

# TOWN OF BELMONT

## PLANNING BOARD

### MEETING MINUTES

June 2, 2020

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: July 15, 2020

TIME: 3:02 PM

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

Absent: Karl Haglund

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Senior Planner

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

#### **2. Continued Public Hearings:**

##### **Zoning Amendment Public Hearing McLean Zone 3 Overlay District Amendment**

Mr. Pinkerton explained that the project as proposed would be revenue neutral, however, the traffic will not meet the limitations imposed by the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). He noted that the MOU is a very complex document and as a result, no one has any desire to open it up. Mr. Dawley provided a revised proposal that will comply with the MOU and is likely to be accepted by the Select Board in terms of the way the traffic analysis was conducted. The PB will need to decide whether they want to proceed with the new proposal; the proposal will go to Town Meeting in the fall.

Jack Dawley, developer, noted that his team had been working to solve many of the issues that have been put before them. They have met with committees to work through all of their issues as well. He noted that the challenges were the traffic limitations imposed by the 1999 Traffic Mitigation and Monitoring Agreement (TMMA, part of the MOU) and the fiscal impacts. He added that the traffic scenarios and fiscal modeling were complete and that he could begin to shape the project around the traffic perimeters in the TMMA. He reiterated that he does not want to open the MOU. Mr. Dawley stated that he is committed to shaping a project that lives within the parameters of the TMMA. He reviewed the proposed number of units and the fiscal implications of the development. He explained the Traffic Manuals data and added that they looked at similar communities to predict traffic. He noted that it is a math problem to figure out how to blend the housing types in a way to yield traffic counts that comport with the TMMA. Mr. Dawley stated that he was looking to maintain a similar total number of units, somewhere around 150 and to redistribute the percentage of age-restricted units to non-age restricted units in a way that brings the project into compliance and at the same time produces a fiscal picture that was responsive to the voices that have come forward in the past months. He reviewed the mix of units that were now included in the revised proposal that would generate a TMMA compliant project. He summarized that the new proposal met the requirements of the TMMA, maintained a total of 150 total units,

maintained the SHI unit count of 116, and increased the percentage of senior housing. Finally, he asked the PB to seriously consider this revision.

Comments from the audience:

1. Robert Eckert, Belmont Resident, asked the PB if the Town had hired a traffic consultant to look at the traffic numbers. He stated that all of the traffic issues need to be presented and were under PB responsibility. He would like to see the calculations and to have a traffic consultant look at the submittal.

Mr. Wheeler noted that the TMMA was with the Select Board and that they would be the body to hire a consultant to review the numbers to make sure they were in compliance with TMMA. He further added that at the PB will have another opportunity to review the traffic during the Design and Site Plan Review process.

2. Rachel Heller Co-chair, Housing Trust, asked if the blended transit adjustment formula was applied to the original proposal. Mr. Dawley noted that the analysis was done equally on both proposals. She noted that there were a lot of great things about this proposal, but children are a protected class and cannot be a factor in decision making.

3. Sue Bass, Town Meeting Member, agreed with Rachel that the project had improved in many ways. She asked for more information about the traffic impact of the two chapel units and wanted to know if they were considered. Mr. Dawley said that they were included. She expressed concern that they were getting away from bus shuttle services. She added that it would be unfortunate for this development not to be involved in a shuttle service.

Mr. Dawley noted the shuttle was not a dead idea and he remains committed to assessing whether or not it was viable to have such a service.

4. Michele Gougeon, McLean Hospital, noted that the existing McLean shuttle is run by McLean and it was oriented around the hospital's shift changes.
5. Ade Baptiste, Belmont resident, noted that he was in support of affordable housing. He questioned what would happen to children or young adults if their parents passed away in the age-restricted units. Mr. Pinkerton said they need to work in language to make sure that there are protections for those situations. Mr. Baptiste noted that he was struggling to see how 12 extra cars was a significant impact. He strongly agreed there should be a shuttle but it seemed short-sighted to limit the project because of 12 cars; it was an extremely small price to pay to have affordable housing.
6. Robert Eckert, Belmont Resident, stated that he did not think that the 12-car calculation was correct.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that the PB did not have the time or the capability to make this assessment and he would follow up with the Select Board.

7. Ms. Heller, wondered if the number of bedrooms within the apartment buildings change the traffic numbers.

The PB decided to hold off on incorporating the Energy Committee comments into the By-Law until a later date.

**MOTION to continue the public hearing to June 23, 2020 was made by Mr. Pinkerton and seconded by Ms. Donham. Motion passed.**

**3. Review and comment on 91 Beatrice Circle – MassHousing Requests  
Comments on Comprehensive Permit (Chapter 40B) Eligibility Application**

Mr. Wheeler stated that the Town received a copy of a Comprehensive Permit (MGL Chapter 40B) Eligibility Application from MassHousing for 16 dwelling units at 91 Beatrice Circle. He noted that this was not an opportunity to approve or deny the application, but to comment on it, such as, how does it meet the Zoning By-Law, does this project make planning sense, number of units, transportation issues, etc. He added that MassHousing will gather all of the comments from the Town and render a decision as to whether the developer was qualified; if found to be eligible, the developer can apply for a Comprehensive Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. A specific Zoning By-Law will then be created for this project. He briefly reviewed the plans and mentioned that it will be difficult for the Town to deny this project because the affordable housing state mandate of 10% has not yet been met. The Town may be able to claim Safe Harbor status but the PB was not sure if the Town was close enough on the necessary requirements to meet the thresholds of this status. He added that comments were due on June 15, 2020 and that the public could send comments to MassHousing directly or to the Select Board.

Comments from the audience:

1. Rachel Heller, Citizen Housing and Planning Association, noted that everything is through the Zoning Board of Appeals unless waivers are required from state laws, then the associated boards would hold separate hearings on the issue.
2. Ryan Thompson, Beatrice Circle, read a letter of opposition from his neighbor Paul Lowry, 105 Beatrice Circle. The letter expressed concerns about traffic, height, setbacks, lack of open space, no area for snow storage, and removal of large oak trees to make room for parking. He was asked to send a copy of the letter to the Select Board.
3. Dan Devine, 37 Beatrice Circle, noted his concerns: (1) the Town's action to meet affordable housing goals and (2) was the project design appropriate for the site. He

added that he was seeking information regarding the process. He requested access to private studies (traffic, wastewater, etc.) that have been already completed and who can he coordinate with in order to get this type of information.

Mr. Pinkerton noted that the best way to raise concerns was through the MassHousing and Select Board. He reiterated that this was only the eligibility phase and that site design and traffic studies and such would be done during the site approval process.

4. Sam and Chris Alexander, 43 Beatrice Circle, noted that the site walk-through will provide an opportunity to express concerns.
5. Charlie Harmon, Town Resident, noted that he was concerned that the development would cause a possible fire safety issue.

The PB decided to set aside another portion of a meeting in the future to decide how it wants to proceed on this issue.

#### **4. Neighborhood Determinations:**

##### **a. 30 Horne Road**

The property owners propose an addition at the rear of their home. The PB asked to remove the two-family homes from the neighborhood.

##### **b. 40 Walnut Street**

The Applicant proposes tearing down the existing two-family home and constructing a new one. The PB agreed to use the neighborhood and data from a previous Special Permit application.

##### **c. 1 Broad Street**

The property owners are proposing a large addition at the rear of their home. The PB agreed with the proposed neighborhood.

##### **d. 28 Pierce Road**

The property owners are proposing a large addition at the rear of their home. The PB asked that the two-family homes be removed from the proposed neighborhood.

##### **e. Lot 1 Clark Lane**

The Applicants proposed to subdivide their existing lot and build a new single-family home; this requires Design and Site Plan Review. The PB agreed with the proposed neighborhood.

#### **5. Adjourn 9:55 PM**