

BELMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Town Hall

October 1, 2003

Meeting Minutes

Commission Members Attending: Co-chairs Richard Cheek and Lydia Ogilby, Paul Bell, Linn Hobbs, Arleyn Levee, Richard Pichette, Nancy Richards, Michael Smith, Sharon Vanderslice. Associate Members: Caroline Darbyshire and Lisa Harrington. Absent: Jonathan Treat.

5 SOMERSET STREET

Attending: Frank and Gillian Aguilar, owners.

The Commission reviewed its draft letter to the Belmont Zoning Board of Appeals in support of the owners' plans to convert their barn into a single-family dwelling. After one change was made to more precisely reflect the vote on the project taken at the September 2003 meeting, the letter was unanimously approved. Three revisions to the draft Preservation Restriction Agreement for the property, which had been agreed upon at the HDC meeting in July, were then inserted into the Agreement. These included an addition to Article 3.1 (Conditional Rights Requiring Approval by Grantee) that would require HDC approval of new structures not seen from a public way, a rewording of Article 15 (Review/Appeal Procedures) that describes the mediation procedure for resolving disagreements between the owners and the HDC, and the addition of a new article, Article 22, which states that the agreement will not override any authority that the HDC currently has over the property. The revised draft Preservation Restriction Agreement will become part of the Aguilar's application to the ZBA for a zoning variance on October 7. Mr. Aguilar then provided the HDC with a set of the before/after elevations of the four sides of the barn and a copy of the site plan, all of which will be submitted as part of the October 7 application.

PLEASANT STREET RECONSTRUCTION

Attending: Karl Haglund, 35 Stone Road

Mr. Haglund appeared before the Commission to discuss legal statutes that apply to federally-funded construction projects in historic districts. Title 49, Sections 106 and 303 of the U.S. Code mandate review of written alternatives to proposed construction plans in such cases, to ensure that the least invasive design and construction methods are adopted. Such alternatives may help preserve historic features, such as specimen trees and stone walls, and save money on construction costs. Richard Pichette agreed to draft a letter to the Belmont Board of Selectmen alerting them to the provisions of Sections 106 and 303.

The Pleasant Street reconstruction project has already been advertised to contractors. Bids will open on January 13, 2004.

TRAPELO ROAD PLANNING

Attending: Karl Haglund, Belmont Planning Board.

Mr. Haglund informed the Commission that the Planning Board would be holding five public workshops to hear recommendations from residents and businesses on how best to reconstruct Trapelo Road, which he hopes will be rebuilt with state and federal money approximately ten years from now. These workshops are designed to resolve conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and automobiles, and between businesses and residents. Historic buildings and landscapes along the street will be mapped. It would be helpful to have a member of the Historic District Commission at each workshop, Mr. Haglund said, along with photographs of historically significant buildings.

585 PLEASANT STREET

Attending: Norman Kherlop, architect.

Mr. Kherlop presented preliminary drawings of a proposed renovation to this 1950s brick ranch house. The family would like to increase the size of the house from 2900 to 5400 square feet, add a partial second story, and incorporate different building materials and window styles.

After reviewing the plans, the Commission recommended that instead of altering the house in such a dramatic way, the owners should try to preserve the existing character of the residence as a one-level prairie-style ranch house by restoring the front of the building and by making a more modest one-story addition to the rear. Michael Smith noted that the proposed arched windows were inconsistent with the existing windows on the house. Any additions, he said, should be more sympathetic in proportion and materials. Other members noted that alterations to the house should not overwhelm the lot or loom over the neighboring houses. Mr. Smith, Mr. Cheek, and Mrs. Ogilby agreed to meet with the owner and his architect at the site on Sunday, October 5, to offer further guidance.

25 SOMERSET STREET

Attending: Joseph and Sarah DeStefano, owners.

Mr. and Mrs. DeStefano presented preliminary drawings for an addition to the southeast facade of this 1855 Italianate house. Commission members reviewed the drawings and expressed their concern that an addition to the house in that location might detract from the prominent stand-alone character of the main house, which has already been

beautifully restored by the DeStefanos. Several members agreed to walk the property with the owners to discuss alternatives.

TOWN HALL ANNEX RENOVATION

Architect Michael Smith, the Historic District Commission's representative on the Town Hall Complex Building Committee, provided a progress report on the construction. He presented proposed paint colors for the windows and trim, which are very close to the color that was used a century ago. The exterior doors will be dark green. Mr. Smith asked the Commission to give him the authority to approve the final paint colors. Permission was granted.

The original slate roof is now being replaced by Crocker Architectural. One half of the slates will be new and one half will be re-used originals. The hip roof joints will be made of copper to match the dormer caps.

Mr. Smith recommended that the Town Hall Annex be renamed the Homer Municipal Building, in honor of the building's architect, Eleazar B. Homer, a graduate of the Belmont schools and the son of a long-time school committee member, Mary Frances Wellington Homer. The Commission supported this suggestion and Linn Hobbs agreed to draft a letter to the Selectmen requesting the name change.

FIRE STATIONS

Richard Cheek reported that the HDC had received an estimate of \$5000 from a preservation consultant for filing the nomination papers to put the town's three fire stations on the National Register of Historic Places. Financing for the work will have to be obtained from public and/or private sources.

Draft minutes of the July and September meetings of the Commission were reviewed and approved.

Minutes recorded by Sharon Vanderslice.