

TOWN OF BELMONT

PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

January 19, 2021

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: March 1, 2021

TIME: 2:45 PM

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

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 and introduced Planning Board members.

Mr. Pinkerton reviewed a summary of the items that were on the agenda. The meeting was held remotely via video conference webinar.

2. Public Hearings:

a. CASE NO. 21-01 – Design and Site Plan Review **347 Pleasant street (LBIII) Robert Webb**

Dr. Sarah Richardson, applicant, would like to development a new state of the art facility to provide dental care for the community. She was requesting Design and Site Plan Review to construct a two-story office building and associated 12 parking spaces.

Randy Waterman, WNDA Design, presented a vicinity may, a plot plan showing existing and proposed. He presented a conceptual site plan and he walked the board through the site plan and pointed out the green space, landscaping and the required and provided parking spaces. The design was parking space driven. He explained that there would be a planted rain garden on the property to direct some of the rainwater runoff and keep it off the street. He noted that soil bores were completed for the property.

Michael Samra, Architect, Studio Troika, reviewed the site plan and noted there would be a bike rack on site, a separate egress for a trash compactor, and the vestibule location. He reviewed the proposed materials for the exterior of the building as brick, wood and glass. He presented the proposed building elevations.

Ms. Donham noted that it was critical to provide a pedestrian pathway to the front door. She also noted that there were a lot of shrubs, she liked having it brought up and made part of the streetscape. She was concerned about using wood as a material as it sometimes fails.

Mr. Samra described a type of wood that was rot resistant that they were considering.

No need for a dumpster on site as Dr. Richardson pays for weekly pickup and employs the use of large roll out containers.

Ms. Guo noted that she liked the building closer to the streetscape. She asked for more information regarding the entrance location. She noted that good signage would be important. The bushes at the front of the building but maybe to make it more interesting and maybe add a couple of benches and small shade trees. She suggested breaking up the mass of the north facing brick wall to make it more interesting during the day.

Mr. Starzec asked for more information regarding the parking spaces and how they thought it would work. He also asked for a general location for sign placement.

Dr. Richardson noted that they stagger the patient appointments so that the rooms are prepared for the next patient. The schedule of the day would be set up with particular attention to the parking needs. Parking at this location was also used by the business next door.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that he was concerned about the massing and the large brick wall on the north side of the building. Mr. Samra noted that they could work on this and try to break it up some.

Mr. Lowrie noted that he thought the move towards the street would cause “buck tooth” and it will be different and dissimilar from what was on the other side of the street. He mentioned that it was a monolith, and he was concerned about the height, it was tall for the site. The parking would double the number of patients that could be seen, and it may not always be Dr. Richardson in this building. He asked if there could there be a pedestrian entryway on the street side.

John Robotham, abutter, was curious about whether there were any drawings or renderings available that would show the rear of the building. Mr. Samra noted that there would be drawings at the next meeting. Dr. Richardson reviewed the expected number of employees and patients that she would have at the location, the rooms are not always used and all hours. He noted that Dr. Richardson was a very conscientious neighbor.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that they would like to see more detailed landscaping, pedestrian access from the sidewalk, more information on efficiency of parking, landscaping improvements to the side wall that faces the gas station as it is not interesting to look at, a plan for a natural barrier at the rear and engineering plans for the mechanicals on top including shielding plans.

Mr. Samra described the reasoning for the entrance location, and he noted that it was very thoroughly considered.

Ms. Donham asked if it was possible to flip the entrance with the office to make it more pedestrian friendly.

Mr. Pinkerton asked them to consider electric vehicle parking spaces and solar panels as well.

MOTION to continue to February 16, 2021 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Starzec. Motion passed.

**b. CASE NO. 21-02 – Two Special Permits
35 Poplar Street (GR) – Jon Rostler and Amy Roberts**

Mr. Pinkerton read the public notice.

Requesting two special permits to construct a three-story addition.

Jon Rostler and Amy Roberts, applicants, mentioned that they have lived in the neighborhood for over 20 years. They need more space so that they can homeschool their children and work from home.

John Lodge, Architect, noted that the addition was three stories because of the site that slopes and that was why they end up with a big addition on the back. He presented the interior plans and the exterior plans.

Mr. Pinkerton opened the meeting for public comment.

Natalie Blue, surveying engineering company, noted that this house was a non-conforming three-story structure and all the lots slope down to the back and most of the basements are exposed. She noted that they were trying to reduce the setback and improve the living space.

Mr. Edward O'Brien, 27 Poplar Street, noted that he was doing an addition himself, but it was much smaller and he felt that this project could be accomplished with a smaller 2 and a half-story addition. He felt that he was kept in the dark by the applicants and he said he was led to believe that this was a 2.5 story addition. He would be most severely impacted by this project and he was not opposed to the addition, but the application illustrates exactly the kind of addition that Belmont does not want. This would be the very first three-story addition on Poplar Street and the Board should be careful about granting an exception for the By-Law because it can create a domino effect.

Bernie and Diane Ryan, 23 Poplar Street, noted that he constructed an addition in 2016 and there was zero neighbor opposition at the time that he did the addition. He understands the needs of the neighbors and they have been exemplary neighbors.

Colin Hamell, 51 Poplar Street, noted that he had an addition approved a few years ago. He agrees with Bernie and the addition is fine and they support the project.

Mr. Lowrie was concerned about the three-story addition; this has not been allowed since he had started with the PB.

Ms. Donham asked for more clarification regarding 3 story additions, one was approved by the ZBA in her neighborhood that was different, and she wants to understand how that works. Mr. Yougurtian explained the difference between a three-story reviewed by ZBA versus the Planning Board. The addition exceeds 300 square feet and therefore, is reviewed by the Planning Board.

Ms. Roberts noted that she would like to go through a Working Group with the Planning Board.

Mr. Pinkerton reviewed the TLA and the FAR and noted that the house was very large. Mr. Pinkerton and Mr. Starzec noted that they were surprised that this project made it through for PB review as it should have been reduced in size before it could be considered by the PB. It was noted that the Town staff has been overwhelmed by work lately and this slipped through.

Mr. Starzec noted that he would join the Working Group along with Mr. Pinkerton.

MOTION to continue to February 16, 2021 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Ms. Donham. Motion passed.

3. Continued Public Hearings:

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

Cliff Rober, supplied the PB with revised plans and they were accepted by the PB. There were no concerns by the PB.

MOTION to approve (plans submitted on January 11, 2021, signed on January 7, 2021) with conditions was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie.

Conditions: Contain linden tree in front and prevent headlights going into neighbor's windows.

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

201 Lexington Street will be returning for a special permit with new plans. They will need to fill out a new application and start fresh as the first application was withdrawn.

90 Agassiz Avenue is a new case coming for review.

93 Concord Ave. - a waiver for a freestanding sign coming up for review.

5. Minutes Review and Approval; December 1, 2020 and December 15, 2020.

MOTION to approve meeting minutes for the December 1, 2020 Planning Board meeting was made by Mr. Pinkerton and second by Ms. Donham. Motion passed.

MOTION to approve meeting minutes for the December 15, 2020 Planning Board meeting (with edits made by Mr. Pinkerton) was made by Mr. Pinkerton and second by Ms. Donham. Motion passed.

6. Adjourn 9:34 PM