

TOWN OF BELMONT

PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

October 19, 2021

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: November 4, 2021
TIME: 9:22 AM

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

Staff: Robert Hummel, Senior Planner

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. New Cases:

a. CASE NO. 21-20, One Special Permit **333 Trapelo Road – David Salibian**

Mr. Pinkerton read the public notice.

Carol Fournier, Fast Signs joined the meeting and she described the proposed free-standing sign. She said it has a smooth metal base, concrete footings and it will be an illuminated LED lightbox sign. The Board reviewed the dimensions of the sign and determined that it was satisfactory with the zoning bylaw regulations. The operating hours of the sign would be within the hours allowed by the Town and it would be set on a timer. It would be allowed to stay on until 10 PM. Mr. Lowrie noted that the lumens should be something to consider in the future.

There were no comments from the public.

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

Roll call:

Yes votes-

Ms. Donham

Mr. Starzec

Ms. Guo

Mr. Pinkerton

Mr. Lowrie

3. Continued Cases

a. **CASE NO. 21-16, Design and Site Plan Review**

774A, 778, 782, & 790 Pleasant Street (LBII) – Empire Management Corporation, Brian Lafferty, President

Mr. Haglund joined the meeting at 7:14 PM.

MOTION to continue to November 2, 2021, was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Ms. Donham. Motion passed. Vote was unanimous.

b. **CASE NO. 21-17, Special Permit**

774A, 778, 782, & 790 Pleasant Street (LBII) – Empire Management Corporation, Brian Lafferty, President

MOTION to continue to November 2, 2021, was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Lowrie. Motion passed. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Lowrie asked Mr. Hummel to be sure that applicants inform the Planning Division (before the public meeting notice is posted) that they are planning to continue so that public does not show up for meetings where the case was continued.

c. **CASE NO. 21-08, Design and Site Plan Review**

115 Mill Street (McLean Overlay District 3) – Northland Residential Corporation, Mr. John C. Dawley, President and CEO

Mr. Pinkerton explained the issues of the proposed dimensional characteristics (height, total livable area, gross floor area (GFA) of the buildings and cellar vs. basement) that were of concern and how each dimensional issue had been addressed by the Applicant. He noted that the cellars were not counted as part of the GFA in the basic definition of the By-Law and 18 of the units qualified as having cellars. The total square foot count was substantially lower and the GFA calculations could be accepted.

Mr. Lowrie said that he felt that the project was being built to scale and the buildings were not too massive. He added that some of them were larger but this was because of the uniqueness of the topography. He explained that he forgave the units that were over the 3,600 square-foot allowed and he did not feel that there would need to be a redefinition of the GFA. He did note that there should be a waiver for the units over 3,600 square feet. He offered to write the draft of the waiver for the larger units.

Ms. Donham said that the topography was going to set the size of the units and she felt comfortable with the overall strategy of calculating the square footage.

Ms. Guo noted that the topography was challenging, and she was happy to come up with ways to work with the topography. There should probably be a waiver for those units that have

challenges.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that the Applicant has done a great job of reducing the appearance of bulk and mass and the reason that the square footages were all over the place was a result of the definition of cellar and basement in the by-law.

Ms. Donham noted that she had no problem with massing on the site. Mr. Starzec noted that they do harmonize well with the structures across the street.

Mr. Haglund noted that the residences in the townhouses need to do a careful landscaping of their property of the high-rises so that they do not stick up above everyone else's twenty-five-foot trees.

Mr. Cliff Boehmer, Davis Square Architect, peer reviewer for the Town of Belmont, reviewed some of the concerns of the landscaping plans from his August 3, 2021 memo. He noted that the waiver idea did make sense and to maybe make a clear link between the definitions and the base code versus the definition in the McLean specific code. He said that they could grant the waivers and pair them with conditions. He noted that his opinion of the townhouses was that they fit in well. He noted that he had a long list of issues (32 of them) and he was not sure that the PB had purview over all of them. He scored the proposed development very high as it fits within the existing development. He urged everyone to read the memo in order to know how to frame their decision.

Mr. Lowrie asked Mr. Dawley how he felt about a deed restriction on the inhabit table space. Mr. Dawley said he was fine with it.

Mr. Lowrie asked that the points in Mr. Boehmer's outstanding issues should be resolved as soon as possible.

Mr. Dawley noted that they plan to address each of the issues in Mr. Boehmer's August letter.

Ed Bradford, TAT, walked the Board through the updated 3D model site plan.

Mr. Pinkerton asked for an explanation regarding the landscape areas that the homeowners would take care of. He said he preferred the landscape to be more natural and not trimmed too low. He asked who will take responsibility of having the homeowners prune and take care of the landscaping in the designated landscaping areas on their property.

Mr. Breau, TAT, said that it will be monitored by the HOA and that they will be left with a maintenance plan. Mr. Pinkerton also asked about parking at the chapel and noted that it would be tricky to back out of the parking spot and could they put in a shared garage. Mr. Breau noted that he agreed there was a lot going on there and it looked worse in the model. They looked closely at this area on the site plan and it was noted that it was the same as a regular driveway.

Mr. Dawley noted that they would put this driveway issue on the list as an issue to look at.

The Board reviewed the landscaping issues that were carry-overs from the previous discussion. Mr. Dawley noted that screening during construction would be addressed with the Woodland's neighbors in the future. He also noted that they were still working with the Historic District Commission on their comments.

Mr. Lowrie asked about the stormwater absorption of the Upham Bowl. Mr. Pinkerton noted that recontouring could be done and the PB asked to have a peer review to make a statement specifically about this issue. Mr. Pinkerton asked Mr. Hummel to get a specific answer regarding this issue. Does it change stormwater runoff or not and they would like a definitive answer.

Mr. Pinkerton asked about what happens long-term with the management of the landscaping.

Mr. Dawley noted that there were three areas that would be managed and each one was managed by the specific Subdistricts and he said that this was very detailed and outlined in a memo that was sent to the Board members. He explained that there were reciprocal rights and, agreements, layers of governance and easement documents and it will be augmented with these other documents that still need to be prepared. He noted that he has his attorneys working on it now.

Mr. Dawley made a few last comments:

- The draft language for landscape plant guarantees was included in the memo.
- The sewer Inflow & Infiltration was underway.
- He noted that he had misspoke at the last meeting about pedestrian access rights existing through Zone 2 and he corrected himself.
- Mr. Eckert has a list of comments from October 5, 2021 that he will respond to.

Mr. Hummel noted that the next meeting would include presentations from the Historic District Commission, Land Management Committee, Housing Trust, and Energy Committee.

Mr. Lowrie noted that they would need to discuss number of proposed parking spaces in the future.

Mr. Pinkerton will arrange with Mr. Hummel a way for the public to review in-person the most recent plans and building materials, displayed somewhere in the Town Hall.

MOTION to continue to November 2, 2021 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Mr. Starzec. Motion passed. Vote was unanimous.

4. Review and Approve Draft Planning Board Meeting Minutes for October 5, 2021.

MOTION to approve Planning Board Meeting Minutes for October 5, 2021 as amended was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Ms. Guo. Motion passed. Vote was 4-0, Mr. Lowrie abstained.

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

No new public hearings.

6. Adjourn 9:35 PM

The Planning Board's next scheduled meeting will be held on November 2, 2021