

# TOWN OF BELMONT

## PLANNING BOARD

### MEETING MINUTES

December 15, 2020

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: January 29, 2021

TIME: 9:07 AM

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

Staff: Ara Yogurtian, Assistant Director, Offices of Community Development

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

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

There will be a working group scheduled and Mr. Pinkerton asked to see the plans before the meeting.

**MOTION to continue to January 5, 2021 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Mr. Starzec. Motion passed.**

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

Mr. Pinkerton noted that the applicants asked for a continuation and had not submitted new plans.

**MOTION to continue to January 5, 2021 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Mr. Starzec. Motion passed.**

Later in the meeting, the applicants joined and stated via Chat that they had trouble making the Zoom connection and had not requested a continuation. Mr. Pinkerton noted that unfortunately their hearing had already been continued and could not be reopened.

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

**MOTION to continue to January 5, 2021 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Starzec. Motion passed.**

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

Mr. Pinkerton noted that because a copy of the latest plan was not copied to the website, the public was not able to review the final version of the plans and the case would have to be continued. Mr. Pinkerton noted that he met with the Applicants and they chopped six feet off of the rear, the TLA was still very high. He also noted that it was in the size range of the size that he thought might be acceptable

Mr. Lowrie noted that he was struggling with the massing of the proposed addition as the left-hand side is higher than the right-hand side and when you measure the average grade it made a difference. The reason that it looked larger was that the grade was higher on the right-hand side. He noted that the size of the structure was double from what it was before and it looked like pretty close to a half floor below the floor level on the addition, it did not look like a cellar. Even though following the definition of a floor as per the zoning code by-laws, the PB has been tasked by Town Meeting to not allow things that don't fit in - it shouldn't be so massive that it doesn't look like it would fit into the neighborhood. With how much of it was above ground and if we allowed this for every house in the neighborhood and allowed for every house to double its' size from the side it would not be the same neighborhood. The house is too big for the neighborhood and if this passed, the PB would need to pass everyone of these that comes by and the neighborhood would not stay the same.

Ms. Donham said that she felt that the Applicant had addressed the issues that were addressed in the Working Group and they had care of things that we articulated at the last meeting. She was comfortable with allowing the addition.

Ms. Guo noted that she agreed that they made an effort to reduce the size and make the shape more regular, she thinks that the existing house occupies a reasonable space on the footprint of the lot. She thought it would fit in even if it was doubled in size. She does not have a problem with the proposal.

Mr. Haglund noted that it was pushing the limit and it was within the limit that they have accepted. He was concerned that the neighborhood may not have been paying attention to this application. If people push back and say this was not what we want the PB to do then there will need to be regulations in place to say it is not possible to double the size of a house.

Mr. Starzec was in support of the application as the house started small and it was an interesting plan. He thought that the elevations were misleading and they maximized the bulk as you are looking at it from the sides.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that he was leaning towards approving it and he noted that he would not allow this in other neighborhoods if it did not fit.

Rayhaneh Ramezany, Project Manager, Architect, Maryann Thompson Architects, explained that there were no columns and the ceiling was going to be flat.

Mr. Lowrie noted that the he felt that the public should have the opportunity to view the final plans according to open meeting law, before the vote was made.

Mr. Yogurtian noted that posting the revisions to the website was not a requirement it was just a courtesy.

**MOTION to approve one special permit to construct an addition greater than 30% with two conditions was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Ms. Donham. Mr. Lowrie voted no. Motion passed. Vote 4 YES and 1 NO.**

**Conditions:**

**Save the existing Norway Maple tree on the property and replace it if it dies and install an exterior French-drain to alleviate flooding concerns.**

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

Mr. Haglund noted that the building plans were not fully dimensioned and it was difficult to decide on the driveway. The amount of exterior paving could be reduced and still be functional.

John O'Donoghue, Applicant, noted that he withdrew the action to remove the Linden tree, reduced the curb cut from two to one, reduced from two to one driveway, moved the house six feet to the right to get it out of the nonconforming situation and the existing driveway was reduced to ten foot wide. The footprint of the structure was reduced by 12 feet off of the depth of the house. The appearance from PQ was improved by reducing the ridge of the height and reducing the dormer size. He added that they have worked with a bunch of the neighbors and worked with the PB to find a common ground.

Mr. Cliff Rober, Surveyor, representing the Applicant, noted that the driveway was designed at nine and half feet wide, it goes along the house to the detached garage, the bump out was to allow cars to turn around. The drywell moved to the other side and would not be too close to the roots.

Mr. Yogurtian noted that if the building is going to be torn down a Stormwater Management Plan would need to be submitted. He noted that the front drywell could flood the basement or surface on the street. This might not be the drywell and it would need to be sized by an engineer.

Mr. Haglund noted that the driveway turnaround dimension of pavement in the rear of the site was a lot of pavement to put down on this site. The turn-around area could be 12 or 14 feet instead of 20 feet and the width of the yard could be increased between the back of the house and the driveway.

Mr. Rober reviewed the landscape plan.

Mr. Pinkerton reviewed the size of the structure and how it fit in with the neighborhood. He noted that he was concerned about the TLA, it was very large. This appears be the largest two-family home in the neighborhood. The FAR was below average for the neighborhood.

Mr. Haglund noted that the green strip would be better at neighbor's side of the driveway at 2.5 feet instead of 1.5 feet.

Mr. Starzec noted that the FAR was reasonably low for this house.

Mr. Lowrie noted that he was concerned with the TLA and noted that there may be a problem with the analysis.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that he was more concerned about the footprint and the size of the house.

Mr. Lowrie asked for more time to review plans in the future for both the public and the PB.

Ian Griffith, 23 Walnut Street, called into the meeting and noted that he was previously in opposition and that he was happy with the new plans and the protection of the tree. Mr. O'Donoghue reached out to the neighbors to make sure that everybody was on board with the plans for the tree.

Adela Pineda, 25 Walnut Street, called into the meeting and noted that she was happy with the tree that was no longer going to be removed and that she was now in support of the plan.

Mr. Haglund would like to see more detail in the plans and have it made available to the public.

**MOTION to continue to January 5, 2021 pending more detailed building plans with dimensions was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed.**

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

- a. Mr. Yogurtian noted that two new cases will be coming to the January 19, 2021 meeting. He briefly reviewed these two upcoming projects.
- b. 91 Beatrice Circle - 40B application materials will be delivered to the Planning Board members for their review and Comments.
- c. Mr. Yogurtian briefly describe a house on Kenmore Rd. and explained that there were two vacant lands adjacent to this property that are owned by the same Owner. If the Owner comes to build a similar house on both of the lots there was nothing in place to stop him and did the Board want to discuss this at a later date.
- d. 73 Trowbridge Rd. was coming back to the PB, they want to swap the rear area to the front, roughly six feet so they can have a bigger office space, is this something that the Board can discuss or does it need to be readvertised as a public hearing, etc. To be on the agenda to discuss how to handle this.

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**4. Adjourn 9:05 PM**