

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
October 10, 2006**

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7:08 p.m. Meeting called to order.

Attendance: Karl Haglund, Chair; Jennifer Fallon; Sami Baghdady; Andres Rojas; Jay Szklut, Staff; Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff; Christine McVay, Consultant

Absent: Andrew McClurg

One grammatical correction and one spelling correction were made to the minutes of September 26, 2006. They were approved as corrected by unanimous vote.

Committee Updates - There were no updates.

**7:15 PUBLIC HEARING: CUSHING SQUARE OVERLAY DISTRICT ZONING BY-LAW
AMENDMENT**

Andres Rojas read the public hearing notice.

Chris McVay presented an overview of the purposes for proposing an overlay zone, how the overlay zoning regulations address those purposes, and the specific rationale for the significant differences from the existing zoning. Included in her power point presentation were photos of the existing Square and architectural renderings of what the Square could look like under the proposed zoning overlay.

Steve Carlini resident of Horne Road wanted to know whether renderings showing the view from Horne Road were available. He was also concerned about the overall impact on a residential district that contained a commercial component.

Response: We would try and get a rendering from Horne Road.

Bill Engstrom, resident of Willow Street, thought more emphasis should be placed on affordable housing.

Chris Starr, landowner of commercial property on Common Street, raised concerns over FAR regulations and in particular whether interior parking spaces were counted in FAR calculations.

Response: Jay presented a brief review of how FAR worked and explained that this was a tool to control density and massing of buildings. As currently proposed, FAR affected allowable area of fourth stories and forced developments to increase setbacks of upper floors. However, the current definition of floor area includes interior parking spaces. The Planning Board agreed that this needed to be discussed further.

Devin Brown, resident, was concerned with impact on residential properties.

Response: The overlay included increased setbacks from residential properties minimizing any potentially negative impacts.

Steve Carlini, resident, was very concerned that the four story parking garage and buildings were too large and severely affected abutting residential properties. He noted that in the rendering the 4 story garage was out of scale.

Response: It was pointed out that the rendering depicted a three story garage and that such a structure is allowed under existing zoning. It was also pointed out that renderings are not final illustrations but are only shown as examples of possible outcomes. Given that the by-law allows increased design and site plan review by the Planning Board, in a public process, concerns raised by residents can be addressed and final designs modified.

Don Becker, resident of Horne Road, asked how design and site plan review of four story structures differed from review of three story structures.

Response: Design and Site Plan criteria did not differ. Both types of projects were subject to such review. However, fourth floors could only be built with the issuance of a special permit. As such, the Planning Board is not solely subject to design and site plan review approval for approving a project.

Sue Bass, resident of Concord Avenue, was concerned that removal of the special permit criterion for a third story may negatively affect historic buildings and may have unintended consequences resulting in poor design. She also thought that FAR of 3.0 is too large and should be reduced to between 2 and 3.

Response: There is a provision in the by-law for consideration of historic structures. Proposed design and site plan criteria are more specified than in the existing design and site plan review provisions.

Paul Winters, resident and owner of property on Trapelo Road, felt that the height and density are not as important as design criteria. He added that he supports the proposed by-law and encouraged focus on 'good' design.

Brian Sieker, resident, asked about addressing future parking needs.

Response: Typical residential parking demand of mixed use is less than those required for suburban residential development typically shown in zoning by-laws. Additionally, concurrent with the zoning overlay, the Town is investigating development of a centralized parking structure to serve the square.

**Motion by Jenny Fallon to continue the public hearing to October 18 @ 7:00
pm at the Chenery Middle School
Seconded by Andy Rojas
Approved Unanimously (4-0, with one member absent)**

8:40 PUBLIC HEARING: McLEAN ZONE 6 ZONING BY-LAW AND MAP AMENDMENTS

Ms. Fallon read the public hearing notice.

Jeffrey explained that this amendment is a technical correction to an ambiguity discovered in the McLean District Zoning. The proposed amendment clearly zones Zone 6 as General Residential and places it within the McLean District. The language of Section 6.9 is amended to reflect "any tract of land in a General Residence District located within the McLean District" rather than "adjacent".

Jay raised the issue that since the location of the Zone 6 within or adjacent to the McLean district is still not clear and that the current sentiment has it adjacent, the proposed amendment may not clarify the ability to construct an affordable multi-family project on the property.

After some discussion, Mr. Haglund recommended that the amendment state simply that an affordable, multi-family residential development, as described in Section 6.9 of the by-law be allowed on Zone 6 as shown in the McLean and General Residential Map. Jeffrey was asked to provide the appropriate language. He will further consult with Town Counsel to insure that there is no more ambiguity regarding this provision.

The Board voted to continue the public hearing to October 24.

9:00 PUBLIC HEARING: WAVERLY WOODS: MCLEAN ZONE 6, PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

The applicant presented revised plans showing the buildings moved closer to the rear and side lot lines which increased the setback from the street. Three potential stone wall designs were shown with various materials utilized for each. The Board agreed that some type of stepped wall (a double wall design with one wall at 9'-0" above the sidewalk and the next one stepped back approximately 4'-0" and 17'-0" above the sidewalk) was preferable to a 17' high single wall. This design would allow sufficient room along Trapelo Road to install a grass strip, sidewalk and street trees. The Board agreed that this is a critical component to the development of this project.

The applicant also explained the process for requesting a waiver of handicapped access requirements in order to construct a stairway within the front retaining wall.

The Planning Board again asked the applicant how a potential delay of approval might affect the proposed project especially as the Board felt they should follow the advice of Town Counsel. The applicant responded that the delay may jeopardize financing available through State funding programs including Transit Oriented Development and Low income Housing Tax Credits.

Mr. Rojas stated that given what has been presented by the applicant and the discussions to date he supports the project and would vote approval. He saw no impediment to hold up the applicant from continuing to move forward with the design of the project as currently proposed.

Mr. Haglund noted that the quality of the design is very high and he has been favorably impressed with the responsiveness of the developers and designers in addressing the concerns of the Board and will vote approval of this project.

Ms. Fallon agreed with both Mr. Rojas and Mr. Haglund and added her support for the project and indicated that she will vote to approve the project as well.

Mr. Baghdady commented that the plans have come a long way from the initial presentation and is generally happy with them. He mentioned that his main concern is the retaining wall and its impact on Waverley Square. He stated that depending on the final design of the stone wall (which the Planning Board will have final review and approval) he would also vote in favor of the project.

Having expressed their unanimous unofficial support for the proposed development of affordable multi-family housing at Zone 6, the Chairman called for a motion to continue discussion of the proposed conditions of approval.

**Motion by Jenny Fallon to continue the public hearing to October 18 @ 6:30
pm at the Chenery Middle School
Seconded by Andy Rojas
Approved Unanimously**

The discussion on Comprehensive Planning was tabled until after the November 13th Town Meeting

Town Planner's Report - There were no items to report.

10:45 Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 18, 2006
Chenery Middle School
6:30 pm - 10:00 pm

10/24/06 Approved Unanimously