

Approved October 11, 2023

**Advisory Committee Meeting
Kingsbury Room, Wellesley Police Station
485 Washington Street**

Wednesday, October 4, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

Those present from Advisory Committee were Madison Riley, Chair; Susan Clapham, Secretary; Wendy Paul, Vice Chair; Gail Sullivan, Vice Chair; Al Ferrer; Pete Pedersen; Christina Dougherty; Rani Elwy; Tamara Sielecki; Hanna Bonin; Phil Jameson; Jay Prosnitz; Lucienne Ronco; and Donna Stoddard.

Absent: David Prock

Madison Riley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Kingsbury Room of the Police Station at 485 Washington Street. The meeting was televised live on Wellesley Media, Comcast channel 8 and Verizon channel 40.

Citizen Speak

Jim Garvey, 9 Ingersoll Road – requested a favorable vote on the feasibility study of pickleball at Morse Pond. Mr. Garvey spoke of the benefits of pickleball as sport for all ages. Mr. Garvey felt the problem in Wellesley is the lack of desirable outdoor facilities and that at present players need to seek courts in other towns. Mr. Garvey stated that the feasibility study is to determine if Morse Pond is a suitable spot.

Joe Schott, 26 Halsey Road – is not in support of the feasibility study. Mr. Schott stated that his concerns are with the proposal and that he is not opposed to pickleball. Mr. Schott asked that the process be slowed down and that Recreation be asked to do more work about the pickleball needs across town, looking at both indoor and outdoor spaces. Mr. Schott felt that after the needs are assessed then feasibility studies could be completed. Mr. Schott felt that there is no consensus among the boards, and he cited the NRC concerns. Mr. Schott expressed support for the Morses Pond beach and bathhouse project.

Deb Codispoti, 130 Oakland Street – spoke against supporting the changes at 125 Oakland at this time. Ms. Codispoti asked that there be provisions to maintain buffer zones and wetlands. Ms. Codispoti felt there were many unanswered questions regarding this zoning change and that it is complicated. Ms. Codispoti felt it was important for the town boards to fully vet this potential change in the zoning to protect the Town's interests.

Bruce Franco, 6 Wellesley Ave – spoke of the positive benefits of pickleball and felt there is a need to have more pickleball courts in town. Mr. Franco stated that if pickleball can't be conducted at Sprague, which is a planned sports facility, then it seems that the Morse Pond location would be isolated enough.

Wendy Beck von Peccoz, 26 Oakland Circle – spoke in support of the Sisters of Charity's right to sell their land to make a profit to fund future years of care for the sisters. However, Ms. Beck von Peccoz expressed concern about a new owner who will probably be a for-profit entity and their motivation will be to build out and make as much money as they can. Ms. Beck von Peccoz stated that, although the footprint is limited, there is no limit to paved areas. Ms. Beck von Peccoz expressed concern about the five (5) acres of woodlands on the hillside. Ms. Beck von Peccoz further stated that there is no guarantee that trees planted today will be able to grow to their full size. Ms. Von Peccoz stated she does not support the zoning change as written without a written, codified conservation agreement.

Leslie Hanrahan, 5 Putney Road -stated that although the current owners of 125 Oakland Street share their neighborhood's value for conservation, the by-right amendment does not provide adequate protections. Ms. Hanrahan stated that this zoning change abuts premier conservation land in Centennial Park, and she felt that the amendment should include protection for the trees. Ms. Hanrahan stated that the protections should be codified if it were felt that the property won't be developed. Ms. Hanrahan stated that intentions based on trust are likely to be forgotten in the future.

**Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 6 – School Committee
Convey Easement for telecommunication purposes to Verizon at Hunnewell School**

Catherine Mirick, School Committee, Vice Chair, and liaison to the Hunnewell project provided an explanation of the Article and motion for an easement. The Schools are hoping that this motion will not be needed. Conduits have been built and Comcast and MLP have already run their lines. The project team is currently working with Verizon who is on site. It is possible that if Verizon finishes their work, then they won't need the easement. Other utilities have not needed an easement. But if an easement is needed for the lines, the Schools would like to do this now so the project can be completed, and the school opened in February on schedule. Therefore, this can't wait until ATM.

Questions

- A question was asked as to why Verizon needs an easement at the last minute.
 - No explanation was provided, and it was a surprise to the project manager.
- Is there money involved?
 - No
- Is this an issue with Verizon as the other utilities did not need an easement? Could it be a lack of experience on Verizon part?
 - We don't know if this is new.
- Who is responsible for damages if an easement is granted?
 - The lines are underground. The easement itself has not been written and Town Counsel will write it to protect the Town.
- If it is determined that an easement is needed, will Comcast and MLP also need an easement?
 - MLP and Comcast have completed their work. Verizon as a business is asking for this.
- If Verizon is on site doing work, how are they moving forward?
 - It is hoped that Verizon will finish their work and not need the easement.
- Is it in the same location as Comcast wiring?
 - Yes, it is one large conduit that runs into the school.

Discuss and Vote 2023 STM Warrant Articles

Article 3, Motion 1

Susan Clapham made, and Christina Dougherty seconded a motion for favorable action on Article 3, Motion 1, as proposed by the Select Board, that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$360,000 to the Fire Department to fund a new position, including benefits, overtime increases, and expenses, as set forth in the article and the motion.

Discussion

- A comment was made in support of this motion as it adds a position to bring all groups from 12 to 13. Support was also expressed for the implementation of a budgetary line item to track overages. In addition, it was felt that a closer budgetary look at the fire department will hopefully address a structural deficit in the budget and reduce the need for year-end transfers which have occurred for many years.

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 3, Motion 1, 13 to 0.

Article 3, Motion 2

Susan Clapham made, and Wendy Paul seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 3, Motion 2, as proposed by the Select Board, that the Town transfer the sum of \$11,000 from the Board of Assessors Personnel Services to the Board of Assessors expenses as set forth in the article and the motion.

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Discussion

- A comment was made in support of this motion as it is budget-neutral.

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 3, Motion 2, 13 to 0.

Article 4, Motion 1

Susan Clapham made, and Lucienne Ronco seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 4, Motion 1, as proposed by the Select Board, that the Town vote to rescind authorized and unissued loans, authorize the transfer of unused proceeds from previously issued loan, and/or amend existing borrowing authorizations on unissued debt for the Hardy School project in the amount of \$3,120,015 as set forth in the article and the motion.

Discussion

- A comment was made that this is an advantageous change as more MSBA reimbursements were received; it may change again (favorably) closer to Town Meeting.

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 4, Motion 1, 13 to 0.

Article 7

Susan Clapham made, and Christina Dougherty seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 7, as proposed by the Board of Library Trustees, that the Town vote to allow the Board of Trustees of the Wellesley Free Library to enter into a lease with a solar energy provider for the purpose of installing, maintaining, and operating a rooftop photovoltaic facility as set forth in the warrant and the motion.

Discussion

- Support for Article 7 was expressed, and it is understood that the lease is required for a competitive RFP for the Town.
- A question was raised about why the Town does not install solar panels; the response was, since the Town does not pay federal taxes, the Town does not benefit from any tax rebates. The Town will receive a much more favorable rate for the energy from the third party.
- A comment was made that the Schools are installing solar panels on the roofs of the new schools, but that the Schools do not need Town Meeting approval. This is unique to the Library.
- It was confirmed that the MLP is involved.
- It was clarified that the Trustees are in care and custody of their building, so if a lease were to be greater than a year the Trustees need Town Meeting approval.

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 7, 13 to 0.

Article 8

Susan Clapham made, and Donna Stoddard seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 8, Motion 1, as proposed by the School Committee, that the Town vote to amend the Town Bylaws to allow the School Committee to enter into five-year contracts for food service management, school yearbook production, and school photography services as set forth in the warrant and the motion.

Discussion

- Support was expressed for this motion. Schools have done this with other contracts. A longer contract allows for the opportunity to save money and eliminates staff work. Quality metrics are in place. Confidence was expressed that this is a good plan.

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- A comment was made that including provisions to exit the contract if necessary was an added protection for these longer contracts. These contracts would be allowed to be 5-year contracts, not required to be.

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 8, 13 to 0.

Article 11

Susan Clapham made, and Phil Jameson seconded a motion for favorable action on Article 11, Motion 1, as proposed by the Wetlands Protection Committee, that the Town vote to amend the Town's General Bylaw to establish a monetary penalty for individuals who violate the Wetlands Protection Bylaw by renumbering the corresponding Article in order to correct a scrivener's error, as set forth in the warrant and the motion.

Discussion

- It was noted that this bylaw was approved at the 2023 Annual Town Meeting and the only item this motion addresses is a renumbering from "h" to "i". The fines were established in the originally approved bylaw.

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 11, 13 to 0.

Article 14

Susan Clapham made, and Christina Dougherty seconded a motion for favorable action on Article 14, Motion 1, as proposed by the Planning Board, that the Town vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw to exempt attached Accessory Dwelling Units from the Large House Review provisions as set forth in the article and the motion.

Discussion

- Support was expressed for the ADU bylaw. However, it was felt that this amendment is a solution looking for a problem. The Planning Board indicated that no one has requested an attached ADU that needs to go through LHR. They are anticipating that more people will come forward if this is passed. Concern was expressed that it feels like there is a loophole that is perhaps not being acknowledged. If a property owner needs to go through LHR at 4,000 square feet (sf) but they can build a 3,500 sf house and an attached 800 ADU sf, then they don't have to go through LHR. Creating additional ADUs is desirable but it was felt that this is not the language. Additional language was requested to be put into this amendment.
- Support was expressed for the previous comments. A house reviewed under LHR is a large house and it is difficult to separate from the main house and the 900 sf addition on the side and/or back of the house for an ADU. It was felt that this amendment cannot be supported because this amendment will not advance the issue of creating more ADUs in town. It was felt that this will add confusion and complexity to discussions going forward
- Support was expressed for the previous comments. It was further added that this also removes the standards and criteria for LHR review of preservation of landscape, scale of buildings, lighting, open space, drainage, and circulation. Support was expressed for finding creative ways to create ADUs, but it was felt that taking these standards away is not the way to do it. It was requested that the attached ADUS adhere to standards without having to submit a plan for an LHR.
- A comment was made that concerns are also shared regarding potential loopholes, but it was felt that Planning answered this with the difference in the ADUs that are required. It was felt that the protections and requirements in other zoning bylaws would protect against some of the concerns.

When the ADU bylaw came before Town Meeting for approval, it was not understood that an attached ADU would go through LHR, so this amendment feels like a correction.

- A comment was made that, although ADUs were supported at Town Meeting and support for housing diversity was expressed, it was felt that there is not enough experience with ADU applications. It was felt that this could be a way around the LHR criteria. Therefore, the motion can't be supported.
- If an ADU is detached it is subject to zoning review but the detached ADUs are not part of this amendment.
- A comment was made that a detached ADU and large house still need to go through LHR if the main structure is over 4,000 sf.
- ADUs will still adhere to Section 5.13.C Physical Requirements, but not the items in LHR Section 5.9.E, which includes preservation of landscape, scale of buildings, lighting, open space, drainage, and circulation.
- Zoning restrictions would still apply and ADUs would still be subject to zoning setbacks.
- Support was expressed for ADUs and diversity of housing in town. LHR takes up a lot of Planning's time and it can take many months and adds considerable expense to go through the LHR hurdles. It was felt that it is important to provide housing opportunities and to not make it difficult for people to build ADUs. The potential for the loophole and the concerns raised were acknowledged. Support for the amendment was expressed as an effort to diversify housing stock.
- Several members discussed the provisions in the motion and how it could be changed.
- A question was asked if there is a way to take out the barriers and still be concerned about landscaping and the other items of the LHR.

Wendy Paul made, and Pete Pederson seconded a motion to table the vote on the motion for Article 14 pending questions for the Planning Board. Motion was tabled by a vote of 13 to 0.

Article 5, Motion 1

Susan Clapham made, and Hanna Bonin seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 5, Motion 1, as proposed by the Community Preservation Committee, that the Town appropriate \$65,000 to the Housing Task Force to create a Strategic Housing Plan for the Town of Wellesley, such appropriation to be funded entirely from the Community Preservation Funds undesignated balance as set forth in the warrant and the motion.

Discussion

- Support for the Strategic Housing Plan was expressed. It was felt that this is a perfect use of CPC funds for housing. Diversity of housing is one of the challenges the Town faces.
- The Strategic Plan will look at housing stock in a meaningful way.
- The study will look at accessible senior housing and continue the work of the housing production plan.
- The Housing Task Force will review the Strategic Housing Plan and it will be a public document open for review by all boards and residents.
- The funds for the study will come from unrestricted CPC funds because housing funds are restricted for affordable housing.
- It will be helpful to look at the overall strategic plan as the state mandates more housing and more affordable housing in communities.
- The topic of housing in the state and country is an important issue.

Advisory recommends favorable action on Article 5, Motion 1, 13 to 0.

Article 5, Motion 2

Susan Clapham made, and Phil Jameson seconded a motion for favorable action on Warrant Article 5, Motion 2, as proposed by the Community Preservation Committee, that the Town appropriate \$25,000 to the Recreation Department to be used to conduct a feasibility study for the design and construction of pickleball courts in the Morses Pond parking lot and to create a set of guidelines for the Town to be used to locate pickleball courts in Town, such appropriation to be funded entirely from the Community Preservation Funds as set forth in the warrant and the motion.

- Support was expressed for the appropriation. It was further commented that creating a set of guidelines for courts in town and not just a feasibility study for Morses Pond would be helpful. Citizens are asking for a “slow down” look at pickleball. It was felt guidelines are needed to plan usage for Morses Pond. A lot of positive support for pickleball was heard.
- A comment was made that both sides of the issue have spoken, and that people are not in favor of this and are concerned about the Morses Pond beach/bathhouse project going forward. Results from the previous study on parking aren’t available, and questions asked in the past have not been answered. Concern was expressed about the public perception of this, and that people feel they are not being heard.
- Concerns about the feasibility study were expressed.
- Support for the feasibility study was expressed and it was commented that other potential sites were considered. The feasibility study will be helpful. CPC supported this with the commitment to learn from the feasibility study. CPC continues to focus on the broader Morse Pond project. CPC and Recreation support this.
- A comment was made that, should the study determine that Morses Pond is not a suitable site for pickleball, it will help with the review of other sites.
- The history of the Morse Pond project was reviewed and although it appears slow, it was a conscious decision. The pandemic, the building of two (2) new schools, and the Town Hall renovation were the priorities. The Morse Pond bathhouse and beachfront project was intentionally slowed down, due to the competing priorities and the Town’s bandwidth to manage all these projects at once. No dollars have been appropriated to the Morse Pond project, so this is a good time to complete a feasibility study on the pickleball courts.
- A question was asked if this will delay the Morse Pond beach/bathhouse project.
 - This will be pulled in as best they can, but it will not slow down the Morse Pond project.
- A comment was made that CPC put together a thoughtful proposal. It is a Recreation Commission proposal on DPW land that CPC is funding. Pickleball was acknowledged as a growing sport. CPC’s charter is to support recreation in town, so it is valid to support pickleball. CPC is going with what they were asked to look at, and they added the language to look at what is required for pickleball areas elsewhere in town.
- Additional support was expressed. With the explanation of intentionally putting the Morse Pond project on hold, the timing seems good. If the pickleball courts are eventually built they will be used.
- Strong support was expressed. The feasibility study is a study with results for consideration, not a guarantee that the courts will be built.
- A comment was made that this can’t be supported because it would be better to take a townwide look at potential sites rather than to focus only on the Morse Pond property.
- Another member indicated they can’t support the motion. Although the guideline inclusion is good, it would be preferable to see the townwide guidelines as the primary focus, and the Morse Pond location as secondary. It was felt that there needs to be a management of expectations on both sides.

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- A comment was made that focusing on Morse Pond is a concern. The sounds of the pickleball were mentioned. It was felt that knowing about the usage at existing courts would be helpful and the feasibility study should look at other areas.
- A comment was made that CPC funds are designated to support recreational activities in town.
- A comment was made that the Town should not have to provide the solution and that this perhaps there could be a private solution.
- A comment was made that if the study were broader in the beginning, it would be helpful.
- A comment was made that if the study is too broad, the cost of the study might be higher.
- A comment was made that these are not Town funds but are CPC funds.
- Multiple questions were asked about the Article language and a request was made to ask Recreation to expand this.
- A comment was made that this feels like the right thing for the Town to do to enhance the quality of life for residents. But it was felt that it was necessary to understand how this fits into the broader strategy for the Town and the total existing capacity.
- A comment was made that this could come before ATM, which would allow more time to refine this.

Susan Clapham made, and Christina Dougherty seconded a motion to table the vote on Article 5, Motion 2, pending more information from Recreation and CPC regarding expanding the ability to expand the study. Motion was tabled by a vote of 13 to 0.

Minutes Approval

Al Ferrer made, and Pete Pederson seconded a motion to approve the September 27, 2023, minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously by a vote of 13 to 0.

Administrative Items

Advisory Committee will have a team participate in the WEF Spelling Bee on November 8, 2023.

Liaison Updates

Planning/Jay Prosnitz – Public Hearing was held regarding all three (3) articles and Planning discussed Article 15. The Planning Board expressed concern about the protection of open space but felt that the Sisters make a compelling argument about selling the property. The Planning Board felt that, although not perfect, the provisions of the permit provided some protections. The Planning Board voted 5 to 0 to support Article 15.

Mobility/Jay Prosnitz – MBTA is focused on the Wellesley Square train station to make it accessible with a 12- to 18-month timeframe for the work; MBTA scheduling is being expanded in the evening and there are plans to expand the day trains; train ridership is 80% of pre-pandemic levels. Tailby lot becoming fuller. Funds were received to expand the bus route. Select Board will be seeking a paid staff member to be a mobility transit coordinator.

NRC/Hanna Bonin – NRC will be sending a letter to Advisory to address some of the language regarding special permitting and what it would do related to 125 Oakland. NRC will also send a letter to Advisory with recommendations.

MLP/Al Ferrer – meeting with MLP next week.

Human Resources/ Al Ferrer - There will not be an Article sponsored by the HR Board for this Town Meeting to be held in November. It is hoped that the HR director position will be filled by the end of the year. Presently interviews are being held with the candidates who made the shortlist. Two were held today, and another will be held next week. Finalists will be brought to the HR Board toward the end of October. The HR Board will then need to interview candidates and decide whether to proceed with hiring. The Town received two community compact grants. One is for \$20,000 for a study on HR best practices as compared to Wellesley's operations. The report will consider centralization of HR functions.

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The second grant is \$50,000 for a compensation and classification analysis. The HR working group will commence the first study on centralization and comparative analysis immediately. The start of the compensation and classification study will be held until the new HR director begins work.

Schools/Donna Stoddard – two (2) people from Boston, who will bring the perspective of METCO families, will be sharing attendance as non-voting members at School Committee meetings and will be attending on alternating weeks. There was discussion about the new schools' construction which is running on schedule. Dr. Lussier discussed the transition plans for the new schools. The new strategic plan was discussed; it will focus on four areas. This information will be published on the School's website and emailed to school families.

Select Board/Wendy Paul – a few contracts from the SB are still outstanding; interboard meetings were held this week regarding budget guidelines for the schools and for the town departments.

PBC/Lucienne Ronco– Town Hall renovation is on schedule but being continually monitored to see if any problems with the old building develop.

PFTF/Lucienne Ronco– more equipment storage facilities are needed at the fields by both the teams and maintenance workers. NRC approved track and field improvements. Concession stands have been finalized. Permit for Sprague bathrooms is being worked on. The Upham building will be used to temporarily relocate the Recreation department and BOH while the Warren building undergoes the planned renovation project.

Retirement/Phil Jameson – Retirement presented to the SB and concluded that they will continue with the current level of contributions to the retirement fund. It is consistent with the objective to be fully funded by 2030. There was a discussion about reducing the current level of funding and where the money will go when the contributions are reduced when OPEB is fully funded in 2030. OPEB contributes to health premiums and pays currently for expenses.

Al Ferrer made, and Hanna Bonin seconded a motion to adjourn. Members voted unanimously to adjourn, 13 to 0. Meeting was adjourned at 9:49 p.m.,

Meeting Materials [October 4, 2023, meeting materials](#)

- C-141 Utilities Plan Rev. 1
- Special Town Meeting 2023 Article 6 Easement
- NRC Redlined Bylaw change Bylaw 52
- Draft 09/27/23 Minutes
- Voting Script STM 2023.10.4.23.v2
- Motions – Articles 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 14