

**REPORT OF THE PLANNING BOARD
For the Period July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007**

Membership

On October 24, 2006 the Planning Board accepted with regret the resignations of Mary Sue Wright and Frank S. DeMasi. On October 30, 2006 at a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board Associate Member Chris Chan was appointed to fill one of the vacancies until the March election. On November 30, 2006 the Planning Board accepted with regret the resignation of Edward H. Chazen. On December 11, 2006 at a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board former Planning Board member James C. Meade was appointed to fill the second vacancy until the March election. There were three Planning Board seats on the ballot for the March 6, 2007 Town Election, a five year term, a three year term and a one year term. Donald S. McCauley ran for and was elected to the five-year term. Thomas Frisardi ran for and was elected to the three year term and Chris Chan ran for and was elected to the one year term. May 21, 2007 the Board reorganized for the upcoming year by electing Thomas Frisardi as Chair, Rose Mary Donahue as Vice Chair and Chris Chan as Secretary. On June 4, 2007 at a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board Jeffrey Kaplan was appointed as Associate Member to fill the vacancy in the Associate Member position caused by the appointment of Chris Chan to the Board and Barbara Lehmann was appointed, until the March 2008 election, to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Chazen. Mr. Chazen's resignation was received after the 2007 election ballot had been set.

The Planning Board Associate Member is authorized to vote as a full member of the Board on special permit cases if for any reason one of the elected members cannot participate.

Comprehensive Plan

The Planning Board completed Phase II of the 2007 – 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update for Wellesley. On March 20, 2007 the Board voted unanimously to accept the final document. Compact disks of the Plan (Phases I and II) were distributed to Town officials at the 2007 Annual Town Meeting. The Board expressed its thanks to the 13 member Steering Committee composed of the members of the Planning Board and precinct representatives, Gerry Hume; Richard McGhee; Jackie Hatch; Joellen Toussaint; Hank Lysaght; Barbara McMahon; and Judith Hull. The Comprehensive Plan contains recommendations and priorities for municipal planning, including zoning, land use, transportation, housing, open space, recreation and Town services. Maintaining an up-to-date Comprehensive Plan is a requirement under State Law. The Planning Board last revised the Comprehensive Plan in 1994.

The web site for the Comprehensive Plan Project is http://www.wellesleyma.gov/Pages/WellesleyMA_Planning/CompPlan

2007 Annual Town Meeting

The Planning Board developed a package of the following thirteen articles for the Warrant for Annual Town meeting:

Article 40 to modify the definition of Floor Area Ratio and add eight new definitions to Section IA of the Zoning Bylaw, including a definition of structure that would include certain retaining walls as structures subject to the Zoning Bylaw;

Article 41 to Section XXI of the Zoning Bylaw to update the off street parking regulations;

Article 42 to amend Section XVIA of the Zoning Bylaw to update the process and requirements for traffic review for Projects of Significant Impact;

Article 43 to restate the 500 foot rule in Section XIX of the Zoning Bylaw;

Article 44 to amend the provisions of Section XIX of the Zoning Bylaw restricting noise emitting equipment in setback areas;

Article 45 to amend Sections IA and XVIB of the Zoning Bylaw to exempt certain assisted units provided under inclusionary zoning provisions of the Zoning Bylaw from density limitations;

Article 46 to amend Section XIX of the Zoning Bylaw to increase the size of accessory buildings exempt from setback requirements;

Article 47 to amend provisions of Section XX of the Zoning Bylaw concerning the calculation of height of buildings;

Article 48 to insert a bulk factor maximum in Section XIX of the Zoning Bylaw;

Article 49 to amend Section XVII of the Zoning Bylaw to define certain changes to existing non-conforming structures as being substantially more detrimental than the existing structure;

Article 50 to amend Section XIX of the Zoning Bylaw to amend setback requirements for residential buildings in commercial and building districts;

Article 51 to amend Section II of the Zoning Bylaw to require a special permit for certain changes of grade; and

Article 52 to reorganize the provisions of Section XVIA of the Zoning Bylaw;

These articles were derived in part from discussions during the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan and in part to respond to concerns brought to the Board's attention during the course of the year.

In the meetings and hearings that followed the submission of the articles the Planning Board received considerable favorable feedback. However, there were some matters raising serious concerns, particularly on measurement issues raised by Articles 47, 48, 49 and 51. Consequently the Board decided to limit the motion on Article 40 to the issue of retaining walls and to make no motion on Articles 47, 48, 49, 50 and 51.

Town Meeting became embroiled in other very contentious issues and consequently continued for many more sessions than is typical. The Planning Board articles were included toward the end of the Warrant. The Board presented Article 40, concerning retaining walls. After considerable debate Town Meeting failed to adopt Article 40 by the required 2/3 vote. Not wanting to unnecessarily extend Town Meeting the Board decided to make no motion on the balance of its articles and bring the package before a Fall 2007 Special Town Meeting.

Neighborhood Conservation District

Sponsored by the Historical Commission, the Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) was authorized by an amendment to the Town Bylaw under Article 58. The adoption of this amendment will enable any neighborhood to utilize the adopted process to seek Town Meeting approval of an NCD. The Denton Road neighborhood was instrumental in lobbying for the passage of NCD authorization.

Planning Department Planner Meghan Jop gave considerable assistance and guidance to the Historical Commission and representatives of the Denton Road neighborhood committee in the preparation of the article, the motion, supporting materials and the Town Meeting presentation itself.

The Planning Board supported the NCD authorization. The concept was discussed and is recommended in the new Comprehensive Plan as an approach to control of the negative aspects of "Mansionization" that allows the neighborhood residents to decide the type and extent of limits applied.

65 Washington Street and 1 Hillside Road Proposal

A citizens petition was presented to Town Meeting to rezone two vacant parcels of land on Washington Street in Wellesley Lower Falls from Single Residence District to the Multi Family Residence District under Article 53. Prior to Town Meeting, Michael J. Connolly, one of the owners of the property, presented to the Town a proposal to build two duplex buildings (four units) on the two lots. During the course of discussions between Mr. Connolly and town officials consideration was given to increasing the project to five dwelling units, a duplex building and a triplex building, with one affordable unit. During the course of Town Meeting the owners and the Town agreed to a development agreement detailing the four unit project and providing for a payment to the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation, but conditioned on approval of the zoning change by Town Meeting. Considerable time was spent by the Board of Selectmen, Town Counsel and the Planning Board in reviewing the proposal and negotiating the development agreement. The four unit project was presented to the Town Meeting but the rezoning failed to receive a two thirds 2/3 favorable vote.

Street Acceptance

Three streets were proposed for acceptance; Burnett Lane (Article 27), Sabrina Road (Article 28) and Woodside Avenue (Article 29). Burnett Lane and Sabrina Road were not moved. Woodside Avenue was adopted as a public way with betterments.

Projects of Significant Impact

Linden Square

The project involves the redevelopment of the 18.4 acre site on the north and south sides of Linden Street to build 276,200 square feet of retail and office space and seven units of affordable housing (three units on land adjacent to the site and four units on-site).

This project was conditionally approved by the Planning Board as a PSI in February 2006. Among the mitigation measures implemented are a storm drainage pump system to alleviate flooding at 151 Linden Street, the land taking at the Linden Street/Weston Road intersection to allow for a right turn “slip lane” to facilitate north bound Weston Road traffic, the vehicle video detection cameras and the interconnecting fiber optic cable has been installed at traffic impacted intersections (software at a central computer operates this system to maximize smooth traffic flow), and the right turn lane southbound on Kingsbury Street onto Linden Street (westbound) has been constructed with no adverse impact on the sidewalk in that section.

Construction commenced in July 2006. Phase I (northern side of Linden Street) is expected to be completed in late 2007. Phase II (southern side of Linden Street) is scheduled to be completed in 2009.

Wellesley Inn

In June of 2004 the White family sold the Wellesley Inn to Westbrook Partners after having owned and managed the property for approximately 40 years. No rooms were rented after February 2005 and the restaurant closed in June of 2005. Demolition of the building began in April of 2006. The Plans were developed by Westbrook’s partner Spaulding and Slye (later to become Jones Lange LaSalle) for a new complex to house 18 condominium units and approximately 8,000 square feet of retail space. The new complex would total approximately 70,000 square feet of building floor area. Six affordable housing units will be provided by the applicant to satisfy the Inclusionary Zoning requirements. The latest version of the plan does not include any restaurant space due to concerns about insufficient off-street parking. The Planning Board voted to conditionally approve the PSI special permit in February of 2007.

Wellesley Country Club

In December 2005 an application was received from the Wellesley Country Club to build a new clubhouse building. The approximately 54,000 square foot building would be located east of the present clubhouse which is to be demolished. The public hearing opened in January 2006. The Planning Board voted to conditionally approve the PSI special permit in August of 2006.

Wellesley Motor Inn

The Motor Inn and restaurant on Route 9 were closed in 2005. There are two buildings on the site, a two story motel with restaurant and a three story motel building. In February the

Board reviewed the Inclusionary Zoning requirements on behalf of the applicant/owner in conjunction with a project to demolish the motel building, to renovate the existing two - story motel annex, which is intended as residential condominiums and to construct a 24,000 square foot two-story commercial building with restaurants and a bank on the first floor and offices on the second floor. The Board determined that the affordable housing commitment is four units of housing which the owner intends to construct on-site. The PSI application was made early in the 2008 fiscal year.

27 Washington Street

In the fall of 1994 the Grossman's hardware store and lumber yard closed its doors. The approximately five acre property on the Charles River in Wellesley Lower Falls was acquired by Wellesley Truman Realty Trust to develop a Stop and Shop supermarket. Area residents concerned about traffic and the intensity of the use have opposed the supermarket proposal.

Notwithstanding several pending court cases the land owner applied to the Planning Board for approval of a Project of Significant Impact (PSI). The hearing had been kept open for many months pending receipt and review of traffic data. On October 10, 2000 final comments were received, the hearing was closed and the Planning Board voted to deny the application without prejudice. On December 22, 2000 the applicant appealed the decision of the Planning Board. As of this writing this case has not come to trial.

Around the time of the 2007 Annual Town Meeting the Town became aware of the pending sale of the property to National Development, a locally owned and operated firm based in Newton Lower Falls. The property transferred to National in June. Town officials anticipate cooperatively working with National on a project to improve the Charles Riverfront, benefit the area and the Town as a whole.

Wellesley Manor Nursing Home – Fells Hollow

The Planning Board reviewed and made comments to the Zoning Board of Appeals concerning a proposal to convert and expand the Wellesley Manor Nursing Home to provide 28 units of age-restricted (55+) housing under the M.G.L Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit process. This condominium project will provide that seven units (25%) will be affordable. At the end of the fiscal year the units are currently for sale.

A lottery of eligible buyers was held for the affordable units. Planning Department staff assisted the Housing Development Corporation with administrative work including inquiries and application intake concerning the lottery.

St. James Church

A group of Town officials representing the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and Community Preservation Committee has met to discuss alternative future use of this approximately eight acre property on Route 9 west of Weston Road. The single residence zoned parcel is partly within the Flood Plain District and wholly within the Water Supply Protection District. This area will be the subject of a planning study which is to include all of the land along Route 9 from Weston Road to the Natick line. This study is expected to be completed late in 2007.

Rockland Street Bridge

Six bridges over the MBTA Commuter Rail have been rebuilt in recent years. Rockland Street Bridge is an original structure dating to 1921 and is in poor condition. Last year the allowable weight limit was reduced to three tons (less than some SUV's.) Frank S. DeMasi, the Town's representative to and Vice-Chair of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee has worked with other Town officials, Representative Alice Peisch and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in encouraging that this needed bridge reconstruction project is designed and bid as soon as possible.

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 for a ratio of affordable housing units based on the size of the proposed development. The Planning Board works closely with the Housing Development Corporation in the administration of this new provision.

Under the adopted Inclusionary Zoning provision the Planning Board hears and decides requests for special permits to allow the required affordable units to be provided on a site other than the development site and to allow a cash payment to the housing trust fund in lieu of providing the affordable units. The Board reviewed and approved permit requests in conjunction with three projects, Linden Square, Wellesley Inn and Wellesley Motor Inn (Route 9). As a result there are developer commitments to build 17 affordable housing units (seven in conjunction with the Linden Square development, six in conjunction with the Wellesley Inn project and four in conjunction with the Wellesley Motor Inn project.)

Review of Unaccepted Streets

Since 1985 Section XIX of the Zoning Bylaw has provided that prior to the issuance of building permits for new houses on unaccepted streets the Planning Board must review and determine whether the street providing access to the lot is adequate. 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. On a motion by the Planning Board under Article 37, the 2003 Annual Town Meeting adopted a change which requires that this determination of street adequacy now also be made prior to major residential reconstruction or additions (adding 50% or more coverage).

Under this review consideration is given to, public safety, availability of utilities, storm drainage and access for emergency vehicles. If the Board determines that the way is not adequate it will, with input from the Town Engineer, identify needed improvements. The process allows the residential project to proceed if the identified improvements are guaranteed by a bond or surety, filed with the Board, sufficient in amount to cover the cost of the improvements.

During the course of the year the Planning Board received six applications from residents or builders proposing to build new or expand existing houses whereupon the above described review was triggered. As a result of these reviews and the subsequent decisions upgrading of the following unaccepted streets or portions was required: Morse's Pond Road, Twitchell Street, Cottonwood Road, Oakencroft Road and Highledge Avenue.

Scenic Roads

There are six roads in Wellesley that have been designated by vote of Town Meeting as Scenic Roads under state law; Benvenue Street, Cartwright Road, Cheney Drive, Pond Road, Squirrel Road, and Waterway/Brookway. The provisions of this law require the Planning Board to hold a public hearing and to review the proposed removal of trees, stone walls or portions of stone walls along any designated Scenic Road.

No scenic road applications were filed during the course of the year.

Review of Zoning Board of Appeal Petitions

The Zoning Bylaw provides that the Planning Board review all petitions which come before the Zoning Board of Appeal and offer comment. Recommendations are made on cases based on planning principles, legal requirements, fairness, maintaining the integrity of the Zoning Bylaw and Map, and what it believes to be in the best interest of the Town. The Board submitted comments recommending approval, conditional approval or denial regarding 58 petitions during the year.

Subdivision Control

The Planning Board continued its administration of four active subdivisions which are in various stages of development, Stonefield Lane, Burnett Lane, Polaris Circle and #15 - 27 Pembroke Road. No new subdivision plans were approved during the year.

The Planning Board reviewed and endorsed 6 plans as "Approval Not Required" (ANR) under the Subdivision Control Law.

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. The Board is currently holding \$351,655.89 in street construction surety bonds.

Submission Fees

The Planning Department receives project submission fees. The fees offset the cost of review of impact reports, plans and other submission materials. The Planning Department received \$7,534 in submission fees in FY07 which was submitted to the Town Treasurer for deposit into the Town's general fund.

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, the process of project approval and scheduling of meetings with the Planning Board, Design Review Board and Historic 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.

Regional Liaison

Former Planning Board member Frank S. DeMasi is Wellesley's representative to the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (RTAC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and the MBTA Advisory Board. He also serves as the Town's representative to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC).

Member Donald McCauley is the Planning Board representative to the Metro West Growth Management Committee. The Town's membership in MWGMC 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.

Planning Board members and staff periodically attend seminars and workshops conducted in the area concerning legislation and programs relative to town and regional planning.

Other Liaison Assignments

Members Thomas Frisardi and Rose Mary Donahue coordinate planning activities and projects with the Board of Selectmen and other town boards. Ms. Donahue serves as the Planning Board member on the Community Preservation Committee replacing member Edward H. Chazen who formerly served in that capacity on behalf of the Board.

Planning Staff

The Planning staff consists of a part-time secretary/technical assistant, a full-time planner and a full-time planning director. The Design Review Board, Historic District Commission, Housing Development Corporation and Fair Housing Committee receive professional and staff assistance from the Planning Department. All building projects involving an exterior change are reviewed except single and two-family projects outside the historic district. All expenses of these boards are funded from the Planning Department budget.

Babson College Entrepreneurship Program

At the initiation of the Board of Selectmen, spearheaded by Katherine Babson and Executive Director Hans Larsen, and with the enthusiastic cooperation of Babson College, forty town department managers participated in an interactive program to explore ways to bring successful techniques from the private sector into improving the functioning of Wellesley Town Government. The program involved two intensive training days in December 2006 and two presentation, discussion and evaluation sessions in May 2007. Managers selected six team

projects – Virtual Town Hall; Building Department Review; Centralized Customer Service; Intranet; Telecommunications; and Balanced Scorecard. The teams met weekly or biweekly from December to May with periodic advice and guidance from the project leaders from Babson, Dean Elaine Eisenman and Professor Julian Lange to develop their projects. Implementation of many of the innovative ideas from the projects have already been implemented other recommendations will take longer. A progress report was given by team captains to the Board of Selectmen in June.

Ms. Jop and Mr. Brown of the planning staff participated in this program. Both found the experience and information extremely useful to their responsibilities. They both wish to thank Ms. Babson, Mr. Larson and Babson College for the opportunity.

Meetings

During FY-07 (July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007) the Planning Board held 20 regular meetings, 11 public hearings, three special meetings, three joint meetings with the Board of Selectmen, one public zoning meeting, and one public zoning hearing.

The Town Development Review Team (TDRT) which consists of elected liaison board members, senior staff officials and Town Counsel, periodically met to discuss major Town developments. The purpose of these meetings is in large part informational so that all departments and boards involved in the review, approval or permitting will be able to conveniently consult with one another and with the applicant concerning proposed projects and that the same information will be shared by all.

Web Site

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