

# TOWN OF BELMONT

## PLANNING BOARD

### MEETING MINUTES

June 22, 2021

RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA

DATE: July 23, 2021

TIME: 9:16 AM

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

Staff: Robert Hummel, Senior Planner, Offices of Community Development  
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. He reviewed a summary of the items that were on the agenda. The meeting was held remotely via video conference webinar.

#### **2. Continued cases:**

##### **a. CASE NO. 21-07, Design and Site Plan Review**

**661 Pleasant Street (SRA) – Belmont Woman's Club, Wendy J. Murphy, President**

Mr. Pinkerton noted that the plan had been approved with conditions by the Historic District Commission. Mr. Pinkerton noted that there were several Planning Board issues to review:

- The use of the parking spaces, event parking will need to be elsewhere in town. The handicap spot was not compelling as the building was not handicap assessable. Municipal parking and the liability issues could be tremendous and municipal parking was not a good use of the facility and there should be a lease agreement with the Town for the parking spaces.
- They would need parking if there were a childcare center there. They should look at the needs for the future childcare facility.
- A parking management plan would be required. It should include who can park there and how to restrict parking. Signage would be important.
- Parking is only for member use until the plan has been submitted.
- Parking is not to be allowed on the driveway.
- Signage for the handicap space was needed.
- Signage for no parking would be needed.
- They will need screening of parking spaces to soften visual impact of a line of parked cars from Pleasant Street. Landscape plan must be reviewed by the Historic District Commission and the Planning Board.
- Mr. Lowrie noted the view from above on the west side should be screened and three different wedges on the parking spaces that have an opportunity for planters.
- Mr. Pinkerton noted the need for plantings to keep people from backing out of spaces and

going down the cliff.

- Handicap access plan is likely a conservation restriction. HDC needs to include the review of this space before Planning Board approval.
- Mr. Yogurtian noted that there should be a 6-month renewable timeline on the landscape plan to give BWC time to get plants donated.
- Mr. Haglund noted that there was an issue with the grading plan. He thinks it ought to be a grading plan that includes a 5-foot plan for the parking lot, the existing grading and the contours show that the parking spaces are steeper than the roadway and a new contour plan will need to be provided for the PB and reviewed by the PB. They will need an existing contour to meet up with the proposed contours. Mr. Rojas noted that the parking spaces will all “pass the test” at the end of the project. Mr. Rojas cleared up the issue of the contours with Mr. Haglund showing him that they were represented in red ink on another sheet of the plan set.
- Mr. Lowrie asked if the land trust had the authority to ease the conservation restriction? Mr. Rojas noted that they had no issue with the granite wall nor the grading. Mr. Lowrie noted that the legality of this would need to be looked into.
- Mr. Pinkerton noted that the land trust situation was an issue. Ms. Murphy noted that they have a written authority and she would provide this for the PB.
- The granite blocks were a concern. The PB would need to see what the granite blocks would look like in the context of the site. Mr. Rojas noted that he would pick each block and it would look nice. He noted that they would be set in alignment in the subgrade.
- Notification of when the blocks are to be selected will be provided by Mr. Rojas.
- The PB could provide a list of conditions and the BWC and Mr. Rojas can provide solutions. This way they can limit the number of conditions at the time of approval. The list should be made public and each PB member will submit their list of concerns.
- The grass next to parking space 11 should be called out as “grass”.
- A delineation of planning removal calculations need to be shown
- Mr. Haglund would like to see a specific commitment to identifying and marking the granite stones to make sure there will be enough to do the job. Ms. Murphy noted that they will purchase more if they run short.
- The list of PB conditions will be provided for the BWC and Mr. Rojas within a couple of days.
- Snow removal would need to be addressed by the BWC and Mr. Rojas, they would need to check with the Town as they are doing the snow removal for BWC.

**MOTION to continue to July 6, 2021 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed.**  
**The vote was unanimous.**

**b. CASE NO. 21-08, Design and Site Plan Review**  
**115 Mill Street – Northland Residential Corporation, Mr. John C. Dawley**

Mr. Pinkerton noted that there was a concern regarding the Gross Floor Area substantially exceeding the By-Law limits. The GFA’s that came in the previous application were concerning and Mr. Dawley has come with an application for a waiver for definition of GFA.

Mr. Dawley, Northland Residential Corporation, came before the Board to present the revised Design and Site plan for the McLean property. He introduced his team: Alan Auckeman - Ryan Associates, Ed Bradford – TAT, Architectural team. He shared his screen of McLean Zone 3, The Residences at Bel Mont – Townhome Unit Heights, Living Area Gross Footage and Gross Floor Area. He reviewed the drawings and discussed the following:

- Townhouse building heights buildings 1 and 2 comply with a limit of 36 feet.
- Building 3-6 were all listed at 36 feet tall.
- 12 units exceeded the 2,400 Living Area Gross Footage and the waiver was filed for these
- The three-bedroom end unit was revised to bring it into compliance and relief was no longer needed. It now included the mechanical room in the measurement as well. The first floor was reduced from 1,646 square feet to 1,546 square feet. The second floor was 920 square feet and it was reduced to 844 square feet. The overall square footage was brought down to 2,390 square feet. The waiver would no longer be needed for these units.
- Mr. Dawley reviewed the architectural plan for the Senior Housing and noted that it had to have single floor living and limited steps. He reviewed the floorplan and floor area size that was best for a senior living home.
- Buildings 3-6 do not exceed 3,600 square feet as there is a basement
- Buildings 7-14 exceeds 3,600 square feet
- Mr. Dawley explained the issue with the non-habitable unconditioned-unfinished area in the lower level. He noted that this design does not make sense.

Ms. Donham noted that she thought the plans were an improvement, but she needs more time to think about it.

Mr. Lowrie noted that they did not want things to look out of size with what was in the area. He would like to know what this looks like on the outside compared to zone 2. They do not want the units to look too different from what is already there.

Mr. Dawley mentioned that the average first floor square footage at Woodlands II was 1,665 square foot and the average second floor area was 760 square feet and the average overall was 2,472 (excluding the basement). He felt that the massing was like what was being proposed.

Mr. Starzec noted that he agrees that the double foundation area was ridiculous.

Ms. Guo agreed that the non-habitable lower grade space would be nice for storage. She would like to see a visual how the new buildings would look compared to the existing buildings.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that he appreciated the changes and didn't feel that the mass would be affected by the non-habitable unconditioned-unfinished area in the lower level. He would

like to know how the size of the proposed buildings compare in size with the Woodland's buildings.

Mr. Pinkerton opened the meeting to public comments:

Joseph Newburg, noted that he lived in zone 2 and he described the lower level floor plans. He explained the size of the units and noted that they are comparable to the proposed units after zone 2 units are fully finished they would be around 3,500 square feet. He noted that the doorways would need to be 36" wide for wheelchair pass through.

Mr. Dawley noted that the 36" was not called out as a requirement.

Mr. Robert Eckert, noted that he thought that the zone 2a would have to be built to federal housing for accessibility requirements. He suggested that they check. The size comparison between zone 2 and 3 should be looked at by the peer reviewer. He was skeptical about the way they are being measured and if they were in accordance to the rules of the By-Laws. The Gross Area Square Footage in the By-law and the definitions should be revisited. The units as viewed from Olmstead Drive will be perceived as massively larger and a height study with a staff should be done. Maybe the bigger units could be moved further away from the overlook. The height measure was to be based on the grade before you adapt the grades not the modified grades. He thinks the buildings are high. All of this should be looked at in the peer review process.

Mr. Yogurtian asked Mr. Dawley if he must comply with section 9.

Mr. Bradford, Architect, TAT, noted that the units were exempt from section 9 and he would send that section to Ara.

Mr. Lowrie would like to see how the buildings compare in an above ground view.

The PB agreed that there should be an architect's peer review done on the area calculations, basement vs. cellar and elevation measurements.

**MOTION to continue to July 6, 2021 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed.**  
**The vote was unanimous.**

**Matt Lowie Left the meeting**

### **3. 35 Poplar Street Request to review Amended Plans**

John Lodges, Architect, noted that his emails were not going through to Belmont. They are asking to raise the ridge and add a door. The PB will need to see the plans in order to review the height of the ridge and they will need to have the updated plans.

**4. 73 Trowbridge Street Request to Review Amended Plans.**

Applicant decided to withdraw plans and submit new plans. The windows that they wanted to add were in character with the house and in character with the neighborhood. Mr. Pinkerton noted that they should go ahead and proceed.

**5. Review and Determinate the Criteria for Additional Wall Signs on One Wall of Lease Area.**

Mr. Hummel noted that they want to apply for additional signs and how does the PB want to have this interpreted. It is the same user with three separate store fronts. PB commented that the signs fit well and they had one reasonable sign per store front. If just replacing comparable signs it should not be an issue.

**6. Review and Determine the Applicability for Beacon Community Church's Proposed Sign under the Dover Amendment.**

Mr. Pinkerton noted that the marquee needed to be cleaned up. Mr. Starzec thought that the two signs together looked a little hobbled. The Dover Amendment does not affect the PB ability to weigh in on this. They would like to have them clean up the marquee sign. Ms. Guo noted that the lights should be replaced with nice looking and matching lights.

**7. MAPC (Inner Core Committee) Representative Appointment**

The Town needs a representative to be nominated from the Planning Board or Board of Selectman. No action was taken at this time. The PB will think about this and revisit this at another time.

**8. Discuss Remote Attendance Participation**

Mr. Pinkerton noted that there would need to be one person to manage the hybrid style meeting. The PB would further discuss this as things progress.

**9. Review and Approve Draft Planning Board Meeting Minutes for May 25, 2021 and June 1, 2021.**

Planning Board approved the May 25, 2021 meeting meetings and the vote was unanimous.  
The June 1, 2021 meeting minutes are to be reviewed at a later date.

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

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

There were no updates or committee reports.

**12. Adjourn 10:14 PM**

The Planning Board's next scheduled meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 6, 2021