

Minutes of the March 22, 2021 Meeting of the Planning Board

WELLESLEY PLANNING BOARD
Monday, March 22, 2021, 6:45 P.M.
Special Meeting
ONLINE REMOTE MEETING

The Planning Board guides the Town of Wellesley in preserving and enhancing Wellesley's quality of life by fostering a diverse housing stock, multi-modal transportation options, valuable natural resources, resilient infrastructure, and a thriving local economy. The Planning Board achieves these goals through the creation and implementation of Zoning Bylaws, policies, long-term planning and by promoting citizen participation in the planning process.

Planning Board Present: Chair Catherine Johnson, Vice-Chair Kathleen Woodward, Secretary Patricia Mallett, James Roberti, Tom Taylor, Associate Member Sheila Olson

Staff Present: Planning Director Donald McCauley

Advisory Member: John Lanza

Call to Order/Confirmation of Participants

Ms. Johnson called the Special Meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:48 p.m. The Special Meeting reflected continuance of topics not covered at the March 15, 2021 Planning Board meeting.

Roll Call: Woodward-aye, Mallett-aye, Roberti-aye, Taylor-aye, Olson-aye, Johnson-aye

Public comments on Matters Not on the Agenda

There were no public comments

Planning Initiatives

Climate Action Plan Presentation – Marybeth Martello

Present: Marybeth Martello, Director of Wellesley Sustainable Energy Committee (SEC)

Ms. Martello presented the “Wellesley’s Climate Action Planning Process,” PowerPoint document dated 3/15/21.

Ms. Martello summarized progress made with greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) goals in the Town of Wellesley, noting that the Town met the 2013 GHG emissions goal and also met the GHG emissions goal for 2020, in consideration of the COVID pandemic and decreased traffic.

Ms. Martello highlighted the 2050 net-zero goal, with emphasis on building resilience and less dependence on oil to fuel buildings.

Ms. Martello outlined proposed strategies to reduce emissions, which included the formation of working groups, contracting with energy consultant, municipal/ community engagement with formation of working groups.

Ms. Martello indicated a finalized energy plan for the Town of Wellesley could be ready by early 2022 and asked the Board to be an active part of that energy plan/mission.

Ms. Johnson commented about recent delivery trends and how that effects data. Ms. Martello stated she would be getting back to the board on those trends in consideration of e-commerce.

Ms. Woodward inquired about Mass Save and energy audits. Ms. Martello spoke of the transfer to natural gas by residents. She stressed building/construction energy efficiencies and asked the Planning Board to consider energy optimization aspects when granting applications. Ms. Johnson confirmed that the Board was committed to work on the energy mission.

Ms. Mallett asked about public outreach sessions. Ms. Martello responded that there would be board meetings, municipal forums and community forums on a continual basis, with inclusion of a designated website and specified media modes.

Resident and SEC member Fred Bunger stated that the energy consultant would be starting in the next two weeks. He commented about current energy usage number in Wellesley being relatively high. Mr. Bunger stated the heat pump topic would be addressed at the Green Initiative meeting on March 31.

ADU – Accessory Dwelling Units

Present: Deed McCollum, Building a Better Wellesley; Andrew Mikula, Building a Better Wellesley; Ann-Mara Lanza, Building a Better Wellesley

Mr. McCauley presented summary of the ADU Bylaw draft dated on 3/5/2021. He detailed the ADU Bylaw is being shaped by Housing Choice Legislation in MA. Mr. McCauley added that such a unit would be limited to 900 square feet.

Mr. McCauley noted the proposed Bylaw addressed several purposes: increased sustainability, diversity, satisfying housing needs and resident needs. He noted the number of Special Permitting process had been the granting mechanism up to this point.

Mr. McCauley detailed that such units must abide by zoning requirements; parking provision, would reflect a single unit only and the property owner must be occupying the main unit for at least half of the year.

Ms. Johnson indicated that extensive input from the building department and ZBA would be required. She stressed that the sustainable energy methods should be included in such a ADU plan.

Ms. McCollum maintained that implementation of the ADU Bylaw would reflect a low-impact plan to increase affordable units, house Town employees, and allow disabled or elderly residents to stay in their homes.

Mr. Mikula endorsed the energy sustainability aspect with ADUs.

Mr. Taylor asked about possible level of demand impact on the Town. Mr. Mikula responded that five ADU units yearly might be expected.

Ms. Mallett asked about the parking aspect. Mr. McCauley suggested limitations be considered.

Ms. Woodward opined about the implementation of ADU regulations/guidelines. Mr. McCauley acknowledged that such regulations/guidelines would likely be included in any ADU plan.

Ms. Woodward mentioned the influence of Airbnb in the Town and expressed concern about constant turnover.

Ms. Olson asked about the possibility of snowbirds leaving their homes and renting that portion of the property as well.

Ms. Johnson acknowledged that Mr. Roberti was a member of the Building a Better Wellesley and could be representative of the Planning Board.

Zoning Board of Appeals

ZBA-20-73 – 11 Elmwood Road

Mr. McCauley provided update and noted that ZBA continued this request.

Staff recommended ZBA deny the Special Permit due to lack of information. Board Members agreed.

ZBA-2021-24 – 58 Upson Road

Mr. McCauley noted the applicant was seeking Special Permit to demolish the garage and rebuild the garage. Staff recommended ZBA approval; the Board agreed.

ZBA-2021-25 – 453 Washington Street

Mr. McCauley described the special permit for installation of signage. DRB approved the request; Staff recommended ZBA approval. Ms. Johnson expressed concern regarding trending of increased branding identity number. The Board agreed with approval of the application.

ZBA-2021-26 – 33 Ingraham Road

Mr. McCauley described the additions being requested. Staff recommended approval; the Board agreed.

ZBA-2021-27 – 4 Damien Road

Mr. McCauley detailed that the applicant was seeking approval for an addition. Staff recommended approval; the Board agreed.

ZBA-2021-28 – 22 Wilson Street

Mr. McCauley provided detail regarding the request for a substantial addition on a small lot in proximity to wetlands. Staff recommended that ZBA deny the Special Permit or delay action in consideration of an alternative design. The Board agreed to deny.

ZBA-2021-29 – 38 and 44 Cypress road

Mr. McCauley noted that the applicant requested a Special Permit, before presenting an ANR.

Staff recommended approval of the Special Permit.

The Board requested that more information be provided before approval by ZBA.

ZBA-2021-30 – 9 Wilde Road

Mr. McCauley noted that Staff recommended denial of the requested demolition and reconstruction application; noting that the proposed plan would be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood. The Historical Commission had concern about the project. Staff recommended denial.

Ms. Olson noted that the home recently came on the market. Ms. Johnson stated the applicant would likely withdraw the request for that reason.

Board Members strongly recommended denial.

ZBA-2021-31 – 148 Walnut Street

Mr. McCauley noted the Planning Board had previously reviewed this project twice and recommended that ZBA approve the Special Permit with condition that infiltration systems be installed behind the structure to compensate for increased impervious area.

Staff recommended that ZBA approve the special permit and the requested variances. The Board agreed.

ZBA-2021-32 – 38 Lowell Road

Ms. Johnson recused herself.

Mr. McCauley confirmed that Staff recommended the ZBA deny the Special Permit or delay action until (i) information was provided regarding compliance with the 500-foot rule and neighborhood context and (ii) the project be reviewed by the Historic District Commission at the April 6th meeting. Board Members agreed.

Mr. Roberti was not present.

Minutes 1/4/21 and 1/7/21

Ms. Woodward motioned to approve the minutes of 1/4/21, as edited. Ms. Mallett seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 4-0; Woodward-aye, Mallett-aye, Taylor-aye, Johnson-aye

Ms. Woodward motioned to approve the minutes of 1/7/21, as edited. Ms. Mallett seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous 4-0; Woodward-aye, Mallett-aye, Taylor-aye, Johnson-aye

Adjourn

There being no further business, Ms. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 9:10 PM

MINUTES APPROVED: Monday, May 24, 2021

NEXT MEETING: Monday, April 15, 2021