

BELMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

February 1, 2005

Town Hall

Meeting Minutes

Commission Members Attending: Co-chair Richard Cheek, Paul Bell, Lisa Harrington, Linn Hobbs, Arleyn Levee, Richard Pichette, Nancy Richards, Michael Smith, Sharon Vanderslice. Associate Member: Matthew Genta. Absent: Lydia Ogilby.

2004 ANNUAL REPORT

The Commission reviewed a summary of its 2004 activities, written by Co-chair Richard Cheek, and made several amendments. Mr. Cheek will submit the revised report to the Board of Selectmen's Office for inclusion in the Town's 2004 Annual Report.

DEMOLITION REVIEW BYLAW

Matthew Genta presented a draft of a demolition review bylaw, which would apply to any building in town that is 50 years old or older.

Mr. Genta will email this draft to all Commission members, who should reply with comments within two weeks. Town Planner Tim Higgins will then present the draft bylaw to the Planning Board. The goal is to get the proposed bylaw on the warrant for Belmont's Annual Town Meeting in April.

509 PLEASANT STREET

Attending: Tali Buchler and Eran Frenkel, prospective buyers; Kristen Giannattasio, their architect; Connie Hadley and Nushin Yazdi, other prospective buyers.

Ms. Buchler and Mr. Frenkel came before the Commission with their architect, Ms. Giannattasio, to see if the Commission would approve a one-story addition to this 1951 house designed by Dorothy Dunlop, which stands on approximately one acre of land. They presented an aerial photograph of the property and a photographic simulation of how the house would look with the proposed addition. The addition would have the same roof pitch and be constructed of the same materials as the original house, which is a mixture of dark green shingle and lighter board-and-batten with a Roman brick entryway and an asphalt roof. Ms. Giannattasio reported that she has all of the original drawings for the house and that the interior has been untouched since 1951, with the exception of a hardwood floor that was added later. In answer to questions, the Commission told the prospective buyers that (1) it was permissible to have a cathedral ceiling in the interior as long as it would fit within the existing framework of the house, (2) that any new guttering should be metal to match the original, (3) that skylights could be added to the Pleasant

Street side of the house if the pitch of the roof and the depth of the overhang made them impossible to see from the street, (4) that any new or replacement windows should be fixed casement with true divided lights (although these lights could be double-glazed if the owner preferred), (5) that it would probably approve a requested change in one window on the south side, (6) that the exterior paint color should be one that was used in the 1950s *and* one that is compatible the surrounding houses, (7) that a color chip had to be approved by the HDC before the exterior was repainted, (8) that perimeter fencing would also have to be approved by the HDC and that an invisible fence for the couple's dog might be the best solution because it would maintain the open feeling of the landscape. Mr. Cheek said that the approach, scale, and materials of the proposed addition were appropriate to the existing house. Michael Smith encouraged Ms. Buchler and Mr. Frenkel to carry the depth of the existing overhang into the addition and to keep the same window elevations. He also suggested that they use windows in the addition similar to those in the existing dining and kitchen areas.

Mr. Cheek said that, if requested, the HDC would grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to a prospective buyer wishing to make changes to a home in the Historic District as long as the application included all drawings required to obtain a building permit and a letter from the current owner saying that he or she approved of the application.

HOW MASSACHUSETTS LAW APPLIES TO HISTORIC DISTRICTS & COMMISSIONS IN BELMONT

In response to questions that often arise from Commission members and town residents, Richard Pichette passed out a 22-page memorandum (attached) that details the powers and responsibilities of the Belmont Historic District Commission under Article 15 of the Belmont Bylaw and under Chapters 40C and 8D of the Massachusetts General Laws. The HDC has the powers of both a Historic District Commission and a Historical Commission. It can accept gifts, enter into contracts, and ask that certain properties in the town be set aside as landmarks.

WAVERLEY FIRE STATION ZONING BYLAW

Richard Cheek updated Commission members on the status of the proposed bylaw, which will come before Town Meeting for a vote on February 7 and will permit the property to be redeveloped for residential use.

LIBRARY SITE PLANNING

Paul Bell reported on the latest proposal being considered by the Library Site Planning Committee. He showed drawings of a proposed new main library with underground parking, which would be constructed on the same site as the existing Belmont Memorial Library. A new egg-shaped pool and a skating/wading area with a bathhouse between the

two would be built on the existing Underwood Pool site next door. The Committee has commissioned a feasibility study of the project and projects that construction would begin 10 years from now. Mr. Bell said that two problems with the proposed plan were that (1) the underground parking garage would be below the existing water table and thus subject to flooding, and (2) there would be no room on the site for the new library to expand in the future.

HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

These written guidelines for homeowners in the Historic District, drafted by Lisa Harrington, will be reviewed and discussed by the Historic District Commission in depth at a charrette on April 2 in the conference room of Equus Design Group, 438 Common Street, Belmont.

ARTICLES ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Nancy Richards presented a draft of the first of an intended series of articles to be submitted for publication in the *Belmont Citizen-Herald*. It discusses the economic benefits of historic preservation. Commission members should forward editorial comments to Ms. Richards via email.

20 CHURCH STREET TELECOMMUNICATIONS ANTENNA

Michael Smith plans to visit the site of a telecommunications antenna in Medford that is disguised within an artificial chimney designed by EBI Consulting. EBI has recommended that a similar setup be used to disguise two new antennas proposed for the roof of 20 Church Street.

Minutes recorded by Sharon Vanderslice.