

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
March 27, 2007**

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

Attendance: Karl Haglund, Chair, Sami Baghdady, Jennifer Fallon, Andrew McClurg, Andrew Rojas. Jeffrey Wheeler, staff, joined the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Deferred approval of March 13 minutes pending redraft of final paragraph "up-date: Senior Center Building Decision" by Jennifer Fallon.

7:15 p.m. Update on Senior Center Building Decision

Following some discussion, the Board agreed to keep its decision and conditions as previously voted. The Board is waiting for advice from Town Counsel regarding resolution of the architect's letter of protect in light of the opinion from BSC Group.

7:35 p.m. Discussion of Transition Zones

Material for properties on Trapelo Road from Slade Street to Hull Street was distributed and discussed. Andy Rojas reported on conversations about the possible development of 7 - 9 Flett Road. The Board agreed that possible development of this property provides good questions for considering zoning changes for the "transition zones". (e.g. What size of development makes inclusion of residential units feasible? How should we be thinking about the balance of residential and commercial uses in these zones versus the business centers? How can we achieve appropriate design, which will be crucial to successful transformation of these areas?)

Several comments were raised from the audience including questions about the amount of traffic generated by professional offices and whether there is a glut of office space in Belmont.

Jeffrey Wheeler presented information on the third Transition zone - intersection of Concord Avenue and Bright Road. Karl Haglund mentioned that this area was an entry into Belmont with high end housing on one side. Andrew McClurg stated that this is not a destination area and asked whether the Board could envision something else for the area.

8:30 p.m. Comprehensive Planning

The Board discussed the draft memo to the Selectmen and agreed to continue to discuss it at its next meeting. There is tentative support for approaching the Selectmen on this topic. The Board agreed to discuss how comprehensive planning would affect, and be affected by, the Board's various discussions and actions, e.g. regarding zoning amendments. Jennifer Fallon stated that the public needs a broad view, and that the process will highlight competing priorities. Andy Rojas said that the scope of the Comprehensive Plan should focus on the most important issues, but that it should not interfere with ongoing efforts to address those issues. Jenny agreed that questions of density, transportation, etc. should be the subject of town-wide focus and

discussion. On the subject of cost, Andy Rojas suggested using consultants to manage the public process, but relying on in-house effort to get the report written. Karl suggested that the memo could point out areas where the Planning Board could have used a Comprehensive Plan to guide decisions, such as the Belmont Center Charrette, the Star Market development, and the South Pleasant and Brighton Streets land use planning. All agreed to send Jenny revisions to the memo and to discuss it at the Board's next meeting.

8:45 Multiple Vehicle Parking

Material identifying residential properties with no driveways was distributed. There was some discussion of the public using church parking lots. Jennifer stated that churches cannot rent parking spaces without losing their property tax exemption. Sami noted that depending on the rental price, it can still be profitable for them to do so. The Board raised the following questions - how to separate these issues, how are they interrelated and how does zoning enter into this discussion? The Board agreed to ask staff to outline (and separate) the various issues relating to parking (e.g. too many vehicles parked in a driveway/front yard parking/lot coverage and open space/etc.) as a next step.

9:05 p.m. Other Business

- Andy Rojas stated that he talked with Chris Starr, who says that he is 1) working with the other property owners in the southwest Cushing Square block, and 2) developing a program for a project there. Karl noted that Town Meeting would have to approve a sale or lease of the municipal parking lot as part of such a development. Andy Rojas mentioned that neighbors would be concerned and the project would need a good design to be acceptable and successful.

- Jennifer Fallon discussed the Mega Meeting held by the Board of Selectmen, Warrant Committee and the Capital Budget Committee to discuss capital projects. She stated that there were two major areas – infrastructure and buildings. A large report was presented on the condition of the roads which would require a large override to fund. Reports were also presented on approximately 10 buildings which would require significant updates and overrides to fund. She mentioned to the Mega Group the possibility of moving the library to Belmont Center. A new committee has been formed, Capital Projects Overview, to look at both of these issues in terms of uses and funding – what priority should these projects take? The Planning Board will have a permanent seat on this committee and the committed will be required to provide a report in the fall. Karl Haglund stated that this was a real opportunity especially how it affects Belmont Center and South Pleasant Street.

9:15 p.m. Meeting adjourned

Approved 4/19/07