

**TOWN OF BELMONT  
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**July 11, 2017**

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BELMONT, MA

2017 SEP 20 PM 2:17

Present: Elisabeth Allison, Chair; Barbara Fiacco, Vice Chair; Raffi Manjikian; Charles Clark

Absent: Karl Haglund

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Senior Planner; Spencer Gober, Staff Planner

**1. Meeting Called to Order at 7:00 PM**

**2. Discussion on Waverley Square and South Pleasant Street**

Ms. Allison gave a PowerPoint presentation on Waverley Square and South Pleasant Street and reviewed public comments received at a previous public meeting and the financial challenges facing the Town. Mr. Manjikian presented the “big idea” and explained the problem of the “log jam” of capital projects and described a “lease” situation with one of the property owners in Waverley Square. He noted that there was favorable feedback from the Board of Selectmen, the Town Treasurer and the Capital Budget Committee. He explained that he felt that this was now the appropriate time to bring this to the community. He reviewed architectural renderings of a building that would be located in the area of the Belmont Car Wash. Ms. Allison summarized that the project would be built by a private developer and would include the library and senior housing. She noted that this met most of the points raised at the public discussion and commented on the positive aspects of the idea.

Mr. Clark and Ms. Fiacco wanted more time to think about the plan, but were pleased with the start of the project.

**Comments from the audience:**

1. Ann Marie Mahoney, Chair of Capital Budget Committee, noted that this idea breaks the “log jam” of capital project and allows the Town to have a library much faster. She noted that it anchors Waverley Square and it says to that part of the community that they were important to the Town.
2. Roy Epstein, Chair of the Warrant Committee, noted that he was not in support of the library idea because the Library Trustees already had plans. He questioned the financials and noted that the library could raise private donations.
3. Lauren Meier, Chair of the Historic District Commission, noted that she was interested in enhancing the character in Waverley Square and she added that this idea had great potential.

4. John Pollock, Town Meeting Member Precinct 5, noted that he was delighted with this very creative idea. He asked the PB to think about the potential for private contributions toward the library. He noted that traffic in this area could be a challenge.
5. Jane Sherwin, Belmont Resident, noted that it was a fascinating idea. She would like to better understand what “lease-back” actually means.
6. Lucia Gates, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 4, noted that she was concerned about the flow of traffic through Star Market and Trapelo Road. She would like to be sure that there would be open space around the library. She noted that there was an existing pocket park in front of the car wash that she would like to see maintained. She asked for more clarification on the lease concept.
7. David Webster Precinct 4, Town Meeting Member, noted the optimism for the “lease-back” idea. He did not like the first proposal of having a building built in the middle of the Square. He wanted to hear from the residents and wanted more information on the financial details. He noted that he was also concerned about traffic.
8. Sarah Masucci, 5 Scott Road, commented on the proximity of the library to the schools. She noted that it could make biking and walking to the library more difficult.
9. Michael Chisholm, Precinct 4 Town meeting member, stated that he would like to see the developer share a portion of the cost of making the commuter rail station ADA accessible.
10. Judith Sarno, Precinct 3, noted that this was the densest part of Belmont and stated that she was enthused and excited about the idea.
11. Lucia Gates, Precinct 4 Town Meeting Member, noted that there were creative ways to make the library meet the needs of the high school students in the new high school.

Ms. Allison reviewed the economics, savings and the financials for this idea. She noted that there will be more discussion at future meetings.

### 3. Public Hearings

#### a. 344 Pleasant Street- Design and Site Plan Review: Retail Building Greater Than 2,500 square feet- Local Business III District

Ms. Fiacco read the Public Notice.

Mr. Noone, represented the Applicant, passed out site photographs and he noted that there is currently a service repair station on the site. He stated that the Leo family purchased the property two years ago and the proposed Dunkin Donuts was denied. He

explained that the Applicant was proposing to demolish the existing structure and to replace it with a new building.

Mr. Noone reviewed the design of the building and changes to the site. He stated that one of the existing curb cuts will be removed and relocated in order to improve the circulation and safety to and from the site. He noted that 21 parking spaces are proposed and only 14 are required and added that the site is under stage 4 of remediation and the equipment will take up one parking space. He mentioned that neighbors requested that the transformer be relocated and that the eight-foot tall fence on the rear lot line remain. He added that the Applicant will submit for a Special Permit for the monument sign. Mr. Noone stated that he felt that this was a significant improvement to the area and that he was confident that it will be an asset to the neighborhood.

Mr. Wheeler reviewed the history of the property and mentioned that the storm water was preliminary reviewed by the Office of Community Development. He added that the final storm water review would happen at the time of a building permit application. He noted that the LSP had the environmental piece under control and that it will be closely watched by the Health Department and Community Development.

Comments from the audience:

1. Frank Vitiello, 24 Hurley Street, spoke in support of the project and noted that the scale and architecture of the building will enhance the area.
2. Belmont Resident, (name could not be understood by the recorder) spoke in support of the project.
3. Susan Robotham, 19 Scott Road, asked whether left hand turns from Pleasant Street on to the lot be allowed and if the building had a basement.

Mr. Noone responded that left turns will be permitted and there will not be a basement.

4. Michelle Banker, 79 Scott Road, asked about the tenants for the building.

Mr. Noone stated that it was too early to know who will rent the space.

5. Albert Barsoumain, 311 Brighton Street, noted that the traffic study was based on a coffee shop and restaurant and that the traffic was much heavier than the traffic for an out of commission gas station.
6. Rusell Mann, 308 Brighton Street, noted that he had concerns with the traffic study. He said he spoke with the LSP and that no one knows how long the remediation trailer will be on site. He supported the development as long as the tenants are compatible with the neighborhood. He added that the Traffic Advisory Committee recently met with Winn Brook neighbors to talk about traffic on Brighton Street.

7. Sarah Masucci, Scott Road, stated that she was in support of the development. She did not believe that the traffic would be radically different in either direction.
8. Riccardo Rullo, 18 Chandler Street, stated that he supports the development. He believed it will be beneficial to the community.

Mr. Noone stated that Design and Site Plan Review and Special Permit were two distinct processes and that he had no intention of undermining the Zoning Board of Appeal. He noted that the tenants will seek Special Permits as necessary and that the Applicant was complying with all the requirements for this development.

Mr. Clark asked the Applicant to explain his experience with developing small strip malls in residential areas. Mr. Leo stated that he has done other similar projects. Mr. Clark noted the number of trips if a Dunkin Donuts were in place. He also commented on the unintended consequence of moving the building closer to the street: the building will be out of line with everything else on the street and the neighbors would have more traffic abutting them since the parking will be at the back of the building. Ms. Fiacco stated that she liked that parking at the rear and noted her concern about the proposed signage and compliance with the new Sign By-Law. Mr. Noone stated that the signs will comply.

Mr. Manjikian noted that the storm water management plan review has a wait and see process and he will review the documents that have been submitted and will check in with Ara Yogurtian with his questions.

David Giargrande, Traffic Engineer, explained how the traffic study was prepared and noted that the Mass DOT guidelines were carefully followed. He noted the many positive impacts to the changes in safety on the site. Ms. Allison noted that a closed gas station was fair to use as the basis for the study. Mr. Noone noted that the study referred to a gas station in operation as a comparison even though it was not in operation right now. Mr. Giargrande noted that the base line number would not change because the daily traffic is the same. He also noted that the turning movements at the driveways will increase but the traffic flow number are expected to remain the same.

Ms. Fiacco asked about employee parking. Mr. Noone noted that most of the employees would be taking public transportation. There was a discussion regarding employee parking and how the Applicant intends to meet the parking requirements for a restaurant. Mr. Clark noted that this is Site Plan Review and a tenant will apply for a Special Permit if necessary.

1. Albert Barsoumain, 311 Brighton Street, noted that there isn't enough parking and this was the reason why the first application was denied.
2. Riccardo Rullo, Brighton Street, explained that a gas station is not allowed on this site and asked that this be considered as part of the traffic study.

Ms. Fiacco asked for the signs to be updated to comply with the revised Sign By-Law.

**MOTION to continue the hearing to July 20, 2017 was made by Ms. Fiacco and seconded by Mr. Manjikian Motion passed.**

**4. Preliminary Discussion on Board's Work Program: State Zoning Bill**

Ms. Allison noted that the bill is going to be reintroduced and will invite Senator Brownsberger and Representative Rogers to speak to the PB. She requested for this item to be placed on the agenda for the second meeting in September 2017. Ms. Fiacco noted that the Town Meeting members should be informed of this bill since certain areas of Town will be impacted if this bill were to pass.

**5. Preview agenda for the next meeting**

Mr. Wheeler noted that there are three new residential cases for the July meeting. Ms. Allison stated that she would like to have a discussion regarding parking at 75 Leonard Street and Waverley Square.

**6. Review and Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION to approve the meeting minutes was made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.**

**7. Adjourn 9:10 PM**