

TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
February 21, 2023

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: March 22, 2023
TIME: 2:19 PM

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

Absent: Renee Guo

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.

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. Continued Cases:

a) Case No. 23-04 - Design and Site Plan Review 350 prospect Street- Belmont Hill School

Mr. Lowrie noted that tonight's topic was the traffic assessment.

Kelly Cardoza, Avalon Group, representing the Applicant came before the Board, she introduced her colleagues Greg Schneider, Head of School; Bob Fitzgerald, Goodwin Law; Jeffrey Dirk, Traffic Engineer. She addressed outstanding questions:

- Ms. Cardoza explained that the green roof was not considered as the building's pitch would not allow it and they may want to install solar panels in the future.
- The Stormwater O&M Plan had already been submitted to the Board and they have it in the application.
- Turning movements for the facilities lot were reviewed by the Fire Department and the Applicant will add one fire hydrant to the plan as requested by the Fire Department.
- Ms. Cardoza mentioned that they might not be ready for a stormwater discussion on February 28. The comments from BSC had been resolved and the changes in the project had a limited impact on the volume and rate of stormwater movement on the site.
- She said they can also present signage on February 28, the building height calculations and anything else that the Board may need at that time.

Jeffrey Dirk, Vanasse and Assoc., presented the Traffic Impact Assessment Summary. He reviewed the following:

- The BSC Group has reviewed the Assessment and the facts and finding of the Assessment have been affirmed by BSC.

- He noted the two things that were going on: 1- Bringing in 35 students who are parking off campus onto campuses and 2- reassigning the parking within the campus itself.
- Traffic will be removed from the Park Avenue rotary and the queuing will improve at some locations without a net increase.
- The resulting residual queuing was increased by no more than one vehicle.
- Crash data shows that there were no safety issues and not disproportionate to what would be expected, there are no high crash locations in this area.
- Lines of site at the driveways will meet or exceed minimum distances to operate safely.
- Existing conditions map and boundary of the study area included 16 intersections.

Mr. Schneider mentioned that there was no growth beyond the demand of the 35 kids who are currently parking at the church parking lot. The adding of a dining hall would displace 35 spaces in the future.

Mr. Dirk reviewed the existing parking supply and the existing parking demands for a non-event day versus an athletic event day. He also reviewed the recommendation comments from peer review and Vanasse and Associates as:

- There will be a post development parking monitoring program within 6 months of the build out.
- They will construct a sidewalk along Park Avenue and Rutledge Road.
- Traffic calming measures to be implemented.
- Continue the elements of the Campus TDM program.

Lastly Mr. Dirk reviewed the Park Avenue Rotary Improvement design.

Stephen Siragusa, BSC Group, noted that everything had been addressed by Vanasse and Associates. There were no safety deficiencies, there will not be a huge impact to queuing or delays. Increasing sight lines and decreasing speeds will benefit the Town as a whole.

Mary Moskowitz, 257 Prospect Street, had sent a stormwater study that was done on her property to share with the Town. She would like to know if her study was sent to the Town's peer review for consideration. Mr. Lowrie noted that it will be sent to the peer reviewer, and they will determine whether it will cost extra money to review the study. Mr. Moskowitz noted that his property is 50 feet downhill from the school's property and he was concerned about water runoff from the school.

Dan Coleman, 5 Knox Street, explained that he does not see any cars parked in the 35 parking spaces in the satellite area. Belmont Hill School doesn't need the extra parking if they are not parking there. He encouraged people to go and drive by there and look for themselves.

Peter Dorfman, address not stated, asked whether the Town was sufficiently considering the serious impact on the community. He would like to see the Board and the Town take a stronger stance.

Heather, last name and address not stated, noted that she visits the off-site parking lot every morning at 8 AM and she has photos showing only one car parked at the lot every day and most days there were zero. She explained that the rotary traffic is backed up at peak traffic and we are still in covid mode with people working from home. She said that cars drive about 40 MPH up and down the hill. She asked if the student and the parking space count took into consideration the multiple students riding together in the same car if they are family plus many of them walk to school. Many teachers are also walking to school. There is a lot of space not efficiently used on the campus and it could be made into parking lots. It is a safety issue to have the kids crossing the street.

MOTION to continue to February 28, 2023 was made by Mr. Lowrie and seconded by Ms. Berberian. Motion passed.

YES votes-

Matt Lowrie

Thayer Donham

Jeff Birenbaum

Karl Haglund

Carol Berberian

b) CASE No. 23-02 One Special Permit and Design and Site Plan Review 57 Burnham Street – Robert Calnan

Mike Mena, representing the Applicant, said that the project proposed to demolish an existing two-family dwelling and a detached garage on two existing lots and included the construction of two new single-family lots, one on each lot by special permit. Mr. Mena presented the updated plans and noted the changes to the driveway to extend further back to the rear of the lots and flare out and have two parking spaces side by side on both lots.

The Board discussed the neighborhood analysis. The neighborhood was very diverse and there were not a lot of single-family homes, most of the buildings were two-family dwellings.

Ms. Donham noted that the proposed home was much taller than what they usually allow, and the roof pitch was really steep, and it could be flattened out to match with the roofs in the neighborhood.

Mr. Lowrie said that he was fine with the parking. The new plans need to be posted to the website. Mr. Lowrie asked for the Applicant to figure out the heights of the surrounding houses.

MOTION to continue (CASE No. 23-02 and CASE No. 23-03) to March 7, 2023 was made by Mr. Lowrie and seconded by Ms. Berberian. Motion passed.

YES votes-

Matt Lowrie

Thayer Donham

Jeff Birenbaum

Karl Haglund

Carol Berberian

**c) CASE No. 23-03 – One Special Permit & Design and Site Plan Review Approval 59
Burnham Street – Robert Calnan**

Motion to continue was made (see above).

3. Public Hearings:

**a) Case No. 23-05 Two Special Permits 221 Concord Ave. and another at 80 Hittinger
Street – Town of Belmont**

Applicant requests two Specials Permit under section 5.2.5-4-(b)-3 to erect two standing signs at 221 Concord Ave. and another at 80 Hittinger Street located in General Residence (GR) zoning district.

MOTION to continue to March 21, 2023 was made by Mr. Lowrie and seconded by Ms. Berberian. Motion passed.

YES votes-

Matt Lowrie

Thayer Donham

Jeff Birenbaum

Karl Haglund

Carol Berberian

**b) Case No. 23-06 One Special Permit and Waiver 768 Pleasant Street – Mint retail
Facilities, LLC, Jim Mensing, agent**

Mr. Lowrie read the Public Notice.

Applicant requests One Special Permit and One Waiver under section 5.2.2 to replace existing standing sign.

Applicant was not at the meeting.

MOTION to continue to March 7, 2023 was made by Mr. Lowrie and seconded by Ms. Berberian. Motion passed.

YES votes-

Matt Lowrie

Thayer Donham

Jeff Birenbaum

Karl Haglund
Carol Berberian

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

No updates were discussed.

5. Review and approve Planning Board meeting minutes: December 20, 2022, January 10, 2023 and January 17, 2023.

To be reviewed at a future meeting.

6. Adjourn 9:02 PM

The Planning Board's next scheduled meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 28, 2023.