

*Statement on Brookside Road for 2011 ATM, Article 30—approved March 23, 2011:*

The Wellesley Historical Commission makes the following statement pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 15C, which authorizes the town Historical Commission to make a recommendation regarding designation of a “scenic road”:

The section of Brookside Road designated in this motion is a unique historical resource of the Town of Wellesley, for the following reasons:

Because of its abundant water supply, the land adjoining Brookside Road has been a center of human activity since prehistoric times. During the earliest colonial era, one of the region’s largest Native American bands, under Chief Maugus, made its seasonal encampment there. In 1720, Ephraim Ware established his farm there; his farmhouse is still in use as a residence, at its original location at the intersection of Brookside Road and Oakland Street. During Wellesley’s industrial era in the mid-nineteenth century, a number of small factories operated alongside Longfellow Pond and Rosemary Brook, including a hosiery mill that made the stockings to go with the shoes made in the factories on Washington Street. The Town Farm, an important institution in Needham and then Wellesley, operated next to Brookside Road from 1828 to 1910. Its site was acquired for the Wellesley Country Club, which is itself a historic institution now, dating back more than a century.

The Commission believes that the trees along this section of Brookside Road deserve protection under these regulations, because, to quote the criteria, they “create a frame of reference for more distant views” and they “contribute substantially to the rural or woodland character of a roadway.” With a little imagination, a traveler along Brookside Road can picture in that landscape not only Wellesley in its earliest days, but also all the human activities that have happened there since.

In conclusion, the Commission would like to point out that Brookside Road bears comparison with the six other designated “scenic roads” in Wellesley. Moreover, whereas those residential byways are rarely visited by people who don’t live there, Brookside Road is still what it has been for centuries, an active thoroughfare from one part of the town to another. Therefore, if the number of people who see it every day is factored in, Brookside Road must be considered a source of enjoyment and historical recall to many residents of the town.

The Historical Commission recommends a “yes” vote on the motion.