

TOWN OF BELMONT

PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

July 7, 2020

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: August 6, 2020

TIME: 12:17 PM

Present: Steve Pinkerton, Chair; Matt Lowrie, Thayer Donham, Karl Haglund; Ed Starzec

Absent: Renee Guo

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Senior Planner

1. Meeting Called to Order at 7:00 PM

2. Continued Zoning Amendment Public Hearing, McLean Zone 3 Overlay District Amendment:

a. Update on Select Board Traffic Vote

Mr. Pinkerton gave an update on the traffic vote and noted that on June 26, the Select Board reaffirmed their decision on the traffic studies. He explained that the old proposal with 110 apartment units (non-age restricted) would not meet the Traffic Monitoring and Mitigation Agreement (TMMA) between the Town and McLean Hospital, while the new proposal will.

b. How does the Board want to move forward?

The PB supported going ahead of the development of the Zoning By-Law with the new proposal for 53 age restricted and 57 non-age restricted units. PB members noted that they were generally accepting of the Select Board decision since many of the aspects of the revised proposal were favorable, though they regretted some aspects of it as well.

c. Discuss how the chapel building will be used

Ms. Donham noted that if the chapel was used for residential for sale units there must be parking. Mr. Dawley noted that the renovation of the existing building would be very challenging. He would like to have the flexibility to reuse the building in a way that makes sense for the overall community and also to be economically viable. He added that the chapel would probably be condominium units. The language for the parking requirements was discussed, clarified and updated in the Zoning By-Law.

d. Review Affordable Housing Requirements

The PB reviewed the Affordability Requirements section and made minor changes.

e. Review Draft Zoning By-Law

The PB made minor edits to the language in the Sections regarding age-restriction, shuttle bus access, and the Performance and Design Standards. Mr. Dawley noted that he will check with his architect on the building height and get back to the PB for the July 21 meeting. The PB asked Mr. Wheeler to insert the existing section regarding roof top mechanicals. The PB discussed what would happen if an “Age-Qualifying Occupant” ceased to line in the unit and agreed to revisit this later.

Comments from the Audience:

1. Betsy Lipson, Co-Chair of the Belmont Housing Trust, stated that this was a narrowed way of looking at traffic and that the traffic analysis are just an estimation. The Housing Trust asked the Select Board to review the traffic analysis and to look at it from different perspectives. She noted that the traffic analysis did not consider the ridership on the community path. She asked the PB to look at this holistically and that the Housing Trust was advocating for the original proposal.

Mr. Pinkerton explained that the TMMA was complicated and there were severe penalties for the Developer for not living up to its terms. He noted that the revised met the TMMA and that the original proposal posed a significant risk for the developer.

2. Judith Ananian Sarno, Town Meeting Member, asked the PB to consider including the roof top mechanicals in the height of the buildings.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that this would be discussed at the next meeting.

3. Rachel Heller, Housing Trust Co-Chair, noted that the Housing Production Plan highlighted multiple needs in Town for seniors and families with children. She stated that this proposal perpetuates segregation rather than being a moment where Belmont can show that we are being inclusive. She explained that it perpetuates segregation because it limits opportunity for people to live in Town. She noted that there are a lot of different ways to address vehicle trip numbers. She added that single-family homes would become available from the seniors who move to these apartments but their homes will sell for more than many families will be able to afford. She further added that now is an important moment where the Town could undo some of the policies that have limited opportunities for people to live in Town.
4. Michael McNamara, Town Meeting Member, noted that there were affordability issues in Belmont. He asked if there could be a plan for more affordable housing as there are going to be people who need affordable living in the future. He added that many people can't get into Belmont or stay in Belmont.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that the PB was trying to enable this to happen.

MOTION to continue to July 21, 2020 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed.

3. Updates on Cases and Planning Board Projects, and Committee Reports

Mr. Pinkerton explained that the Select Board and Town Administrator had been preparing a response to the Beatrice Circle 40B proposal. He noted that the PB did not have a statutory role in this and would not be reviewing it. The PB had been asked to maybe sign onto to the response and not to submit their own. Mr. Pinkerton noted that it was a complicated issue and the PB decided not to come out with a statement.

4. Minutes Review and Approval for Meeting dates: May 5, May 19, June 2 and June 24, 2020

MOTION to approve meeting minutes as amended was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed.

5. Adjourn 9:43 PM