

2018 JUL -5 PM 2: 15

**Belmont Historic District Commission
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, March 26, 2018
Homer Building, Art Gallery

Commission members present: Lauren Meier, Co-Chair; Lisa Harrington, Co-Chair; Kathleen Fahey, member; Nushin Yazdi, alternate member; Terry McCarthy, member; Michael Chesson, member; Michael Smith, alternate member; Elizabeth Pew, member; Lydia Ogilby, member emeritus

Spencer Gober, Office of Community Development

Not present: Jacob Cohen, member; Karl Leabo, Member

Community members present: Angelo Firenze; Joe White; Ellen Schreiber

1. 7:00 PM Meeting called to order.

Following the call to order, Ms. Meier noted that proponents of the scheduled Public Hearing had not yet arrived. It was determined to move to the Continuing Discussion on the War Memorial as its proponents were present.

2. Continuing Discussions

a. War Memorial and Intergenerational Path projects at Clay Pit Pond

- L. Meier opened the discussion by reminding attendees that the original War Memorial, built in 1940, is listed in the Commonwealth's Inventory of Historic Assets as an historic landscape; and, while the HDC has no formal review authority because the Memorial is not in an Historic District, the HDC is a Town advisor on historic properties. She reminded everyone that the HDC has already voted favorably on the CPA application for restoration of the existing monument; but the focus of this discussion will be on the new proposed additions across from and adjacent to the existing historic monument.
- Mr. Firenze said that the Veteran's Committee has worked with the Conservation Commission using the same designer of the Intergenerational Path for the new proposed memorial. He said the intent of the new memorial is to honor veterans of all wars since the Civil War with separate stones and related elements as shown in plans provided to the HDC. The Veteran's Committee has been reviewing various stone materials, benches and lighting and is waiting for final plans from the designer. They are expecting to dedicate the new memorial by November, 2018.
- Commission members comments and questions include:
 - M. Smith thanked the Veteran's Committee for their work on restoring the existing monument but raised concerns over those parts beyond the existing memorial. He

noted, however, inconsistencies in the veteran's CPA application with the proposed design. For example, written statements in the application include the following:

"The memorial, dedicated on May 10, 1940, is one of several Veterans Memorials in town, but it is unique in a very fundamental way...the memorial at Clay Pit Pond is the only one in a location suited for quiet contemplation...Belmont residents dedicated this location to all Belmont Veterans – 'In Honor of the Citizens Who Served the United States in War.'"

And,

"Rather than build monuments to each individual conflict, a comprehensive memorial can honor all of our veterans – past, present, and future."

He said, in his opinion, the proposed design for the area beyond the existing memorial is inconsistent with these statements. For example, he said the design includes a completely new area with monuments dedicated to "each individual conflict from the Civil War through the war in Afghanistan." Yet, the existing memorial is for that very purpose – to honor all Belmont veterans who served the United States in war. A well-restored existing memorial can continue to serve that historic intent.

Also, he said, under the current design, the contemplative nature of the existing memorial site will be compromised by having the addition of this new area, especially with the new Intergenerational Path designed to be placed directly between the existing and new memorial sites. This new path will have runners, bikes, skateboards, strollers, etc. coming directly through what is supposed to be a place "suited for quiet contemplation."

He urged the proponents to reflect upon these inconsistencies between Goals, Community Needs and Design.

- M. Chesson agreed with Mr. Smith that the statements in the CPA application are contradictory and the proposed additional monuments even raises the question of which wars to represent. He noted as examples that the Veteran's Committee is proposing one monument to "The War on Terror" rather than identifying individual conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan; and, there are likely to be additional wars in the future, requiring adding more monuments. He also suggested that proposed brick pavers should be carefully selected for their ability to withstand weathering.

- K. Fahey and L. Harrington raised concerns about incompatibility of the various proposed stone materials and finishes. Ms. Fahey suggested the stones should blend with the color of the existing wall.

- L. Meier raised concerns about compatibility of materials and design of the proposed monument as well as the design of lighting. She suggested keeping new materials as neutral as possible so as not to contrast but, rather, to complement the

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existing historic wall. She expressed concern about the size and placement of the new proposed central monument. She said the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) sent a letter asking for drawings to be sent to them.

- Mr. Firenze's and Mr. White's comments included:
 - Having the Intergenerational Path going through the existing and proposed monuments is intended to draw members of the community to go by it and reflect on the sacrifices of veterans.
 - Lighting is expected to be kept to a minimum and the Veteran's Committee is waiting for the results of the designer's recommendation.
 - The intent of the overall design is to be relatively small and not overpowering yet be a place where people can honor war veterans.
 - Granite has to be ordered before mid-May to meet their schedule.
 - The Veteran's Committee would appreciate HDC help on selection of pavers.
 - They do not expect revised drawings until about a month.
 - They believe the MHC has no jurisdiction over selection of materials.
 - They expect Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen approval within six weeks.
- The meeting was concluded with no action taken.

3. Public Hearing

- a. Case #18-03, 61 Pleasant Street (the Homer House) scope: Vote on one-year extension of previously approved scope of work.
 - Proponent not having arrived, it was determined to proceed.
 - Following review of the submitted materials, M. Smith moved, M. Chesson seconded to approve a one-year extension of the previously approved scope of work. Unanimously approved.

4. Continuing Discussions

- a. Thaddeus Frost House (291 Brighton Street) LHD Update
 - K. Fahey reviewed the language for the proposed article at Town Meeting to amend Section 40-315 of the Town Bylaw.
 - Following discussion K. Fahey moved and L. Harrington seconded to accept the language to amend Section 40-315 regarding the creation of the Thaddeus Frost House Historic District. Unanimously passed.
 - L. Meier gave an update on the work with the Bylaw Review Committee and Town Clerk to address inconsistencies in the Town Bylaws regarding Historic Districts. Not having the information yet resolved, no action was needed to be taken at this time.

b. Demolition Delay Bylaw

- S. Gober distributed an updated list of Belmont's Significant Historic Buildings Subject to Demolition Delay.
- Following discussion, L. Harrington moved, M. Smith seconded, to approve the revisions to the March 30, 2017 List of Significant Historic Buildings Subject to Demolition Delay. Unanimously passed.
- 65 Clark St. - S. Gober distributed a memo dated March 26, 2018 to Glenn Clancy, Building Inspector, from L. Meier and L. Harrington, with the subject "HDC Opinion Regarding Execution of Demolition Delay Bylaw at 65 Clark Street." The memo includes a summary of the proposed work previously approved by the HDC and a statement that, in the opinion of the HDC, "the proposed scope of work does not constitute 'substantial demolition' as defined by the Bylaw."

c. McLean Barn CPA Application Update

- S. Gober distributed summary portions of Spencer, Sullivan & Vogt's Conditions Assessment of the McLean Barn dated March, 2018 and cost estimates for two phases of the proposed work to stabilize the barn. Mr. Gober will forward the entire 200 page report to HDC members. He also distributed Warrant Committee Questions and Answers regarding the CPA Application. Comments of HDC members should be submitted to S. Gober by Monday, April 5.
- Ms. Meier and L. Harrington will present the request for CPA funds at the upcoming Town Meeting.

d. Belmont Police Station

- M. Smith reported the selection of TGAS Architects for schematic design authorized by Town Meeting for improvements to the existing Police Station and Department of Public Works buildings. He noted that the previous consultant (SMMA) had proposed an exterior elevator to be placed on the east side of the Police Station and a ramp at the front of the building. The PD/DPW Committee has agreed with the HDC recommendation to have any new elevator placed inside the building and that, given an accessible ramp and entrance at the west side of the building, no additional ramp would be needed at the front of the building, pending anticipated relief by the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. A vehicle sallyport is still being studied for the west side of the building.
- Mr. Smith said that, although Town Meeting had voted for temporary improvements to the building in anticipation of a new Police Station being built at the DPW site in approximately ten years, The PD/DPW Committee is considering the possibility of expanding improvements that would keep the Police Station permanently in its existing location.

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- L. Meier asked if the Municipal Light Building might be considered for other potential municipal uses after it is abandoned by the Light Department in approximately five years. Mr. Smith said he has suggested the site may be appropriate for a two-level garage with the possibility of preserving the street facing façade of the building, but no decision in this regard is being studied at this time. L. Harrington suggested applying for CPA funds to study the condition of the existing building.
- K. Fahey asked if the Historical Society has expressed an interest in possibly having their facilities being moved to the Municipal Light Building in the future. M. Chesson said that at the last HS meeting they discussed the idea of getting space in a new library.

e. Lone Tree Hill

- L. Meier will attend a meeting next Wednesday. Nothing new to report currently.

f. High School

- L. Meier said the High School Building Committee will talk to the HDC sometime in the near future. Nothing new to report currently.

g. Appointments

- M. Smith said he contacted the Boston Society of Architects to search for a member architect as required in the Town Bylaws. He will follow-up on status.

5. Minutes

a. Review and approval of minutes

- Minutes from 02/13/18 were approved.

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b. Assignment of Minutes

- L. Harrington will take minutes at the April meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:55 PM.

The tentative date and place for the next HDC meeting will be April 10th at 7:00pm in Conference Room 2 of the Belmont Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Smith