

TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES
January 31, 2012

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8:35 a.m. Meeting called to order.

Attendance: Sami Baghdady, Chair; Michael Battista; Charles Clark; Joseph DeStefano; Andres Rojas; Karl Haglund, Associate Member; Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff

8:35 a.m. Cushing Square Village Application

Public Hearing Date

Sami Baghdady stated that several residents contacted him regarding a conflict with holding the public hearing on February 14th which is Valentine's Day. In the spirit of transparency, he suggested that the public hearing be moved to February 28th. Joseph DeStefano agreed that it was a good idea to reschedule the public hearing. Karl Haglund inquired whether the 28th conflicted with school vacation week in February. Mr. Baghdady responded that the 28th would not conflict since school vacation is the week of February 20th. Andres Rojas agreed with the continuation to the 28th, but was concerned that it not be delayed much further. He noted that moving the date to February 28th would allow for maximum access and public attendance. He added that the Board needed to act expeditiously and efficiently, and that the public and the developer expected this as well.

Scope of Services for Peer Review Consultant

Mr. Baghdady distributed an outline of the Scope of Services for the Independent Peer Review of the Cushing Village project. He asked Glen Clancy, Director of Community Development, to join the Board to discuss Peer Review Consultants and the outline of the Scope of Services. Mr. Clancy explained that hiring a Peer Review Consultant was at the expense of the developer. He stressed the importance of coordination between the Cushing Village development and the reconstruction of Trapelo Road.

Discussion ensued around the use of consultants. Andres Rojas felt that the use of consultants was a good idea and that the developer's team would benefit from the knowledge that the consultant would bring to the process. He added that multiple entities, each with different areas of expertise, might have to be used. Sami Baghdady mentioned that some consulting firms that he thought should be invited to bid include the BSC Group, VHB Group, and Epsilon Associates.

Discussion ensued regarding the public bidding process. Jeffrey Wheeler stated that the process could be structured in several different ways. Andres Rojas requested the "Peer Review Scope" be sent electronically to the Board, so that they could annotate it and send it back to Jeffrey with their comments. Sami Baghdady suggested making a list of consultants who would best serve the Board's needs. Michael Battista asked who made the final determination on the public bidding process. Mr. Baghdady responded that the Planning Board selects the Peer Review Consultant, but the developer may appeal the selection to the Board of Selectmen under certain circumstances.

Finally, Mr. Baghdady stressed the importance of the Board speaking as one voice, and reminded members and staff that the Rules and Regulations adopted by the Planning Board designate the Chair as the spokesperson with the media.

9:00 a.m. Debrief Special Town Meeting/Next Steps for Annual Town Meeting

Sami Baghdady provided a list of projects that the Board will be undertaking during the winter/spring of 2012. He was pleased that the Solar Energy Systems zoning Article was passed by Town meeting.

Demolition Delay By-Law

Mr. Baghdady reported that the question of the age of structures that would be considered historic under this By-law is a policy question that will be left for Town Meeting to decide. He added that the Historic District Commission and the Planning Board had agreed to disagree on this issue. He also reported that the Historic District Commission has agreed that there will be a minor technical amendment to the proposed By-law which limits the time period for the Commission to decide whether a structure is subject to the demolition delay.

Solar Energy Systems Zoning Amendments

Andres Rojas mentioned that one of the issues raised by the Energy Committee regarding the Solar Energy Systems zoning amendments was that they wanted installers to provide input on the amendments. He recommended that the Board compile a list of Solar Energy Systems installers and ask the Energy Committee for its input as well.

Central/Palfrey Square Interim Planning Overlay District

Sami Baghdady reported the Central/Palfrey Square Interim Planning Overlay District was going to expire at the 2012 Annual Town Meeting in April. Andres Rojas asked if the Board had to look at it again in detail or simply request an extension at Town Meeting. Jeffrey Wheeler responded that the Board had three options: 1. tweak the By-law; 2. leave it the way it is; or 3. let it expire.

9:15 a.m. South Pleasant Street Zoning By-Law

Mr. Baghdady noted that given the other projects that the Board has to review this Spring, the re-zoning of South Pleasant Street will be on hold until further notice. Mr. Rojas noted, however, that the Cushing Village project permitting process will help the Board make more informed decisions on the South Pleasant Street re-zoning.

Adjournment: 9:20 am

List of Documents Presented:

- Outline of Independent Peer Review
- Planning Board Project List Winter/Spring 2012