

TOWN OF BELMONT

PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

July 20, 2021

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: August 16, 2021
TIME: 9:11 AM

Present: Steve Pinkerton, Chair; Ed Starzec; Thayer Donham; Matt Lowrie; Karl Haglund; 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 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. 21-02, Two Special Permits 35 Poplar Street (GR) – Jon Rostler and Amy Roberts

Mr. Pinkerton noted that the applicants would like to make a slight change to their design for the Planning Board's approval.

John Lodge, Architect, reviewed the revisions to the plans. He noted that there were two changes:

1. Add a door to the basement on the north side
2. On the west elevation roofline, the room needed a cathedral ceiling in the family room and the ridge would go up 16”.

Mr. Lowrie would like to hear from the neighbor who had concerns at the time of the original permit review.

Mr. Starzec thought the additional one foot was minimal.

MOTION to approve was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Ms. Donham. Motion passed.

Roll call:

Yes votes-
Mr. Lowrie
Ms. Guo

Ms. Donham
Mr. Starzec
Mr. Pinkerton

b. CASE NO. 21-06, Three Special Permits
201 Lexington Street (GR) Christine Arthur and Eugene Klein

Ms. Arthur, applicant/architect, presented the new plans for the revisions to the original proposal. She noted the changes to the plan as being much less bulky and lower in height by five feet. She reviewed the floorplan and noted that it was smaller. She reviewed a shadow study and a view study from the neighbor's yard.

Mr. Pinkerton reviewed the revised calculations of the TLA and the FAR. The house was no longer the largest in the neighborhood. The FAR was much lower and the house was no way near as large as the original proposal.

Mr. Lowrie noted that the GR district had restrictions on the width of the driveway as per restrictions in the by-law, not to be wider than 12 feet. Two driveways were greater than 12 feet and separated by a grass strip. Mr. Yogurtian noted that he would review the section of the by-law to better understand the intent.

Ms. Guo noted that the FAR was acceptable.

Mr. Haglund noted that the 3D view from the neighbors was devastating and the project was too big given the constraints within the neighborhood.

Mr. Starzec was fine with the reduced FAR.

Mr. Donham noted that the applicants were responsive to the PB concerns and the working group's concerns. She added that the project had evolved in response to the neighbor's and the Planning Board's concerns. She said that the driveway garage issue needed to comply and the color should probably be all one color.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that he would be concerned about the alternative. He was concerned that the alternative would be to tear down the existing house and build two single-family houses that would be even bigger. Given the alternative, he felt comfortable with this reduced plan.

Mr. Lowrie was still concerned about the massing. The original ask was very big, and he was looking at the overall project and it was still very big. The image of the house was massive and out of character. The number of the cars parked in the front of the house was not what the neighbors would want. This would not fit into what the Town of Belmont would want.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that there would not be enough votes to grant the special permit as there would not be four votes.

There were no public comments.

Ms. Arthur noted that she would choose to withdraw the application.

MOTION to approve withdrawal of application without prejudice to a new application was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Haglund. Motion passed.

Roll call:

Yes votes-

Mr. Lowrie

Ms. Donham

Mr. Starzec

Mr. Pinkerton

Mr. Haglund

**c. CASE NO. 21-0, Design and Site Plan Review
661 Pleasant Street (SRA) – Belmont Woman’s Club, Wendy J. Murphy, President**

Mr. Pinkerton noted that the future of ADA parking and access along with the parking plan were still a concern. He met with the BOS and Mr. Clancy and it was determined that the parking uses could be determined by the Planning Board. The parking could only be used for Belmont Women’s Club members and BWC functions. Mr. Pinkerton reviewed six conditions [he shared his screen to the listed conditions], PB members gave their comments and finalized the language to approve the application.

HDC member, Carol Moyles, noted that the site plan was different than what the HDC had looked at in the past. The HDC would need to review the new plan.

The PB had a lengthy discussion regarding the handicap space. The outcome was that they would require a letter from the architect assuring that the handicap space would meet the necessary requirements.

Before parking was permitted in the space the BWC will need approved signage by the PB and the HDC.

There were no public comments.

MOTION to approve as amended subject to the conditions (shown on the Belmont Media Center recording to this date) as posted in the future on the Town website was made by Mr. Lowrie and seconded by Ms. Donham. Motion passed.

Roll call:

Yes votes-

Ms. Donham
Mr. Starzec
Mr. Haglund
Mr. Lowrie
Mr. Pinkerton
Ms. Guo

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

Mr. Pinkerton noted that they would only cover the architectural issues at this meeting.

Mr. Stan Rome, abutter, noted that there was a commonality between the units in the previous zones and units could be resold at similar prices. This was not the case here.

Jolanta Eckert, neighbor, noted that the Building 7 height would be 25 feet higher than hers. She would like the PB to do site measurements and consider how this will look on the site. That building will stand straight up from Pleasant Street. The accessibility to the apartment buildings is no where near what is needed. People will be in and out constantly with uber, utility trucks, etc.

Mr. Eckert, shared photos of a view up Olmstead Drive. He reviewed roof heights and he noted that he would like to see an actual height study done with a balloon. He would like the PB to come out and see how the elevations would look compared to other structures in the area. Mr. Eckert noted that there were three major points that should be evaluated for views. He asked for subtle land complimenting architecture. It would be accretive for the residents.

Mr. Lowrie suggested asking for architectural models.

Mr. Haglund asked to have a few balloons floated.

Maria Neirotti, abutter, noted that she shared the same concerns regarding the height of the buildings and the traffic situation.

Judith Ananian Sarno, Precinct 3, Town Meeting Member, commented that working groups for the neighbors could be set up, it could be helpful regarding the height, stormwater, traffic and screening. She asked about the balloons and she was interested in the sightlines from different locations.

Carol Moyles, HDC member, noted that she thought it was interesting and she would like to see balloons and elevational markers as an informative way to communicate height and mass of buildings.

Greg, architect, noted that the drone photography could help to deal with some of the elevation issues.

Mr. Dawley, Northland Residential Corporation, came before the Board and introduced his team: Alan Auckeman - Ryan Associates, Ed Bradford – TAT, Architectural team and Michael Breau. He addressed the height issues that were noted by the neighbors. He walked the PB through the Freedom Commons at Belmont Hill Site Plan. He compared McLean Zone 3 versus Freedom Commons (parking spaces, floor area, number of units and heights). He specifically addressed the neighbors concerns regarding heights and elevations.

Michael Breau, reviewed the overall architectural details and aesthetic precedents for Subdistrict A (scale, massing, color, design and detailing). He reviewed a detail of Building 5 and described how it would be built into the hill. He said that what they were trying to create was a pedestrian friendly small-scale neighborhood. He reviewed more details of Building 5, along Olmstead Drive and the façade of the end of unit 7. He described how materials will help to reduce the feeling of mass, they were trying to work with the topography and using field stone walls. According to zoning by-laws, the building height allowed was 36 feet above average mean grade and they are well below that on all of their buildings. He described the changes that were made to the end of the building 7 to make for a more interesting roofscape. He said that this was an appropriately scaled building for the campus and the Woodlands and complimentary in the architecture components.

Ed Bradford, followed up on comments regarding Subdistrict B. He described the exterior cladding materials for Building 100. He reviewed the combination of materials and described how the four material types helped to distinguish the different forms of the building. The goal of the materials and building design was to break down visual perception of the bulk and mass. He described the function of the link to the amenities at the first floor, it would be a focal point for Subdistrict A and B.

Mr. Dawley noted that he would re-examine building 7.4 to see if he could reduce the massing on this building.

Mr. Eckert, noted that he preferred the large trees, he thought slide 17 had an accurate view and he wanted further consideration by the Board for the end of Building 7 and Building 8.

There were no comments or questions from the PB members.

MOTION to continue to August 3, 2021 was made by Mr. Lowrie and seconded by Ms. Donham. Motion passed. Unanimous.

3. Public Hearing

- a. **CASE NO. 21-15, One (1) Special Permit**
376 Trapelo Road (LBIII), Dane Helsing, Beacon Community Church

Ms. Donham read the public notice.

Mr. Helsing was requesting permitting to install his church name and logo on the former Studio Cinema sign. He noted that they would like to keep the marquee for nostalgic reasons. They would like to use the marquee to announce events as well.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that the new sign was within the sign limits within the by-law but they were concerned about the condition of the marquee.

Mr. Lowrie noted that he was concerned about the illumination.

Mr. Helsing explained that the illumination would be off by 10 PM as per code.

Ms. Donham noted that she was fine with the illumination and it needs a time limit.

Mr. Haglund and Mr. Starzec had no issues or comments regarding the sign.

Ms. Guo was also fine with the illuminated sign.

Planning Board members asked to have the marquee cleaned up.

MOTION to approve was made by Mr. Starzec and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed.

Roll call:

Yes votes-

Ms. Donham

Ms. Guo

Mr. Haglund

Mr. Starzec

Mr. Lowrie

Mr. Pinkerton

**b. CASE NO. 21-13, Design and Site Plan Review & Two (2) Special Permits
41R Holt Rd. (GR) – Clark Freiner, Two by Two Realty, LLC**

Mr. Lowrie read the public notice.

Mr. Freiner, applicant noted that he would like to propose a two family. Brendan Driscoll, his uncle, will be working with him on the project.

Mr. Rosales, attorney, asked for a continuance so that he could have more time to prepare for the hearing. He had only been hired to work on this project the day before.

MOTION to continue to August 17, 2021 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed. The vote was unanimous.

**c. CASE NO. 21-13, Design and Site Plan Review & Two (2) Special Permits
41 Willow Street (SR-C) Mark and Nancy Jarzombek**

Mr. and Mrs. Jarzombek noted that they would like to convert a portion of the barn into a studio space. They walked the PB through the architectural plans and elevations. They have approval from the HDC and they have support from their neighbors along with their signatures.

Jeanne Mooney, abutter, noted that she was in support of the project.

Carol Moyers, HDC member, noted that the HDC had approved this project and they endorse it.

Lauren Maier, HDC member, noted that the HDC had reviewed this and it was appropriate for this structure.

MOTION to approve was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Ms. Donham. Motion passed.

Roll call –

YES votes-
Mr. Starzec
Mr. Haglund
Mr. Lowrie
Ms. Donham
Ms. Guo
Mr. Pinkerton

4. Adjourn 10:37 PM

The Planning Board's next scheduled meeting will be held on Thursday, August 3, 2021