

**TOWN OF BELMONT  
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**December 4, 2018**

RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA

2019 JAN 10 AM 8:43

Present: Charles Clark, Chair; Steve Pinkerton, Vice Chair; Karl Haglund; Thayer Donham; Bulent Gurel; Ed Starzec

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

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

**2. Continued Public Hearing:**

**a. 22 Houghton Road – Second Floor Addition – SRC**

Mr. Gober noted that the Applicant for 22 Houghton Road met last week with Mr. Pinkerton who requested further reductions.

**MOTION to continue 22 Houghton Road to December 18, 2018 was made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Pinkerton. Motion passed.**

**3. Bradford; Review and Approve:**

**a. Exterior Building Materials**

A revised red shingle and white trim for the Winslow Building were viewed by the PB last Saturday at a site visit. Mr. Wheeler noted that the public and PB thought that the materials looked good.

**MOTION to approve building materials was made by Ms. Donham and seconded by Mr. Pinkerton. Motion approved.**

**b. Tree Grates in Sidewalks**

Mr. Clark noted that the tree grates that were recommended by BSC, the Town's engineering consultant, were not the grates that were originally approved by the PB. The BSC recommended these since they were used throughout the rest of the neighborhood, but it was noted that the size could possibly be too small to handle the size of the future tree roots. A suggestion was to use a permeable pavement that looks like dirt.

Mr. Haglund noted that planting the trees smaller in order to save the pavement was not justified and the larger trees of 4.5"-6" caliber would be a better investment and they would have a better survival rate. He noted that if the tree was planted properly there was no reason for the tree to uproot the tree grate. He also noted that the soil mix needed to be right so that it does not tear up the sidewalk in the future. He added that the size and

species of trees should be decided by the Landscape Architect. Mr. Wheeler noted that the approved plans show Honey Locust trees, American Elm trees, Red Oak trees (all at 4.5-5" caliber) and the grate size was 6' X 6'. Mr. Haglund noted that the 3' X 6' tree grate was not proportionally correct and he recommended the bigger tree grate so that the trees would grow properly. Mr. Clark asked to have the Toll Brother's Landscape Architect take a look and get back to the PB. Otto Weiss, Toll Brothers, noted that the BSC suggested the smaller grate. The Landscape Architect took a look at a different species of trees and he was happy to look at the concerns of the tree grate and to work with the Town and BSC. His concerns about trees were of them getting too big and becoming a maintenance issue.

Comments from the Public:

1. Lauren Meyer, Belmont Resident, noted that the Honey Locust tree was a good choice and that the American Elm was a luxury tree but was for large spaces. She was concerned about the grate, trying to manage both the pedestrian and the tree scape and that that the sidewalk will get too narrow. She asked if the Tree Warden could engage in the discussion. She also noted that the permeable surface in place of the tree grate requires too much maintenance.
2. Rachel Berger, 33 Stella Road, a member of the Shade Tree Committee, encouraged the PB to speak with Tom Walsh, Tree Warden.
3. Kathy Rushe, 64 Horne Road, noted that the tree grates proposed by BSC made sense. She asked if the tree grate was ADA compliant.

Mr. Weiss noted that the tree grates were ADA compliant.

The PB decided to continue this discussion to a future meeting.

**4. Discuss Potential Zoning Amendments:**

**a. Single Residence-B Zoning District**

Mr. Wheeler noted that there had been some interest in amending the SR-B District similar to the protections recently adopted for the SR-C District. Mr. Gober reviewed the history of the Town's Zoning and explained how the SR-B District came about. He noted that there were many existing non-conforming homes/lots in the SR-B District. He added that if the SR-C zoning was applied for the SR-B District there would still be a large amount of existing non-conformities. Mr. Clark noted that if the PB was going to follow through with this that the PB would need to hear a "strong voice" from the neighborhood.

Comments from the audience:

1. Ellen O'Brien Cushman, SR-B resident, believes that there were two issues, zoning protections and the huge disparity of lot size in the District. She noted that the neighbors were patient with this potential zoning amendment.
2. Rachel Berger, 33 Stella Road, noted that there were neglected homes that may need to be torn down and it was okay if it was on the slow track.

Mr. Wheeler reviewed the issues of the potential zoning amendments in SR-B as nonconforming/grandfathering, character of the neighborhood, two sub-districts, building mass and bulk, McMansions, definitions of height and grade, dimensional regulations, location of HVAC, average front setbacks, and lot coverage. Mr. Clark noted that he was concerned about the amount of time that it could take to amend the SR-B. He noted that it was going to be difficult to make rules that could apply to everybody because of the sloping typography and varied landscape. He added that these were complexities that they have not seen in other districts, though a lot of what was learned in the SR-C and GR District zoning amendments could be applied to the SR-B District. He also added that there were two "zoning districts" here in the SR-B the denser one on the slope and the other lots [with larger and flatter topography]. Mr. Wheeler noted that there would be research done on the last 5 years of building permits in the SR-B District to see what was going on and how it all fits in. Mr. Starzec noted that he lived in this District and he wasn't sure if he would need to recuse himself. He didn't think there were a lot of knock-downs in the neighborhood and that this was going to be a very complicated parcel by parcel battle.

Mr. Clark suggested bifurcating the area (and only deal with the denser parts). This would help with the differences in elevations and lot sizes. Mr. Wheeler noted that they should move forward and aim for the annual Town Meeting in May. Mr. Clark asked the members of the neighborhood to have a letter submitted to the PB by December 18, 2018.

**b. Formatting and Consistency of the Zoning By-Law**

Mr. Wheeler noted that some of the issues were text, numbering, terminology inconsistencies, incomplete sentences, and incorrect reference of statutes that do not exist anymore. He noted that there was a lot that the PB could do to help clean up the Zoning By-Law. He added that this would have to go to Town Meeting and be approved as a "house-keeping" amendment. Mr. Wheeler will meet with the Town Clerk to begin going over the process.

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

- Mr. Wheeler noted that the Belmont High School will be coming on December 18, 2018 to give an update on how to move forward. They were proposing to break up the approval into three different steps. The only definite date was December 18, 2018 and

the other dates were yet to be confirmed. The High School Building Committee was shooting for a June 1, 2018 ground-breaking.

- Mr. Wheeler noted that the Belmont Police Station (building additions) would be coming to the PB on January 8, 2019.
- Mr. Clark noted some of the upcoming projects that would be going to Town Meeting as: McLean Development, SR-B Zoning Amendments and Inclusionary Zoning.
- In reference to blade signs, Mr. Haglund noted that the Staff did a helpful survey of Concord, MA town center. They learned that Concord classified three signs and any individual establishment can only have two of three, but not all three.

**6. Review and Approve Minutes**

November 8, 2018 - there were minor changes made to the minutes.

November 27, 2018 - there were minor changes made to the minutes.

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

**7. Adjourn 8:46 PM**