

**Belmont Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes**

2019 JAN 23 PM 2: 55

Date: July 12, 2018

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:30 PM

Location: Belmont Town Hall, Conference Room 2

Commission members present: Lauren Meier, Co-Chair; Lisa Harrington, Co-Chair; Terry McCarthy, member; Elizabeth Pew, member; Kathy Fahey, member; Michael Chesson, member; Mike Smith, associate member

Members not present: Nushin Yazdi, associate member; Lydia Ogilby, member emerita

Staff: Spencer Gober, Staff Planner

Members of the public present: Chris Arthur; and, Steve Dorrance, Director of Facilities

1. Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM

2. Public Hearings:

- a. Continued – Case #18-08—455 Concord Avenue, Town Hall, scope: install temporary railing along the wall in front of Town Hall that will be removed once a permanent solution is identified and approved.
 - i. Mr. Dorrance said an inexpensive temporary repair to the railing along the steps up to the front of Town Hall, facing Concord Avenue, was needed. (See project description in prior HDC package for details.)
 - ii. Ms. Meier gave a general introduction about the project. Ms. Harrington made detailed comments. Was a special town vote needed to approve the repairs? Mr. Smith asked about using CPA funds.
 - iii. There was a detailed discussion between Co-Chairs Harrington and Meier, Mr. Dorrance, and Mr. Smith about the proper course of action.
 - iv. Ms. Pew called Town Hall the jewel in Belmont's crown, that it was seen by countless commuters twice daily. She agreed that safety was first, then appearance.
 - v. Ms. Harrington moved that the project be approved, which was seconded by Ms. McCarthy, and approved unanimously by the HDC.

3. Public Meeting:

a. Belmont Gallery of Art – Town Hall Municipal Complex signs

- i. Ms. Arthur, representing the Art Gallery, said it would like signs for the public about its location on the Homer Building's third floor, one at the corner of the parking lot on the Concord Avenue side, next to the driveway between the Homer Building and Town Hall; and an identical sign at the entrance to the rear parking lot off Moore Street. She provided photos. Ms. Arthur thanked Mr. Smith for his help with the design. All agreed it was stunning, and would look like it had always been there.

- ii. Mr. Gober said a certificate was needed, because it would be a change in an historic district. Ms. Meier said Ms. Arthur needed to fill out some forms. A notification would go to neighbors prior to a public meeting on the issue.

4. New Business:

a. Section 106 Notification – 30 Leonard Street.

- i. Ms. Meier explained a proposal to put a three foot high transmitter on top of a public light pole in Belmont Center. She said it did not meet town design standards. Mr. Smith agreed. Ms Meier said that Mr. Gober had done the “heavy lifting” on this proposal. Town Administrator Patrice Garvin needed to provide input, if the HDC would approve a draft of a letter to her asking for comments. The HDC approved the draft unanimously. The letter will be sent to Ms Garvin.

5. Continuing Discussions:

a. Open Meeting Law decision and upcoming briefing

- i. Ms. Meier reminded all members that there will be a training session July 17 at 7:00 PM at the Chenery Middle School. She distributed a detailed draft summarizing subjects that the HDC customarily discusses.
- ii. Mr. Gober provided more details and clarification. Ms. Meier said that the online posting of cases had been a great improvement, and was a nice start toward comprehensive online filing of cases, agendas, and minutes (though not drafts; which first had to be approved, only then posted).
- iii. There was a detailed discussion of how to handle various HDC documents.
- iv. All HDC members were cautioned to be very careful in their use of email and other communications. Ms. Meier said that we had to change how we did business, including not meeting without a quorum.

b. McLean Barn project update

- i. Ms. Harrington reported for the McLean Barn subcommittee.
- ii. Ms. Meier said after the BHS discussion and Town Meeting is over, the subcommittee will be working collaboratively with the LMC on future uses of the barn. There was a detailed discussion.
- iii. Mr. Gober said he had the lead on a RFP for the barn project.
- iv. Mr. Smith asked if the Belmont Art Gallery director was at the barn meeting. She’s interested in its future use. The art director thinks she can raise money for the barn project.

c. Belmont Police Station and Municipal Light Building Update

- i. Mr. Smith spoke to the architect, who needs more accurate elevations and site plans, and an HDC letter supporting the handicapped accessibility proposal.

- ii. Ms. Meier said neither building was in the Historic District, and would like the MHC to be notified before further work being done. Mr. Smith explained that neither building was put in the district originally, because the future of both buildings was not known at the time. He now thinks the Police Station can be included, and possibly the Light Building. Ms. Meier said that the HDC would need to proceed carefully.
- d. **Lone Tree Hill LMC update**
 - i. The Town Clerk has reported that the LMC got a bequest from a resident of roughly \$300,000; a portion can be used for land management.
- e. **Belmont High School**
 - i. Mr. Gober said that the deadline for submissions had passed, that he thought all documents were in, and that the HDC could probably take it off future agendas. Several members commented.
- f. **Appointments**
 - i. Mr. Smith had advertised for new HDC commissioners who were members of the Boston Society of Architects. Multiple resumes came in. Two people, architects with considerable experience, were selected: Tracy Marquis and Carl Solander. Their applications have been sent to the BOS. A draft membership proposal was discussed and unanimously approved, giving the HDC a full complement of members for the first time in several years.
- 6. **Updates from the Office of Community Development**
 - i. Mr. Gober said he had no additional items to report.
- 7. **Minutes**
 - a. March 26 and May 29 minutes were approved.
 - b. It was proposed that a meeting be held on Wednesday, August 15, if at least four members notify Mr. Gober that they can be present.
- 8. **A motion was made to adjourn, seconded, and passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Chesson, Member