parking lots. The Board can foresee no reduction in property values in the area, let alone "substantial" ones.

The Board finds that the petitioner's proposed use will not otherwise be injurious, obnoxious, or offensive to the neighborhood by reason of the fact that the neighborhood is already sub-

ject to various public and semi-public charitable and philanthropic uses and, of these uses, that of the petitioner will be among the most distant from the residences.

The problem of access does concern the Board. However, the Board seeks to mitigate this problem by the conditions appended hereto.

Accordingly, the Board hereby grants permission to the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association to enlarge its building at 219 Washington Street by the construction of an addition thereto, and to use the same for a semi-public institution of a philanthropic character as provided under Section II, paragraph 8 (c) of the Zoning By-law, the construction to be carried out in accordance with the plans filed with this Board.

Conditions

The foregoing permission is subject, however, to the following conditions:

1. Youth activities shall be limited to a maximum of 200 persons in attendance.

2. A 6 foot high chain link fence will be maintained along the entire length of the northeasterly boundary of the premises, which boundary is designated "426.11' S 41° 45' E" on the topographic site plan dated February 27, 1973 which is on file with the Board. There shall be maintained a 8 foot wide opening secured by two 4 foot gates in that portion of the fence that extends over the asphalt paved driveway leading to and from the properties of the American National Red Cross and the First Congregational Church of Wellesley Hills as shown on the topographic plan.

3. Shubbery shall be planted along the petitioner's side of the chain link fence referred to in condition 2 above in those areas where the distance between the fence and adjacent structures or paving will permit such planting.

4. The petitioner shall comply with the conditions limiting the parking in the Department of Public Works parking lot as set forth in the Department's letter of 17 June 1975.

5. If parking in the Department of Public Works parking lot by persons other than Department employees would constitute a violation of the Zoning By-Law, permission for such parking must be obtained from this Board pursuant to a duly held public hearing.

6. There shall be maintained adequate visiblity between Washington Street and the point at which the petitioner's present or future driveway exits onto the ramp road to Route 9, the maintenance of such visibility to require the clearing of brush and bushes but not the felling of mature trees.

7. When it may be reasonably expected that more than 150 persons may be leaving from the premises all within a short period

of time after the conclusion of a particular event or meeting, a police officer shall be detailed to control the traffic flow.

F. Lester Fraser

William O. Hewett

Henry H. Thayer

Filed on _____, 1975

with the Town Clerk