

Annual Report of the Wellesley Historical Commission 2006-2007

The Wellesley Historical Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen, to serve a three year term. The members of the Commission for the period of this report were Joel Slocum, Helen Robertson, Deborah Bates, Robert McConnell, Dwight Lueth, Erin Hester and Linda Buffum, Chairman. We had four advisory members: David Wright, Judith Hull, Vicki Schauffler and Lawrence McNally.

The WHC was approached by some neighbors on Denton Road who were concerned about a recent teardown and new construction in the neighborhood. We set up a committee of our members and Denton Road residents and researched Neighborhood Conservation Districts across the country. The Commission worked with Meghan Conlon from the Planning Department as well to refine the language of the article. A meeting was held at the Main library to inform Town Meeting members about the article as well as three meetings hosted by the League of Women Voters. Article 58, the enabling legislation, which allows the town of Wellesley to form NCD's, was passed by a vote of 58% in favor at Town Meeting.

The WHC continues to follow the progress of the Farms Station. Two members of the Commission are researching other uses for the building which might justify further work to be done in the future to make the station weatherproof.

The status of the Wellesley Country Club is constantly being monitored. There is still some thinking of ways to move the building to a new site within the community. Plans were made with the Wellesley Country Club Board for a monument with explanatory text to commemorate the site and explain its historical significance once the clubhouse has been moved or demolished.

The Wellesley Inn has had a quiet year while the developer continues to work on the plans. The Commission is concerned about the right hand building of the new structure as viewed from Washington Street and will be following the Design Review Board's review process.

The Walnut Street firehouse project has been completed. The Commission met numerous times with the architect and contractor to discuss windows and mortar. A major meeting of the minds took place in the Spring of 2007 to discuss mortar issues. These were resolved with the contractor cleaning and redoing certain areas of concern. Water issues in the basement were addressed in June 2007 and concrete patios were installed to eliminate water seepage. The Commission signed off on the building in June, 2007.

A member of the Commission is on the Committee to study the future use of the Kepes panels which are being stored in the Hills Branch Library basement.

The process to place the Fuller Brook Path on the National Register of Historic Places was advanced, with the consultant being put under contract to begin the study.

The nominations of Elm Park/Clock Tower and Wellesley Hills Library to the National Register of Historic Places nominations were reviewed by Massachusetts Historical Commission in April. Both buildings were then reviewed by the National Register office

and approved in June, 2007. The Katherine Lee Bates house was sold in the Spring of 2007. Approval from the new owners will be necessary to continue the nomination process for the National Register. This property is on hold in the nomination process awaiting this approval.

The Wellesley High School project continued to be on the Commission's regular agenda. A Land Use Committee was formed in the Fall of 2006 and a member of the Historical Commission served on this. Members of the Commission attended many meetings to follow the process of the School Building Committee as it considered all options for a new high school. It continues to be our recommendation to renovate and reuse the 1938 building and preserve the exterior of this structure while moving forward with sound educational and fiscal plans. Statements were presented to the School Building Committee and Town Meeting advocating for this approach.

Our town web site information was updated and had all pertinent information on NCD's added.

Some members were able to go on a tour of the Green Garden at 107 Dover Road. arranged by Judith Hull. This garden was designed by John McAndrew in the 1950's.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Buffum
Chairman

August, 2007