

# TOWN OF BELMONT

## PLANNING BOARD

### MEETING MINUTES

December 1, 2020

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: January 29, 2021

TIME: 9:06 AM

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

Absent: Renee Guo; Thayer Donham

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Senior Planner

#### **1. Meeting Called to Order at 7:00 PM**

Mr. Pinkerton called the meeting to order, introduced Planning Board members, and reviewed a summary of the items that were on the agenda. The meeting was held remotely via video conference webinar.

#### **2. Public Hearing:**

##### **a. 28 Pierce Road: Two (2) Special Permits: Construct an addition – SR-C**

Mr. Pinkerton read the public notice.

Joe Noone, Attorney, representing the Applicants, Jonathan and Michelle Brit, noted that the Applicants would like to build a second-floor addition over the garage (maintaining the existing nonconforming set back), add an addition to the rear, raise an existing porch and construct an addition on the rear of the house. They would also like to lengthen the garage and keep within the nonconforming setback and to construct a dormer over the rear of the house. The additions would exceed the 30 percent allowed by the Town and this was why they were seeking the special permit. The Applicant's TLA analysis showed the renovations coming in at 20 percent of the size of the surrounding neighborhood. The Applicant's FAR calculations show that the proposed size was consistent with other homes in the neighborhood. Three abutters submitted support and possibly one neighbor was concerned about the dormer. He added that the proposed changes were in general harmony with the neighborhood and not a detriment to the neighborhood. He also noted that over 40 percent of the surrounding properties had a similar dormer to the one being proposed.

Maria Turrelles, 22 Pierce Road, next door neighbor, noted that the house was too close to her as it was, the second-floor addition would now mean that she would now have her privacy invaded. The second floor would certainly create shadows. The value of her property would go down and the garage was way too close and she could not imagine people living on top of it. She does not want to lose her view of Belmont Hill and the foliage. She was in opposition of the application as the proposed house was too big.

Steve Boyle, 55 Hastings Road, neighbor to the rear. He noted that he thought that the scale of

the addition was too big and he was concerned about the large third-floor dormer. There were no other homes with a third-floor dormer, this was too big for the neighborhood. He would like to maintain home sizes and open spaces in the neighborhood. He was in opposition of the special permits.

Kathrine Whitestone, 49 Hastings Road, noted that the proposed additions were too big for the neighborhood, light-blocking and she was in objection to the special permits.

Mr. Pinkerton explained the PB's concerns of expansions on nonconforming setbacks, the PB has not allowed them unless it was a special circumstance. He added the neighbors were not happy. The PB has not been allowing full third story dormers on top of second stories, the dormer was called out as an attic but this doesn't mean it couldn't be used as an office or a fifth bedroom, it should be counted in the TLA as it was approximately 400 square feet. He suggested that the Applicant should consider redrawing the plans, consider knocking down the garage and moving over two feet.

Mr. Noone asked to have a working group set up and Mr. Pinkerton noted that they should rework the plans first before going in for a working group.

Mr. Lowrie noted that the dormer would create a huge bump in the height of the building. It would be better to see a new effort rather than a working group.

Mr. Starzec agreed that the third-floor dormer was too big and it created a tall wall effect and the windows were the same size as the rest of the house.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that they consider withdrawing the application to redesign the plans and to construct so that they were eliminating the side setback.

Mr. Haglund, also noted that they need to see a different proposal before a working group would be organized.

**MOTION to continue to December 15, 2020 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed.**

### **3. Continued Public Hearings:**

#### **a. 30 Newcastle Road: Special Permit: Construct a new single-family home – SR-C**

**MOTION to continue to December 15, 2020 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed.**

#### **b. 30 Horne Road: Special Permit: Construct an addition – SR-C**

Michael Logan, Applicant, noted that he has made some changes to the original plans. Changes were made to the elevations and the TLA was reduced. The PB reviewed the changes in the

plans.

Mr. Pinkerton reviewed TLA relative to the rest of the neighborhood. He noted that the single-family house being proposed was as big as many of the two-family houses in the neighborhood. It was an extraordinarily large structure that was being proposed, it was one of the largest homes in the neighborhood.

Mr. Logan noted that he thought that the problem was the mass and the TLA and the ridge height, and he came back with smaller home and now the TLA was a big concern.

Mr. Starzec and Mr. Lowrie agreed with Mr. Pinkerton's concerned about the TLA. If it were allowed here it would be allowed on that whole street and it would be a completely different neighborhood.

The PB concurred that they need to come down on the size and then come back and maybe then a working group later.

**MOTION to continue to December 15, 2020 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Haglund. Motion passed.**

**c. 1 Broad Street: Two Special Permits to construct an addition – SR-C**

Paul Riegle and Laura Miyakawa, Applicants, reviewed the changes that were previously made to the plans. Since the last meeting the TLA was reduced by 143 square feet down to 2,379 square feet and the new FAR was .33. They squared off the back of the addition, pulled it back from the setback lines from the rear and Sherman Street sides.

Mr. Lowrie noted that he would vote no because he felt that the addition was too large and out of character with the neighborhood. He thought that the one-foot reduction of the roof and making the basement lower was an issue because it was still really a three-story building. There was a lot of TLA that wasn't TLA because the basement was made bigger.

The PB discussed the difference between a "basement" and the "cellar" and the height of the addition.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that the PB had previously allowed raising the landscape or they moved the back of the house in until it was no longer an issue.

Mr. Wheeler noted that the PB has typically not really looked at basements or cellars. As long as the appearance was a two and a half story the PB hasn't taken into account the basement/cellar.

Mr. Lowrie noted that the one-foot height reduction was taken from the attic and the right and left sides do not look a whole lot different from the outside, the lower side was only one foot lower. The height of the addition was as high as the three-story.

Rayhaneh Ramezany, Project Manager, Architect, Maryann Thompson Architects, described the new side view and the changes since the last meeting.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that there was a distinct request from the abutter to add drainage and appropriate flood mitigation. Mr. Riegle noted that he agreed and that this was reasonable.

The PB will continue to the next meeting when more PB members will be present and the Applicant may have a better chance at approval of the special permit.

**MOTION to continue to December 15, 2020 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Starzec. Motion passed.**

**d. 24 Grant Avenue: Two (2) Special Permits to construct a two-family home – GR**

Mr. Cusano, Applicant, noted that he would like to withdraw the application and make a new proposal for a single-family home. He asked to see the neighborhood TLA and FAR numbers. Mr. Pinkerton shared his screen showing the existing and proposed TLA and FAR compared to other neighborhood dwellings.

The PB reviewed the graph with Mr. Cusano and reviewed what size may be acceptable to build the new single-family home.

**MOTION to approve request to withdraw the pending application without prejudice for a new application to be filed was made by Mr. Lowrie and seconded by Mr. Pinkerton. Motion passed.**

**MOTION to close the public hearing was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed.**

**e. 40 Walnut Street: Two (2) Special Permits: Construct a two-family home – GR**

**MOTION to continue to December 15, 2020 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed.**

**4. Updates on Cases and Planning Board Projects, and Committee Reports**

No new cases or updates were reviewed.

**5. Adjourn 8:52 PM**