

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 5, 2012**

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FEB 15 2 07 PM '13

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

Present: Sami Baghdady, Chair; Michael Battista, Vice Chair; Charles Clark, Elisabeth Allison, Joseph DeStefano; Karl Haglund, Associate Member (arrived at 7:25 pm); Andres Rojas, Board of Selectmen Liaison, Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff.

7:05 p.m. Discussion – Roof-Top Solar Energy System on Wellington School

Mr. Baghdady reported that he read in the newspaper that a solar energy system was being installed on the roof of the Wellington School building. He felt that it would be prudent to advise the School Committee and Administration whether such improvements on the roof would require an amendment to the Site Plan Approval, before a contract is entered into with a solar energy system installer. Mr. Baghdady explained that the Site Plan Approval had to be formally amended when the School Building Committee wanted to relocate an HVAC unit on the roof. In addition, the Wellington School has still not been issued a final Certificate of Occupancy, and the Board is still working with the Building Committee to address the level of noise emanating from the rooftop mechanicals. Mr. Baghdady asked whether other Board Members believed that the installation of a solar energy system on the roof of the School would require an amendment to the Site Plan Approval.

Mr. Battista observed that the installation of a solar energy system on the roof is a major improvement with significant issues, such as water run-off, solar glare, etc. Moreover, there have been major noise concerns among neighbors from the rooftop units on the building. How will the solar energy system affect those issues? He felt that the solar energy system would constitute a significant change to the building, and required a public process before the Planning Board. Mr. DeStefano agreed and stated that it would be prudent for the School Committee to come before the Planning Board for site plan review. After additional discussion, including the intent of the Solar Energy Systems By-law, all agreed that the installation of a solar energy system on the roof of the Wellington School would require a formal request of the Planning Board to amend the Site Plan Approval.

Mr. Baghdady asked Mr. Wheeler to draft a letter to the School Committee and the Superintendent advising them of the Planning Board's conclusion.

Mr. DeStefano recused himself at this point.

7:15 p.m. Committee Updates

Mr. Battista reported that the Belmont Center Lighting Committee met to review the lighting for the Center. Once the design of the lighting fixture is determined, the Committee hopes to review benches and other accessories. Ms. Allison asked if the Committee was planning to use LED lighting, to which Mr. Battista responded that the Committee had discussed it.

The Board took a short recess.

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

Erik Rodin, architect for the developer, gave a presentation on the Hyland Building that illustrated key design and dimensional changes. In particular, he discussed the following:

- A re-structured main entry on Belmont Street will give access to the elevators and stairs, which will also access the parking area below;
- The number of residential units would be between 45 – 47 units;
- The heights and setbacks of the building are appropriate in relation to abutting homes and along Home Road;
- He pointed-out details of the Horne Road Plaza, the roof, windows and facades of each elevation; and,
- He highlighted the open space and landscaping, the patios for each unit and the open space on the roof.

Mr. Baghdady opened the rest of the presentation to comments from the audience:

1. Don Becker, 35 Horne Road, read a written statement regarding the mixed use development in Cushing Square. He explained the intent of the Cushing Square Overlay By-Law. He stated that the By-Law gives the Planning Board greater control to create a socially inviting place and noted that all development had to comply with the By-Law.
2. Doug Koplow, 18 Oak Avenue, asked all people speaking to disclose any ties, financial or otherwise, they might have to the development team. Mr. Baghdady asked all those speaking to volunteer such a disclosure.

Mr. Koplow continued that he wanted to improve transparency of the process and asked that the visualizations be improved. He suggested that the peer review consultant provide an analysis using massing software that will allow views from different vantage points and that shows massing as promised when the Overlay was approved as a tool for comparison. He also asked for independent benchmarks and metrics. The massing software will allow seeing peak building heights and the percentage of the building that is four stories.

3. Devon Brown, 54 Horne Road, gave a brief presentation and summary of the issues that the Cushing Square Neighborhood Association has with the three buildings:

Hyland –he stated that this building should be a 2-3 story building and not a 3-4 story building. He expressed concern that a significant portion of the Hyland was four stories and urged that the Applicant make it three stories.

Pomona – he stated the four story building violates the spirit of the By-Law. He expressed concerns about the shadows cast by the building and urged a 4-3-2 story

transition that is more in keeping with the scale of the Town. He also expressed concern about the roof-top mechanicals making the building appear even taller and noted that individual condensers can cause significant noise.

Winslow – he reiterated that the Planning Board asked for a larger transition to the two stories and wanted the developers to look into this change.

4. Steve Carlini, 31 Horne Road, asked that the Planning Board submit to the developers the parking data he generated and submitted earlier in the application process.
5. Debbie Hartman, 133 Brookside Avenue, disclosed that she did not have any ties to anyone. She voiced her support of the project and felt that the Applicant has negotiated in good faith, and feels that the design complies with the By-Law.
6. Chris McVay, 109 Brookside Avenue, stated that she felt the current design meets the intent of the Overlay By-Law, and would like to see the area returned to a vibrant commercial center. She disclosed that he was a real estate agent and has worked for Real Estate 109 and has leased properties for Chris Starr, the developer.
7. Kathy Rushe, 64 Horne Road, said that she had no financial interests, and noted that the roof-top mechanical units would add to height and mass and stated that she did not like them on the roof, and requested they be buried within the building. She felt this would mask the noise they would generate.
8. Ed Kazanjian, 355 School Street, commended the Planning Board and the Applicant for their hard work. He did not have any financial interest to disclosure, and wondered why there was still opposition to the project, especially since the square footage of the proposed buildings has come down from the initial application.
9. Judith Sarno, 30 Waverly Terrace, stated that she did not have a financial interest in the application. She stated that the Pomona Building should be reduced from 4 to 3 stories since she is concerned about setting a precedent. She noted that there is not enough retail space and that it should be increased. She also noted that there should not be any mechanicals on the roof-tops of the buildings.
10. Nick Markantonis, 65 Richardson Road, stated he did have a financial interest, as he was the owner of Brothers Pizza. He felt that the development will be a tremendous benefit to the Town.
11. Judy Singler, 53 Selwyn Road, expressed concern about setting a precedent for four story buildings and fear of “over-saturation” of the Square.
12. Nicole Gianoukos, 569 Belmont Street, stated that she was concerned with the “fit” and felt that a four story building would block the sun, regardless of the length of the setback. She didn’t want Belmont to become “urban.”

13. Ann Paulsen, 90 School Street, was concerned that brick sidewalks would present a danger, and noted that it is very difficult to walk on them. She urged the Planning Board and the Applicant to use concrete instead of brick.
14. Tommasina Olson, 10 Bay State Road, felt that the more the project gets chipped away, the less economically viable it will be.
15. Hernan Jara, 20 Horne Road, raised concerns about the length of construction time. He noted that the project has scaled down, and wanted guarantees that it would remain at the size and height agreed upon and not change.
16. Carolyn Bishop, 7 Orchard Street, urged all to think of the whole Square as a Center, and wanted classic, solid designs that are in scale with the neighborhood and Town.
17. Sue Bass, 540 Concord Avenue, noted that she has no financial interests, but a deep personal interest. She stated that this was the future of Belmont and urged that this change be done carefully, and to take the time to do it right.
18. Al Smith, 11 Poplar Avenue, stated that he does not have a financial interest and noted that compromise is key to the success of this project. He felt that Mr. Starr has made valid attempts to compromise, and suggested that if you live on Trapelo Road you have to accept the problems that come with this road.
19. Jenny Fallon, 30 Richardson Road, stated that not everyone is going to agree and the Board has to set a goal to end the negotiations to come to closure.
20. Alisa Gardner-Todreas, 16 Chenery Terrace, stated that she was the chair of the Belmont Housing Trust and noted that Cushing Village will offer different housing options and price points.
21. Harout Ghazarian, 47 Cross Street, spoke in support of the project. He stated that he does have a financial interest, as his father owns a business in Cushing Square. He would like the Square to return to the thriving place it used to be.
22. Jeanne Mooney, 60 Oak Avenue, noted that this type of development is a unique opportunity, and would like to see more affordable housing provided.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Baghdady asked the Applicant to be prepared to continue the public hearing on December 11. He requested floor plans of the Pomona and Hyland Buildings and noted that the Applicant will have to address the mechanicals in the context of height and mass and the possible relocation of them. He commented that he would prefer not to see open space eaten up by condensers. He also requested an updated shadow study. Mr. Donahue stated that traffic and parking could be discussed at the next meeting and added that the shadow study and landscape plans will be sent to Board once they are complete.

Mr. Battista asked the developers to look into noise mitigation, and suggested that the use of geothermal units would eliminate a lot of the noise generated by the condensers.

Mary Kennedy, 11 Lorimer Road, asked what the anticipated length was of the construction work on Trapelo Road and wondered what the impact of the street repair and building construction happening at the same time would be. Mr. Baghdady stated that the Applicant's team has been in touch with Town's consultant regarding the reconstruction of the road.

Doug Koplou asked the peer review consultant to provide 3-D visualizations. Mr. Rojas responded that creation of 3-D visualizations is beyond the scope of Peer Review but that the Applicant would be providing these plans.

Moved by Mr. Clark to continue the Cushing Village public hearing to December 11, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.. Seconded by Mr. Battista. The motion passed.

Adjournment: 9:20 p.m.