

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

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**MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 11, 2012**

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

Present: Sami Baghdady, Chair; Michael Battista, Vice Chair; Elisabeth Allison, Charles Clark, Karl Haglund; Andres Rojas, Board of Selectmen Liaison; Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff Liaison to the Planning Board

**7:05 p.m. Public Hearing Continued: Wellington School Building Committee –
Update on Solutions to the Roof-Top Noise Issues**

William Lovallo of the Wellington School Building Committee gave a brief summary and update on the noise mitigation measures at the Wellington School. He recounted the dates and events of actions taken by the Building Committee and the subsequent outcomes. The Committee met with the neighbors, came before the Planning Board to request a modification to the roof top units, and took noise readings. The Committee found that even though the units were in compliance with the Noise By-Law, there was still a significant noise problem. In an effort to mitigate the noise, the Committee decided to fill the openings in the screen wall around the units and apply acoustic baffling. The Committee expected to complete the work by last summer, but due to unforeseen events the work did not begin until late summer. The screen wall is complete, and the baffling of the roof top units is expected to be completed soon. Mr. Lovallo indicated that the Committee plans to take more readings during January, 2013 and would like to report back to the Planning Board at the February 26, 2013 meeting.

Mr. Rojas asked if there had been any further discussion to add other acoustical materials to the screens. Mr. Lovallo responded that the Engineering Consultants said that applying material to the inside of the screens would not reduce the noise. He also stated that the materials used to fill in the bottom where the screen was going to be raised would be placed outside the units, and sheet metal baffling would be used on the roof top units because the consultants said it would mitigate the noise. He also noted that the readings to be taken after the work is completed would be about the same time as when they were initially taken last year.

Mr. Rojas noted that the ultimate goal is to make life better for the residents and to correct the problem. He was concerned that the steps being taken will only result in a minor improvement.

Mr. Baghdady stated that the Planning Board was committed to working with the Town to resolve this quality of life issue. He felt it wasn't enough for the Building Committee to simply state that the units are compliant with the Noise By-Law. He suggested that the Committee meet again with the neighbors after the noise reduction levels are taken and report back to the Board. Mr. Lovallo stated the Building Committee was not hiding behind the By-Law and re-affirmed his commitment to work until this issue is resolved, as it is imperative to obtain a Final Certificate of Occupancy.

Moved by Mr. Battista to continue the Wellington School Building public hearing to February 26, 2013. Seconded by Mr. Clark. The motion passed.

7:25 p.m. Public Hearing Continued: Cushing Village Application

Peter Quinn, the Applicant's architect, reviewed the latest plans for the Hyland, Winslow and Pomona Buildings. He stated that additional setbacks had been added to the Winslow building and that some of this space would be used for a balcony. He highlighted additional changes that were made to help reduce the mass of the building. He also mentioned that some of the architectural details had changed and that a public plaza was added behind the building. Similarly for the Pomona building, additional setbacks were added. With regard to the Hyland, additional setbacks were added creating greater separation with abutting residential properties. He highlighted that more landscaping was added as a result of the increased setbacks.

Mr. Quinn presented shadow studies showing shadow patterns from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm during one day in the months of March, September, June, and December. Discussion ensued regarding where shadows were cast at certain times of the day. Mr. Baghdady questioned why the study stopped at 3:00 pm. Mr. Quinn responded that there weren't many changes after that time. Mr. Baghdady asked how the shadows compared to those based on the original design of the building. Mr. Quinn responded that the shadows cast now are substantially less than last January. Mr. Quinn reviewed the shadow impacts on the abutting properties highlighting the impacts on the residential abutters. Mr. Heikin, Peer Review consultant, suggested extending the model for the shadow studies to 8:00 am to 5:00 pm to give a more complete sense of the shadows cast by the buildings.

Comments from Residents:

1. Devin Brown, 54 Horne Road, made several comments on behalf of the Cushing Square Neighborhood Association. He stated that because the Hyland was on a slope and directly adjacent to several residences, it would be undesirable to have 4 stories. He urged the Planning Board to limit all buildings to 3 stories, not 4. He noted that the Hyland was a gateway to Belmont and should reflect the character of the Town. He felt that the 4 story silhouette was too much and would have a very negative impact. He asked for the relocation of the roof top mechanicals. He asked that the square footage of Horne Road be taken out of the FAR calculations. He spoke to delays, and noted that the pace of progress has been dictated by the development team, and he did not think it fair to blame the delay on the Planning Board and the Neighborhood Association. He noted that there was a significant amount of compromise by the neighborhood in the creation of the Overlay By-Law. Mr. Brown indicated on the plans where the changes should be made to each building.
2. Claus Becker, 20 Poplar Street, felt that the shadow study was confusing and suggested the study should be focused on the shadows cast by the new buildings, and not the existing buildings.
3. Donald Becker, 35 Horne Road, felt that the 4th story on the Hyland Building "had to go." He felt that the setbacks do not mitigate the height of the building.

4. Nicole Gianoukos, 569 Belmont Street also requested the removal of the 4th story of the Hyland Building. She felt that the developer's idea of compromise was not true, as coming down in height from an artificial elevation did not denote a fair depiction of compromise.
5. Sara Hartunian, 60 Horne Road, felt that a two story limit was good for the Town, and that there was a need to look at what neighboring towns have done.
6. Mark Kohler, 324 Common Street, Watertown, stated that he didn't want another building to block his view. He felt that two stories would be economically viable.
7. Al Smith, 11 Poplar Street, urged everyone not to use the word "compromise" in a combative way, but in an advancing mode.
8. Tommasina Olson, 10 Bay State Road, stated that there was not a market for office space and was concerned about the economics of creating this. She felt it was necessary to speak to the commercial aspect of Cushing Square. She further noted that the Oakley Village development will result in a lot of children and impact the school system.
9. Don Becker, 35 Horne Road, urged the Planning Board not to allow 4 stories. He suggested 3 stories as an acceptable compromise.
10. Ed Kazanjian, 355 School Street, commented that he liked the setbacks and was happy with the progress made.
11. Al Smith, 11 Poplar Street suggested removing the cupola if it didn't serve a function. Mr. Rodin responded that the tower has an elevator and a stair access to the parking garage. He felt strongly that the tower was a needed element that represented the Town as one entered into Belmont.
12. Ann O'Donnel, 537 Belmont Street, stated she was delighted with the progress made in the reduction of the mass and size of the Hyland Building. She suggested incorporating the same building materials used in the other parts of the building so it wouldn't appear so high.

Mr. Baghdady stated the Board and the Applicant will continue meeting in working sessions to incorporate these comments. He asked the Board for their views regarding the comments made by the audience, to give the Applicant direction.

The Winslow: Mr. Clark noted that the proposed building design is much better than it was originally proposed. Mr. Battista stated his satisfaction with the footprint, height and bulk of the Winslow Building. Mr. Baghdady noted the considerable amount of work done.

The Pomona: Mr. Baghdady noted that there is more congregation space now. Mr. Clark noted that in terms of massing, he echoes what he said about the Winslow Building. Mr. Haglund agreed with Mr. Clark and stated that eliminating 1 unit on the Horne Road side would make a

big difference to the neighbors on Horne Road. Mr. Battista suggested taking away the roof top green space in order to lower bulk in the southwest corner. Mr. Baghdady said he would ask the development team to look into the possibility of mitigating some of the bulk around Horne Road.

The Hyland: Mr. Baghdady noted that the bulk had been lowered considerably and the 4 story element is not as visible from Common Street. He also stated that the working group will continue to look at the 4th story. Mr. Clark commended Mr. Rodin on doing a terrific job of redesigning the Hyland. Mr. Haglund requested that the Peer Review Consultant work with the development team to decrease the stories from 4 to 3. He added that this would reduce some of the need for expensive underground parking, and urged the Board to carefully look at the parking space issue. Mr. Rodin responded that much of the 4th level is an egress and is not rentable space. Mr. Haglund urged the Development team and the Planning Board to look at 3 stories as the maximum, as requested by the Neighborhood Association. Mr. Rojas noted that 3 units or more would have to be given up in order to make this a 3 story building. Mr. Battista questioned the use of metal roofs, stating that they were expensive and added to height and noise. He asked how many units would be lost if the 4th story were eliminated. Mr. Starr responded that 6 units would be lost because they would have to replicate an egress.

Rebecca Brown, traffic consultant for the Applicant, presented a response to the traffic and parking analysis submitted by Kerry Pike, Peer Review traffic consultant. She reviewed the additional data that was requested and explained further the methodology she used to determine the traffic impacts. She reviewed traffic queuing and volumes based on revised data. She also explained how parking will be managed and what areas will be reserved for short-term parking, and for the residential units.

Mr. Rojas asked what route delivery trucks will take to get to the site, and how will the municipal parking spaces differ from the other commercial parking spaces. Ms. Brown responded that the parking spaces won't differ except to allow for different length of parking times. Mr. Rojas noted the revenue component generated by parking and asked what assurances a parking sticker holder has that a space would be available to them when they wanted it. He stated the need to differentiate between municipal and commercial spaces. Mr. Starr noted the current policy allows for more stickers to be sold than available spaces.

Joe San Clemente of Howard-Stein Hudson, a colleague of Keri Pyke, the Peer Review traffic consultant, responded that they had just received the follow-up report and had not had time to review it.

Mr. Battista asked if the dumpsters would be shared or if each building would have their own. Mr. Quinn stated that each building would have its own dumpster.

Moved by Mr. Battista to continue the public hearing on the Cushing Village application to January 8, 2013 at 7:00 pm. Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed.

Adjournment: 9:40 p.m.