

**TOWN OF BELMONT  
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES  
October 21, 2014**

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BELMONT, MA

2015 SEP 22 PM 2:57

Present: Michael Battista, Chair; Elisabeth Allison, Vice Chair; Charles Clark; Joseph DeStefano; Karl Haglund, Mr. Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development

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

**7:05 p.m. Continued Public Hearing:**

**22 Waverley Street – Second Unit at the Rear of the House**

**MOTION made by Mr. DeStefano to continue 22 Waverly Street to December 2, 2014. Seconded by Ms. Allison. Motion passed.**

**13 Birch Street – New Two-Family Dwelling**

**MOTION made by Ms. Allison to accept the withdrawal of 13 Birch Street. Seconded by Mr. DeStefano. Motion passed.**

**7:10 p.m. Public Hearings**

**23 Centre Avenue – Historic Accessory Dwelling Unit**

Ms. Allison read the notice of public hearing for 23 Centre Avenue.

Mr. McNamara, the Applicant and the new owner of 23 Centre Avenue, gave a brief presentation regarding the sale and transfer of the property, historic background, proposed renovations, and use and intention of the accessory building.

Ms. Allison questioned whether the accessory building met the setback requirements for the Single Residence A Zoning District. She also commented that the Board's decision would be informed in part by the proximity to the neighbors and disruptions to them. Mr. Clark stated that the Board had to weigh the preservation of the structure against other issues.

Mr. McNamara mentioned that:

- The building has fallen into disrepair, and he intended to repair it and bring it up to date.
- The building has four parts; the first floor would consist of the garage that houses 2 cars and unheated storage space. The second floor would have a small apartment (939 sq. ft.) and an exercise room.
- Only the apartment would be rented out, the other spaces would be used by his family.
- The driveway will be to the left of the main house and in front of the carriage house and can accommodate 3 cars.

Ms. Battista stated that it should be a condition that a business cannot be operated out of the apartment. Mr. DeStefano added that it should be a condition that the new owner repair and update the carriage house. Ms. Allison felt that the Board ought to condition that the 1 bedroom apartment not be expanded into the space used by the family.

#### Comments from the Audience

1. Dick Madden, 707 Pleasant Street, stated his support for the application. He said that the proposed use of an historic building is exactly what the by-law was intended for.

**MOTION made by Ms. Allison to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. DeStefano. Motion passed**

**MOTION made by Ms. Allison to grant the Special Permit for the use of the historic accessory structure subject to the following conditions: \close the public hearing.**

1. Prohibit the transfer of the Special Permit to a new owner.
2. Parking will be limited and no further expansion of the asphalt will be allowed.
3. There will be no expansion of the apartment. It will remain as a one bedroom.
4. No business use of the building is allowed.
5. The owner will repair and maintain the structure.
6. No further subdivision will be allowed.
7. The property shall maintain the existing landscaping.

**Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed**

#### **36 Merrill Avenue – 2 New Single-Family Dwellings**

Ms. Allison read the Notice of Public Hearing

Mr. Cusano, Applicant and contractor for the property, explained the proposal to subdivide the property into 2 lots and build 2 single-family homes. He stated that he has been working with a surveyor in order to keep the proposed homes aligned with those existing in the neighborhood.

Mr. Battista asked that detailed plans outlining the elevations be submitted. All agreed that 2 singles works better than 1 two-family home.

Mr. DeStefano expressed concerns about the small 14 1/2 foot front yard. A brief discussion ensued. Clarification was requested regarding the front setbacks for Hamilton Road and Merrill Avenue.

Ms. Allison clarified that the home was really 4 stories, and not 2, due to the topography of the property. Mr. Haglund felt it exceeded the height requirements. He also asked that Mr. Cusano submit plans specifying which plants will be used in the landscaping and their location. Mr. DeStefano stated that he felt the siting of the buildings worked relative to the topography.

Mr. Cusano responded that the exposed concrete could be covered with wood if the Board wanted that. He also commented on the variety of styles of homes in the neighborhood and he tried to design something that blend well with the neighborhood.

The Board agreed that the height of the dormers was unbalanced and needed to be adjusted, and that the two homes did not complement one another. Mr. DeStefano asked that natural materials be used that would enhance the neighborhood. Additionally information was requested on the window details and that the roof should be pitched lower. He added that each home should reflect the street that they are on. Mr. Battista suggested eliminating the third floor bathroom which thereby eliminates the need for the dormers. The Board requested revised plot plans, revised elevations, specify the plantings, and to use different windows in the Merrill Avenue house.

Comments from the Audience:

1. Steve Tomczyk, 47 Hamilton Road, requested that the landscape plan include the existing Town street trees. He asked that the two Ginko trees that the Town planted be protected during construction, and requested that the Ginko tree that had been damaged (the top had been cut off) could be replaced. Mr. Cusano stated that he will replace the damaged tree and also protect the others from potential damage due to construction.
2. Annie Gardner, 25 Merrill Avenue, expressed her concerns about the loss of light and view, and of being dwarfed by the new buildings.
3. Seth Clark, 35 Concord Avenue, felt that the homes were oversized and the windows needed to synch up better. He also asked about the location of HVAC equipment and about the kind of lighting that will be used in the back yard.
4. Kaspar Totosian, 659 Belmont Street, owner of 41 Concord Ave, 9/11 Colby Street, and 23/25 Hamilton Road, expressed several concerns. He was concerned about safety issues on that corner; that the house was too high; snow removal, as he felt that the plowed snow would be pushed onto his property, melt and flood his basement; loss of sunlight; and shadows cast onto his home. Ms. Allison suggested talking to the Police Department about the number of accidents at this corner and the DPW to ascertain how the Town proceeds with snow removal.

**MOTION made by Mr. DeStefano to continue the public hearing to November 6, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Allison. The motion passed.**

**318 Trapelo Road – New Two-Family Dwelling - Re-open Public Hearing**

Mr. Oteri proceeded to give an overview of the newly submitted plans with changes and reported on several of them:

- The garages have been reduced by 12 feet, set back 16 feet, and are now on the same

plane.

- The side setback has been increased to 11 feet.
- The height of the buildings has been reduced from 33 feet to 30 feet, 3 inches.
- The dormers have been reduced and are a combined length of 18 feet.
- The pitch of the roof has been lowered from 9' 12" to 3' 12".
- The gables over the windows were reduced.
- The metal roofing has been removed and will be replaced by a rubber roof.
- The lattice work has been removed so the building's siding will be more consistent.
- Windows were added to the north and south sides of the building.
- Landscaping changes were made to the front of the property. The maple tree that stands out front will be removed, but it will be replaced with another maple tree.

Mr. Clark questioned whether to give access to public land while other abutters don't have it. The Board and Mr. Oteri briefly discussed the pros and cons of a gate opening up to public land. Mr. Oteri suggested that the gates could be locked so kids/parents at the playground could not access the private property. Mr. Battista suggested speaking to the Recreation Department to find out their policies and views on this matter.

Ms. Allison expressed concern about the third floor and that even though its one big room it could easily be converted into 2 bedrooms. She also expressed concern that there wasn't a lot of open space left.

Mr. DeStefano commented favorably on the new design, noting that the structures in this new plan were not massive like they were in the original one. He stated that he liked the way the buildings were staggered; he liked the way the garages acted as a buffer between the homes and broke up the density; and that this new plan gave the illusion of two single-family homes.

**MOTION made by Ms. Allison to continue the public hearing to November 6, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed.**

**9:35 p.m.      Updates on Potential Cases**

Mr. Battista commented on the following potential cases:

- The developer of 13 Birch Street will build a single-family home instead of a two-family home.
- If the Uplands Project becomes a reality, it will be important to look at how this development will affect Town services.

There was a brief discussion about the Citizens Petition. Mr. Clark clarified that the Petition did have enough signatures to get onto the Town Meeting Warrant. It is expected to come back at another Town Meeting.

**Adjourn: 9:45 p.m.**