

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
September 8, 2015**

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Present: Michael Battista, Chair; Elisabeth Allison, Vice Chair; Joseph DeStefano; Barbara Fiacco; Karl Haglund; Raffi Manjikian (Associate Member), Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development

7:05 p.m. Meeting called to order

1. Public Hearing

15-11 13 Birch Street - Design and Site Plan Review

Ms. Allison read the public notice.

Cliff Rober, representing the applicant Mike DeMartino, reported that Mr. DeMartino is proposing to build a single-family house on his 5,000 square foot lot. Ms. Fiacco clarified that the hand written notes apply to all of the drawings. Mr. Battista asked what type of materials would be used and asked that they be added to the drawings as well as gutters and down spouts. He also suggested that the arch at the top of the garage door might look nicer if it were squared off. Mr. DeStefano stated that the architect had done a very nice job with the design, but suggested windows be spread out on the left side elevation to better balance the design. He also strongly recommended using wood shutters or none at all. Ms. Fiacco clarified whether the front door would be single or double. Ms. Allison noted that the new structure will be slightly smaller than the median of the neighborhood and that the plans were consistent with the By-Laws.

Comments from the Audience:

1. Gail Stafford, 8 Cherry Street, spoke in support of the plan since the Applicant paid attention to the by-law.
2. Mark Stafford, 8 Cherry Street, reported that the Applicant has been very approachable and reasonable.
3. Judith Sarno Ananian, Waverly Terrace, asked if this will be the first single-family since the By-Law passed. It is not. She also thanked the Board for its work.
4. Dick Chandler, 267 Orchard Street, expressed concerns that there didn't seem to be enough land for the house. He also noted that it seemed too tall.

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

MOTION made by Ms. Allison to approve the Design and Site Plan based on conditions as discussed. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed

2. Continued Public Hearings:

15-10 1 Clark Lane – Design and Site Plan Review

Mr. Battista stated that the Applicant requested a continuation to September 22. Ms. Allison cautioned that several continuations in a row might discourage people from showing up to a public hearing and result in less participation.

MOTION made by Ms. Allison to continue the public hearing to September 22, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Board of Selectman's Meeting Room. Seconded by Mr. DeStefano. Motion passed.

15-06 29-31 Flett Road – Special Permit to Alter Non-Conforming Structure

Mr. Battista stated that he wanted to wait for the ZBA to rule on the Variance from the lot coverage for the bridge connecting the house to the garage. Ms. Allison noted that the revised plans don't reflect any of the concerns or comments about size and density raised during the last meeting. Mr. Battista noted that every dimension is pushed to the maximum allowed and commented that if the Board took a vote this evening the application would not be approved. Mr. DeStefano commented that the dormer is adding too much living space and did not fit with the neighborhood. He asked the Applicant to reduce the living space. Ms. Fiacco asked the Applicant to reconsider the size of the addition.

MOTION made by Ms. Allison to continue the public hearing to September 22, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Board of Selectman's Meeting Room. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.

15-08 26-28 Dante Avenue – Design and Site Plan Review/Special Permit

Ms. Allison reviewed the data matrix and reported that the quartile analysis of the newly submitted changes put the property in the upper 25th percent, and also that the lot does not meet the required frontage. She used the Assessor's data for her analysis. Mr. DeStefano noted that 2 front doors have been incorporated into the design and commented that the proposed structure would be an attractive addition and is much more preferable to what is there currently. He wondered about the accuracy of the Assessor's data.

Ms. Allison felt it increases density and that it was a "railroad car." Mr. Haglund commented that in terms of total living area this home barely approaches the top quartile, and that it is not as maxed out as some other plans the Board has seen. He suggested making each room 10 or 15 percent smaller. Ms. Fiacco suggested reducing the size of one of the units and commented that the frustration with the analysis is how the large structures within the neighborhood impact the analysis. Mr. DeStefano stated that he wants to put a two-family back that fits into the neighborhood and that if it were too small it would not function well. Mr. Battista stated that a traditional two-family would work better – 2 bedrooms on the first floor, 3 bedrooms on the second and attic floors.

The Applicant stated that he felt very frustrated because he made the requested changes and now the Board wants more. He added that the proposed structure meets the dimensional regulations,

abuts open space and fits into the neighborhood. Mr. Haglund stated that he was sympathetic to the struggle of the Applicant; however, the Board was trying to prevent monstrosities from occurring within the neighborhood and added that this application will be setting a precedent.

The Board discussed how the Applicant could make the building smaller and reduce the number of bedrooms. The Board emphasized that this was a process and that they are trying to keep the structures below the maximums. The Applicant was asked to resubmit plans that reduce the size of the structure.

MOTION made by Ms. Allison to continue the public hearing September 22, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Board of Selectman's Meeting Room. Seconded by Mr. DeStefano. Motion passed.

15-09 531 and 549 Concord Avenue – Special Permit for a Shared Driveway

(Mr. DeStefano recused himself from this public hearing.)

Mr. Notopoulos, attorney representing the Applicant, reviewed that the application and mentioned that, in reality, he is asking the Board to do nothing since the Applicant wants to use the existing driveway to access the same house that it has since it was built. He explained why the frontage on Concord Avenue and Wellington Lane would not work since significant trees and vegetation would have to be removed and an opening would have to be installed in a stone wall at the front of the house.

The Board discussed whether or not the lots could be sub-divided in the future, and if the address of the property would change from a Concord Avenue to Sumner Lane. The Board agreed that the question of addresses was not within their purview, but that public safety should be contacted to give their input.

Mr. Notopoulos stated that maintenance of the driveway will be the responsibility of 531 Concord Avenue since they will be using it. Rick Kobus, the Applicant, reported that there were covenants filed with the subdivision that protected the trees and view sheds on the property.

Comments from the Audience:

1. Victor Sandor, a neighbor, spoke in support of sharing a driveway and not cutting through the stone wall.
2. Francis Lampay, 28 Wellington Lane, spoke in support of using the driveway since it would not cut through the wall nor remove any trees.

Mr. Battista asked that the Applicant update the plans to show all of the easements and driveways on one plan.

The Board discussed attaching conditions to the Special Permit including no future sub-division of the lots, insuring that the Fire Department reviews the plan and contacting the Board of Selectmen about the addresses for each house.

MOTION made by Ms. Allison to continue the public hearing to September 22, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Board of Selectman's Meeting Room. Seconded by Mr. DeStefano. Motion passed.

3. Updates on Potential Cases and Planning Board Projects, and Committee Reports

Mr. Wheeler suggested scheduling another meeting to address the many items before the Board.

Mr. Wheeler mentioned the possibility of the MBTA closing one of the stations in Belmont. He noted that the Waverly Square is not ADA compliance and is no longer grandfathered. He also noted the low number of people that board the train at Belmont Center. Mr. Haglund added that the T is considering adding a rail stop at Alewife Station.

Mr. Battista stated that the Board was waiting for the noise study and the landscaping plan before it could approve the Certificate of Occupancy for the Underwood Pool.

Mr. Battista also mentioned that there will be a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee to discuss the possible re-construction of the ice skating rink. He noted that he will report on it once he obtains a copy of the report.

Adjourn: 8:40 p.m.