

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
December 15, 2015**

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2016 JAN -6 PH 2: 26

Present: Elisabeth Allison, Chair; Barbara Fiacco, Vice Chair, Joseph DeStefano; Karl Haglund; Raffi Manjikian (associate member)

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development

7:00 p.m. Meeting called to order

1. Discussion of Planning Topics for 2016

Ms. Allison asked the Board for comments regarding prioritization of upcoming agenda items. Ms. Fiacco thought that discussion on Cushing Village might necessitate its own meeting. She questioned non-conforming/grandfathering education. Mr. Wheeler stated that this is very complex and evolving issue and suggested that George Hall, Town Counsel, could speak about this at one of the Board's meetings. Ms. Allison stated that a review of implementing the General Residence Zoning By-Laws would be a good time to discuss what has worked and what has not. She also suggested establishing design guidelines so that potential applicants will know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. Mr. DeStefano stated that the Waverley Square and Belmont Center MBTA commuter rail stations were a hot topic and should be discussed at the beginning of the New Year. He also stated that a discussion with realtors and the Assessor regarding real estate trends could be very helpful. Ms. Fiacco questioned the urgency to review Airbnb and whether there was time to get this done for Town Meeting. She added that this issue needs to be discussed quickly and for the Board to decide how to move forward. Ms. Allison suggested scheduling a meeting with the developers of the Uplands project in March. The Board briefly discussed when to schedule some of these issues.

2. Discussion of Cushing Village Progress Monitoring

The Board agreed to discuss monitoring Cushing Village on January 19.

3. Status of Cases Approved 12/03/2015 with Conditions

Mr. Wheeler distributed a draft of the conditions from each case compiled into one document. With regard to 26-28 Dante Avenue, Ms. Allison reported that the Board received a memo from Principal McAllister regarding the second driveway. She stated that it was clear that he was looking to the Board for direction.

Ed Sanderson, Flett Road, who has a child at the school, felt that this corner is a busy drop-off corner. He suggested expanding the existing driveway instead of constructing a second driveway. Ms. Allison stated that the Board had already granted a Special Permit and that the Board will be adding conditions to ensure safety.

Ms. Fiacco stated that condition #4 regarding vegetation was too loose and should be tighten. Mr. Haglund suggested that there be a two year maintenance plan for the landscaping, though Ms. Allison stated that this may be too substantive of a change to the conditions. Mr. DeStefano

suggested that the fence be constructed of cedar board.

The Board quickly reviewed the conditions for 122 Waverley Street.

4. Continued Public Hearings

a. 15-12 54 White Street - Design and Site Plan Review/ Special Permit

(Mr. DeStefano recused himself.)

Mr. Wheeler reviewed the revisions made to the plans.

Ed Hovsepien, the Applicant, stated that he hired a landscape architect, who agreed that several trees on the property should be replaced. The landscape architect suggested planting winterberry bushes and arborvitae because they offered more privacy. She also suggested planting red maples on the property. Mr. Haglund stated that the plan worked well.

Mr. Hovespian reviewed the architectural plans. All the Board members agreed that the newly submitted plans offered more detail and the landscaping additions improved the look of the property.

MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Haglund. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Ms. Fiacco to grant the Special Permit with the Board's standard conditions. Seconded by Raffi Manjikian. Motion passed.

b. 15-14 24 Upland Road - Design and Site Plan Review

(Mr. DeStefano recused himself.)

Ms. Allison reviewed the status of the application. She stated that while people were pleased that a single-family home would be built in the neighborhood, there were concerns about the building's design.

Justin Kenyon, Applicant, stated that the design of the house fits with the style of the neighborhood. He added that energy efficiency played a big role in the number and placement of windows. He argued that he proposed structure is moving closer to the style of the neighborhood than the existing single-story structure. The Board expressed concerns that the house design seemed unbalanced and suggested moving around window placement to give it a more balanced appearance and to add more symmetry.

Mr. Haglund requested that the caliper of the trees be at least 3 ½ inches to increase their survivability.

Mr. Manjikian questioned whether the Board was comfortable with the minimalist design of the building. Ms. Fiacco questioned how to strike a balance between the neighborhood and the Applicant's preferences. She stated that she wanted more symmetry with the placement of

windows. Ms. Okado, the architect, explained why the windows were placed where they were. Mr. Kenyon added that he wants to certify the home as a passive home.

Comments from the Audience:

- a. Steve Pinkerton, Precinct 7 suggested adding a false window to create an aesthetic balance.
- b. John O'Connor, 35 Upland Road, clarified the height to the top of the roof ridge. He added that the Board was on the right track to do something with the windows.

Ms. Allison stated that this interpretation of the minimalist style is not consistent with the neighborhood and encouraged the Applicant to look at windows again. Ms. Fiacco added that the windows were intended to soften the house. Ms. Kenyon, the Applicant's wife, stated that the design was intended to evoke a sense of her home country. Mr. Manjikian requested a streetscape of the abutting homes to show context of the proposed with the existing.

**MOTION made by Ms. Fiacco to continue the public hearing to January 5, 2016.
Seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.**

(Joseph DeStefano rejoined the meeting)

5. Review of Potential Zoning Amendments for Single Residence C Zoning Districts

Mr. Wheeler reviewed the status of the potential zoning amendments. Mr. DeStefano stated that the side setbacks should remain at 10 feet. He added that he supported the idea of a specific threshold for when a Special Permit would be required, i.e., a percent of the house being altered.

Comments from Audience:

- a. Steve Pinkerton, Precinct 7, agreed to keep side setbacks at 10 feet and noted that some towns count garages into the total living area. He suggested that 30%-40% seemed like a reasonable threshold.
- b. Bob Kennedy, Precinct 3, expressed concerns that out of scale buildings will be built in his neighborhood of Kendall Gardens. He questioned how the Board arrived at 34 foot to the roof ridge. Mr. DeStefano replied that the 34 foot limit was chosen because the research that the citizen sponsors did for the Dalton Road neighborhood. He also felt that this was a reasonable height based on his experience in construction.
- c. Peg Calanan, Precinct 7, commended the Board for the proposed amendments.

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

There were no updates

7. Review and Approval of Minutes

MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to accept the minutes of December 3, 2015 with the changes as submitted. Seconded by Mr. Haglund. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to accept both the 8:00 am and 7:00 pm meeting minutes. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to accept the minutes of November 3, 2015 as amended. Seconded by Mr. DeStefano. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to accept the minutes of October 27, 2015. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Mr. DeStefano to accept the minutes of October 13, 2015. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Ms. Fiacco to accept the minutes of September 22, 2015. Seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to accept the minutes of September 21, 2015. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Mr. DeStefano to accept the minutes of September 8, 2015. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.

MOTION made by Mr. DeStefano to accept the minutes of August 4, 2015 as amended. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.

Adjourn: 9:15 p.m.