

TOWN OF BELMONT  
PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

May 23, 2017

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TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA

2017 JUL 11 PM 2:55

Present: Elisabeth Allison, Chair; Barbara Fiacco, Vice Chair; Raffi Manjikian; Joseph DeStefano; Karl Haglund; Charles Clark

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

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

2. **Continued Public Hearing:**

- a. **55 Day School Lane** (Belmont Day School) - Design and Site Plan Review for gymnasium building ("the Barn") and site improvements.

Ms. Allison recused herself.

Kelly Durfee Cardoza, representing Belmont Day School (BDS), gave an update and presented a PowerPoint presentation that addressed driveway compliancy and fire safety issues, and noted that there will not be any stormwater discharge onto abutting properties. She also addressed a third-party memo regarding the traffic study that reviewed queuing and the number and location of vehicular accidents. She noted the changes that BDS has made in response to the concerns of the neighbors.

Ms. Fiacco reviewed the points of discussion from the access road working group meeting with Fire Chief Frizzell. During the meeting, the Chief stated that access is required for the new building and that porous material is sufficient for the surface of the driveway. He noted that he was not making a decision about other uses of the driveway since that is a decision for the Planning Board. He requested modifications to the parking lot islands to allow emergency vehicles to access the proposed barn from the access driveway and identified some problems with locked gates in the past.

**Comments from the Audience:**

1. Charles Styron, 35 Waverley Street, a former BDS parent, noted that the driveway will improve the traffic conditions and lead to smoother and safer traffic flow.
2. Debra Brissenden, an employee of BDS, noted the positive things that BDS has done for the Town. She stated that she was in support of the proposed driveway. She noted that traffic on Concord Avenue had increased tremendously with the use of GPS directing people to cut through Belmont on their way to Boston.
3. Paul Laferriere, 123 Pinehurst Road, stated that BDS had previously agreed not to use the land under review for a road. He asked why neighbors should believe undocumented

assurances in reference to water flowing onto Lone Tree Hill since there is precedent for assurances not being honored over time.

4. Laura Pang, 699 Concord Avenue, stated opposition to the road since it would interfere with the peace of the sanctuary of the cemetery.
5. Tommy Driscoll, 689 Concord Avenue, spoke in opposition and noted that BDS has not followed through with its promises in the past. He mentioned that the Cemetery Commission worked hard to create a place of peace and sanctity. He added that BDS was not willing to hold a true collaborative process and asked the PB to think before granting any privileges to BDS until they have responded to the neighbor's concerns.
6. Dan Healey, 670 Concord Avenue, spoke in opposition and quoted traffic numbers from the traffic study. He stated that he was concerned about the safety of the neighborhood and added that reducing speeds and making Concord Avenue safer was very important to him. He encouraged the school to think more creatively and to engage the neighbors. He noted that it would be important to create a school zone of 20 MPH and that the neighbors would be happy to work with BDS to improve Day School Lane.

Ms. Fiacco noted that the PB needs to be confident that they have a complete application package in order to proceed with its review.

Mr. Haglund noted that he had not heard a compelling need for the road and that it seems like more of a convenience than a need for the school.

Mr. DeStefano stated that his concern is the storm water management because of the pervious paving system and the 3% slope for the drive. He suggested that the slope should be 2% max for the system to work effectively. He asked the Applicant's engineer if he was confident that the driveway design will not cause any future storm water problems. Frank Holmes, Engineer, noted that he was confident that the drive will perform well as designed. Mr. DeStefano asked for details on the thickness of gravel for the driveway. Ms. Fiacco asked why the pervious pavement would work and not freeze in the winter. She asked about mitigation plans to deal with heavy rains when the ground is frozen. Mr. Holmes described pervious pavement and responded to questions regarding the storm water report. He noted that the ground water table was well below the driveway.

Mr. DeStefano noted that most of the direct abutters opposed the driveway. He asked the Applicant to describe how they were collaborating with the neighbors. Mr. Largay stated that BDS held several neighborhood meetings to review the construction plans and noted that many people attended these meetings.

Ms. Fiacco noted that assumptions on speed on Concord Avenue will not be valid in the future as the Town's speed limit will be changing to 25 MPH. She noted that she was

concerned about the internal traffic management and requested more details. She also asked for an explanation on why the road was designed as a straight stretch and not meandering. Ms. Cardoza noted that there is a pre-existing structure that cannot be moved. She explained that BDS will educate parents and will enforce the traffic rules. She noted that the Director of Operations or Head of School will let the parents know if there was an issue. She reiterated that there will be people on site to enforce the rules.

Mr. Haglund asked BDS to explain what they would do if the driveway was not approved. Kathy Bailey, attorney for BDS, asserted that the proposed driveway was necessary for fire access, to improve internal circulation, and to reduce traffic on Day School Lane.

Mr. Haglund stated that Chief Frizzell noted that if the barn was built as a separate building not as an addition to the school then the driveway would be a fire safety requirement. Ms. Cardoza noted that this is the only place for the 20-foot unobstructed driveway. Ms. Fiacco stated that the PB needs to hear from Chief Frizzell directly in order to clarify misunderstandings arising out of his memo and to address Mr. Haglund's concern.

**MOTION to continue the public hearing to June 6, 2017 made by Mr. DeStefano and seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.**

- b. **395 Concord Avenue** (National Armenian Studies and Research Library) - Design and Site Plan Review to construct 3<sup>rd</sup> story addition and to waive parking requirements

Ms. Allison joined the meeting and Mr. DeStefano recused himself.

Ms. Allison distributed a memo outlining the issues identified by the PB that the Working Group had addressed: mass and dimensions, noise from the HVAC, and traffic and parking and presented the recommendations of the Working Group to the full Board. . Mr. Krafian addressed parking and noted that the First Armenian Church had some reservations about signing a formal parking agreement. He stated that he contacted the Post Office who signed a parking agreement. Ms. Allison asked that the contract be reviewed and that ownership of the Post Office parking spaces be confirmed. Ms. Allison noted a condition of the Design and Site Plan Approval will require a review of parking in three years. Mr. Krafian stated that he will submit a map that shows the location of the 11 parking spaces, an updated signage plan, and a copy of the letter of agreement from the Post Office to Mr. Wheeler.

Ms. Allison asked the Applicant to address how the trash would be handled if a large catered event took place on the third floor. Mr. Krafian stated that it would be picked up by a private party.

**MOTION to close public hearing was made by Ms. Fiacco and seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.**

**MOTION to approve the Design and Site Plan Review for the construction of a third floor subject to the conditions as distributed and noted below made by Ms. Fiacco and seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.**

Condition:

Provide a copy of the parking agreement from the Post Office and associated map that shows the location of the 11 parking spaces and an updated signage plan.

- c. **29 Jason Road** – Special Permit – Addition Greater than 30% - Single Residence C District

Mr. DeStefano rejoined the meeting.

Mr. Haglund noted that the landscape working group met at the site to look at the existing trees. He noted that the Town's Tree Warden recommended that the white pines plus the other two trees should be removed because they are diseased. Mr. Haglund noted that planting four or five new trees would be necessary in order to maintain the existing tree scape in the neighborhood. Xueyan Fu, Applicant, reviewed the proposed landscape plan. The PB asked that the arborvitae species proposed in the rear of the home to be changed to a different species and that the Applicant plant maple trees in the side yard (the side facing Dean Street). Mr. Gober presented a conceptual landscape plan in order to encourage a conversation with the PB. The PB reviewed the Applicant's landscape plan.

Mr. DeStefano noted that dimensions were missing on the architectural plans and asked to have them added. Mr. Haglund was concerned about the window changes and noted that the windows do not match with the internal plan of the kitchen. Mr. Manjikian asked for clarification on the height of the attic. The Applicant explained that the ceiling height of the bedroom will be 10' and that the attic would house the HVAC system. Mr. Manjikian noted that the extra space could be future buildable space.

Ms. Allison requested that the height of the ceiling in the bedroom and the dimensions be added to the plans. Mr. DeStefano asked for a working set of drawings that included dimensions.

**MOTION to continue the public hearing to June 6, 2017 was made by Mr. Manjikian and seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.**

- d. **63 Underwood Street** – Special Permit to Alter a Nonconforming Structure: Second Story Deck (Deck Already Exists) – General Residence District

Mr. DeStefano recused himself from the meeting.

The architect representing the Applicant noted that he worked out solutions to meet the building code requirements. Mr. Wheeler distributed a packet of minor changes that were

submitted after the PB packets were delivered. Ms. Allison noted that the PB needs to review the new packet.

**MOTION to continue the public hearing to June 6, 2017 was made by Mr. Manjikian and seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.**

e. **72 Chilton Street**

**MOTION to accept the withdrawal of the Special Permit application was made by Mr. Manjikian and seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.**

3. **Update on potential cases and planning Board Projects and committee reports**

a. The Bradford (formerly Cushing Village)

The PB was reminded that a meeting will be held on May 25<sup>th</sup> to review proposed changes to the plans.

4. **Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – 5/25/2017 and 06/06/2017**

**MOTION to approve minutes made by Ms. Fiacco and seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.**

5. **Adjourned at 8:45 PM**