

TOWN OF BELMONT  
PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
October 27, 2010

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**7:05 p.m.** Meeting called to order.

Attendance: Sami Baghdady, Chair, Michael Battista, Karl Haglund, Andres Rojas;  
Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff.

Mr. Baghdady called the meeting to order.

Minutes of October 13, 2010 were approved.

Mr. Baghdady attended the Mega Group Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and stated that the Group reviewed the Capital Projects Overlay Committee report which lays out a plan for construction and renovation of public facilities. He mentioned that much of the conversation was on prioritizing and funding of capital projects. The Group decided to continue its discussion about these issues.

Mr. Baghdady also attended the Envision Belmont meeting. He commented that it was similar to a charrette and mentioned that good ideas were generated. He expects some data from the meeting to be posted on line soon.

Mr. Haglund attended the Belmont Center Traffic meeting. He mentioned that the meeting was a general discussion and that recommendations are expected at the next meeting. Mr. Haglund stated that he will attend the next meeting.

Mr. Rojas mentioned that the Friends of the Benton Library reached an agreement with the Board of Selectmen to operate the Benton Library on a part-time basis. The agreement will not cost the Town any money and will expire in 2 years at which time the agreement will be reviewed.

**7:15 p.m. Public Hearing - Historic Accessory Structures Zoning Amendment**

Mr. Rojas read the public hearing notice. Mr. Baghdady gave background on the reason for the amendment and reiterated the discussion regarding how to expand the definition of family. Mr. Rojas questioned whether this amendment should go before Town Meeting.

Mr. Baghdady asked whether there was anyone present who desired to speak in support of the Amendment. No one spoke in support of the amendment.

Mr. Baghdady next asked whether anyone desired to speak in opposition to the Amendment. Susan Goldsmith of 323 Waverley Street argued that there was no need for the amendment. She did not support the expansion of the definition of "owner" to include other family members.

With no further public discussion, Mr. Baghdady closed the public hearing.

Mr. Baghdady commented that including siblings in the definition had raised some concerns. Many residents were also under the mistaken belief that the Amendment would allow owners to convey their properties into trusts. He expressed concern that Town Meeting will be confused by this amendment. He stated that he does not want to go forward with something that was

confusing and suggested withdrawing the article at this time. Mr. Rojas stated that he thought that the article was too controversial and that he supported withdrawing the amendment with the possibility of bringing it back at the Annual Town Meeting.

On a motion made by Mr. Rojas and seconded by Mr. Haglund the Board voted (4-0) to recommend dismissing the proposed amendment from Town Meeting.

**7:30 p.m. Discussion on Cushing Square Potential Development**

Mr. Baghdady provided a quick update on two actions that the potential developers of the Cushing Village had taken. First, a request for public records under the Freedom of Information Act was filed. Second, a demand letter threatening to sue the Town if negotiations over the municipal parking were not restarted was filed with the Board of Selectmen. A copy of the Freedom of Information request was circulated. Mr. Baghdady instructed the Board Members to provide to the Staff any materials they may have which is consistent with the Request.

**7:40 p.m. Planning Board Committee Membership**

Staff reviewed the existing committee memberships with the Board. All agreed to keep their existing committee assignment. Mr. Battista agreed to be the Board's representative to the Belmont Housing Trust.

**7:40 p.m. Discussion with the Belmont Library Trustees**

Mr. Stuart Roberts, architect, reviewed the status of the library site feasibility study and recommended that a new library be built at the corner of Concord Avenue and Underwood Street. He explained that building a new library across the street next to the White Field House would create significant problems and impacts with abutting facilities and athletic fields, and showed a concept plan of that site. The plan detailed a 2 story 45,000 square foot building with 51 parking spaces adjacent to the building and approximately 54 spaces in the bowl in front of the Underwood pool. A separate building next to the skating rink would have to be built to replace the White Field House. According to Mr. Roberts, the library and field house cannot be combined into one structure because each facility needs separate access and elevators so each space could be use at different times.

Mr. Roberts then presented a concept plan for a library at the corner of Concord Avenue and Underwood Street. This site has significant grade changes and will require discussion with the Conservation Commission due to its proximity to Clay Pit Pond. The concept plan showed the same size footprint but was designed to take advantage of the slope – the Concord Avenue façade will be one story and the façade facing the Pond will be two stories. The parking lot would be built down slope and will be screened from the neighbors across the street. Mr. Roberts concluded that the Trustees will be meeting with the School Committee next week to discuss the results of the feasibility study.

Mr. Rojas stated that he has serious concerns with this alternate location since it takes away open space, which is a scarcity in Belmont. He explained that this area is the visual gateway to Belmont and development of it would create significant impacts. Mr. Rojas added that the Town is giving up prime open space that cannot be recovered in the future.

With respect to the White Field House location, Mr. Rojas stated that parking could be put under the library and that recreation facilities could be built at the incinerator site. He added that there

are other developed and underutilized sites in Town and stressed that the Town has to be more creative with locating a new library. Mr. Rojas suggested that the Hittinger Street site might provide another opportunity for the library. Mr. Haglund added that the High School parking lot next to the tennis courts could be shared by the library if it is constructed in this location.

Mr. Haglund concurred that the corner of Concord Avenue is the signature open space in Belmont Center. He added that the parking lot will have significant impacts on the path around the Clay Pit Pond. Mr. Baghdady suggested that the Planning Board could consider a waive of the parking requirements thereby reducing the size of the parking lot.

Nancy Davis, representing the Library Trustees, commented that the Library Trustees have already had positive feedback on the new location. Bob White, the project manager, stated that the White Field House location has had many negative reactions and that the Trustees are not getting support from the School Committee for this location.

Mr. White concluded by mentioning that the application to the state is due January 27<sup>th</sup>. Currently there are 35 applications in the queue and 10 will be approved in the first round – the remaining applications go back into the pool for future funding and are not expected to be considered for funding for another 5 years.

Mr. Baghdady stated that the Planning Board members were happy to offer their informal reactions to the current locations being considered for the library, and that the Board would be happy to offer specific recommendations once a site has been approved.

#### **8:30 p.m. · Informal Presentation – 307 Trapelo Road**

Hans Strauch, architect, provided an overview of the project. He stated that a neighborhood meeting was held about a week prior. He reviewed the existing site and types of development in the area. He explained that the development would fall under the Central/Palfrey Squares Interim Overlay Planning District and that the building will be 3 stories and 36' tall. The ground level facing Trapelo Road will contain approximately 5,000 square feet of retail space. The exterior of the building will be brick to echo styles throughout Town. The Wilson Avenue façade will have a row house design with clapboard siding. The first two floors will be townhouse and the top floor would be flats. The building will contain underground parking with access off of Wilson Avenue. The development includes 31 units of housing with the majority of the units set aside for 2 bedrooms. The building is set back from Trapelo Road to allow for trees and outdoor seating – this is seen as a desirable possibility for the development. The Wilson Avenue façade is also set back to allow for trees and open space. The lot coverage for the building will be below 55% but greater than 35% - no exact number was provided.

Mr. Rojas suggested that the open space should be increased and to look for creative ways to achieve this such as balconies. Mr. Strauch added that proximity to Pequotsette Field will also provide a sense of open space for the development.

Mr. Strauch also mentioned several other issues. The dumpster will be located in an alley next to the Fire Station, snow storage is still under discussion and loading is still being reviewed. William Dillon, the realtor, stated that the stores (4) will be approximately 1,200 square feet and as a result do not require large delivery trucks. Curtis Beaton, the developer and a principal, stated the ramp leading to the garage will be heated. He echoed Mr. Dillon's comments that the square footage of the retail units do not lend themselves to large volumes that require large

delivery trucks. He added that box trucks have enough room to come in the parking lot unload and exit. Mr. Rojas requested more information on deliveries.

Mr. Baghdady asked whether the units would be rental or condominium. Mr. Beaton responded that the entire project would be condominiums, and the residential units would be desirable for young couples and empty nesters. Mr. Beaton represented that there would be no short term occupancy units. There would be four affordable units.

Mr. Beaton discussed the proposed relocation of the Town's utility easement that bisects the property. Relocation of the easement will be voted upon at Town Meeting. He mentioned that the property is currently under a purchase and sale agreement pending moving the easement and building permits. He added that a 21E investigation will occur after the easement is moved.

Mr. Rojas discussed the massing of the building. He requested more detail on the roof structures in order to create a diversity of form. He suggested cutting back the corners and taking the edges off of the box form and stressed that the third floor is the key so that it does not appear to be a straight box. Mr. Haglund suggested differentiating the roof above the central entrance and to project the entrance out a couple of feet. Mr. Baghdady stated that this was good use for this site, though he added that the concept plan seemed too congested and he thought that the project could improved with less congestion.

Mr. Baghdady opened questions from the audience. Judith Sarno expressed concern about an increase in the school aged children and expressed a desire to see more studios. Mr. Beaton responded that in his experience this type of condos do not attract families with young children. Shelia Flewelling was encouraged by the neighborhood support for the project. Town Meeting Member Joseph White expressed support for this development and felt that traffic will be minimal since the bus line runs right in front of the development.

#### **9:30 p.m. Associate Member Amendment Discussion**

Sami Baghdady gave a brief overview of the need for this provision within the General and Zoning By-Laws. All agreed that an Associate Member seemed to be an appropriate position for the Planning Board.

#### **9:45 p.m. Meeting Adjourned**

**Next Meeting:** Monday, November 8, 2010, 6:00 p.m.,  
Community Meeting Room, Chenery Middle School

#### **List of Documents presented:**

- Historic Accessory Structures Zoning By-law Amendment Public Hearing Notice
- Historic Accessory Structures Zoning By-law Amendment

12/8/10 Minutes Approved



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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***NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
BELMONT PLANNING BOARD***

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 5, the Belmont Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Monday, November 8, 2010, at 6:00 p.m. in the Large Community Room, Chenery Middle School, 95 Washington Street** to consider amending Sections 7.4.1. and 7.3.3.c. of the Zoning By-Law to allow an Associate Member of the Planning Board to participate and act on Special Permit and Design and Site Plan Review Decisions in the event where a regular member is absent, unable to act, or has a conflict of interest or in the event of a vacancy on the Board. Copies of the amendments are available at the Office of Community Development and the Town Clerk's Office.

Anyone wishing to be heard on this issue should appear at the time and place designated.

**TO BE PUBLISHED:**

Boston Globe October 22, 2010

Belmont Citizen Herald October 28, 2010

PROPOSED ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT

Associate Planning Board Member

October 20, 2010

Add the following as a second paragraph in section 7.4.1.:

*Pursuant to Chapter 40A, Section 9 of the General Laws, the Planning Board shall have an associate member for the purposes of acting on a special permit application in the case of absence, inability to act, or conflict of interest, on the part of any member of the Planning Board or in the event of a vacancy on the Board. Said associate member shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen."*

and add the following after the second sentence in section 7.3.3.c.:

*The associate Planning Board member shall sit on the Board for the purposes of acting on a Design and Site Plan Review application, in the case of absence, inability to act, or conflict of interest, on the part of any member of the Planning Board or in the event of a vacancy on the Board.*

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BY

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