

TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
November 15, 2022

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: February 15, 2023
TIME: 2:35 PM

Present: Matt Lowrie, Chair; Thayer Donham; Renee Guo; Jeff Birenbaum; Karl Haglund, Carol Berberian

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

This meeting was held remotely using Zoom video conferencing technology, as permitted by the Massachusetts Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations, that became effective July 16, 2022.

Ms. Berberian introduced herself as a new Planning Board Member.

Mr. Lowrie introduced Planning Board members and reviewed a summary of the items that were on the agenda.

1. Meeting Called to Order 7:00 PM.

2. Public Hearings

a) Case No. 16 - Design and Site Plan Review 350 Prospect Street – Belmont Hill School Proposal to construct a new parking lot and Facilities Building on land east of Prospect Street, along with minor changes to existing parking at 350 Prospect Street (off Marsh Street). The school is located in the Single Residence A (SR-A) Zoning District and the proposed work will be conducted at the joint properties of 283, 301, 305, 315, and 350 Prospect Street & 12 and 20 Park Avenue.

Mr. Lowrie read the public notice. He noted that the Applicant had dismissed the pending application and started over. Ms. Guo has recused herself from this matter.

Mr. Lowrie presented a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the Dover Amendment and the DSPR process.

Greg Schneider, Head of School at Belmont Hill School, gave a summary of the history of the school and put the project into historical context. He discussed the school's commitment to sustainability. He noted that the dining hall would need to be moved to a new location in the future. He explained the overall application would increase parking spaces by 150 spaces. The new parking spots would be used for faculty, staff, overflow parking and parking for events at the school.

Kelly Cardoza, came before the Board to present the Design and Site Plan Review application materials. She said that Belmont Hill's application for DSPR has been filed in compliance with the By-Law for the construction of a 7,000 square foot facilities building, the addition of 150 parking spaces, reconfigurations for off-street parking, screening, egress, utilities drainage and lighting. She briefly reviewed the plans and walked the Board through the project to show how

it meets the requirements as set forth in the Zoning By-Law. Ms. Cordoza presented a locus map, an existing conditions map, a proposed conditions map, map of the east campus - to be opened in fall of 2023, the Zamboni lot map - to open in Fall 2023, upper lot and front yard map – to open late summer of 2023 and facilities lot and building map – ready to open in the spring of 2028. Ms. Cordoza reviewed the regulatory compliance list and noted that this project was very carefully designed to meet the Town of Belmont’s zoning code regulations. They will request a waiver for an existing “less than 150’ between existing egress” locations. She reviewed the Construction Plan and Community Outreach Plan to be updated quarterly.

Mr. Lowrie presented a proposed schedule for comments. He noted that there would be no public comments at this meeting, but the public was to be heard on the topics in the upcoming meetings with one last chance for public input on February 7, 2023.

b) Case No. 22-17 – One Special Permit 277 Trapelo Road (LBIII) – M&T BANK, Theresa Freni, agent Applicant requests One Special Permit under section 5.2.5 (b)-3 to replace an existing standing sign with new.

Ms. Guo joined the meeting at 8:08 PM

Mr. Lowrie read the public notice.

Mr. Wiley, with Sign Design, Image One Industries for M&T bank, noted that they would like to replace a monument sign. They have reduced the square footage by about 10’ and have moved it back from the street. Mr. Wiley reviewed the plans for the new sign. He noted that the light would illuminate the whole face, but he could change the illumination to light up just the M&T Bank portion of the sign. He said that M&T would really like to have the green part illuminated.

Mr. Hyman noted that he was a Construction Manager with M&T bank, he noted that they could put a dimmer on the sign. He said that the intentions were to have this sign match the existing signs. Mr. Hyman said that it should not be any brighter than what is coming off the People’s bank sign. The sign would be lit all night long because the ATM is open 24 hours.

MOTION to approve with a dimmer switch installed and the applicant to comply with any issues about brightness of the sign was made by Mr. Lowrie and seconded by Ms. Donham. Motion passed.

YES Votes-

Ms. Donham

Mr. Haglund

Ms. Barbarian

Mr. Lowrie

Ms. Guo

NO Vote-

Mr. Birenbaum

c) Case No. 22-18 – One Special Permit & Design and Site Plan Review Approval 18 Ash Street (GR) - Ruth Betts Applicant requests One Special Permit and Design and Site Plan under sections 3.3 and 6D-2 of the By-Law to construct a two-family dwelling at 18 Ash Street Located in a General Residence zoning district.

Mr. Lowrie read the public notice.

Brigitte Steines, Architect representing the Applicants, came before the Board to walk them through the project. Ms. Steines started by explaining that there were many existing nonconforming conditions on the site as a masonry business and storage yard with an apartment above. She noted that the Applicant was proposing to demolish the existing structure and construct a new two and half story two-family duplex unit (approximately 1,800 square feet each) with three bedrooms and three and a half bathrooms each. The new structure would conform to the setbacks and zoning requirements. She noted that the other homes in the neighborhood were similar in size and height, this was one of the larger lots on the street. Neighbors on the street have been informed of the proposed project. She noted that the project would be an improvement to the neighborhood.

Mr. Collins mentioned that he thought the height to the midpoint was 28.8 feet and the height is 34 feet 8" to the ridge.

Mr. Lowrie noted that there was not yet a neighborhood analysis available for this project.

Mr. Birenbaum noted that he was concerned about the tandem parking, the dormer from the front elevation was large and looked out of place.

Mr. Lowrie reviewed the definition of a parking space and noted that the tandem parking as proposed would not be acceptable. He would vote no on the project with this parking arrangement although he was generally strongly supportive of this project.

Mr. Haglund noted that this would be difficult to only have one car in each driveway here.

Mr. Yogurtian suggested that this case be continued to December 20, 2022 and at that time that can have the neighborhood analysis, the redesigned driveway and the height confirmed.

Deborah Scott and Terry Curtis, 16 Ash Street, joined the meeting and noted that they were in support of the project. They were concerned about the strip of grass that allowed her to access her backyard. They were also concerned about the snow plowing as they plow into the current owner's yard and where will they put the snow in the future. Ms. Scott asked for reassurance that there would not be any encroaching on their property. They asked if there was a need for soil remediation given the stuff that has been stored on the site.

Mr. Collins noted that the site has had no hazardous materials released on the property.

Mr. Lowrie mentioned that they would not allow the builder to encroach on their property at 16 Ash Street. The snow issue would something for the Town of Belmont to deal with.

MOTION to continue to December 20, 2022 was made by Mr. Lowrie and seconded by Mr. Birenbaum. Motion passed unanimously except for Ms. Guo who had dropped off the meeting for two minutes.

3. Continued Cases

a) Case No. 21-18 Amendment to Special Permit 768 Pleasant Street – Mint Retail Facilities, LLC. Applicant requests to amend previously approved Special Permit. Revision includes changes to exterior elevations.

MOTION to continue to December 20, 2022 was made by Mr. Lowrie and seconded by Ms. Donham. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Lowrie noted that the Clark Lane had a trial and there will be a decision.

5. The Board to review and vote on meeting dates for the calendar year 2023, January through June. January 10, 2023 January 17, 2023 February 7, 2023 February 21, 2023 March 7, 2023 March 21, 2023 April 4, 2023 April 18, 2023 May 2, 2023 May 16, 2023 June 6, 2023 June 20, 2023

MOTION to accept meeting dates was made by Mr. Lowrie and seconded by Ms. Donham. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Adjourn 9:20 PM

The Planning Board's next scheduled meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 6, 2022.