

## **BELMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**March 5, 2003 7:00 p.m.**

**Town Hall**

**Meeting Minutes**

Attending: Richard Cheek and Lydia Ogilby, Co-chairs, Paul Bell, Nancy Richards, Michael Smith, Jonathan Treat, Sharon Vanderslice. Absent: Linn Hobbs, Arleyn Levee.

Pleasant Street Resident: Arthur Wolfson.

### **TOWN HALL COMPLEX UPDATE**

Michael Smith, HDC representative to the Town Hall Complex Building Committee, reported that a cost estimate had been received two days before and that it was very close to the amount budgeted for the project (which involves renovation of the School Administration Building and the Town Hall Annex and completion of the Town Hall renovation that began in the late 1990s). There may not be enough money, however, to finish repointing the brick walls of the Town Hall and repair its stained glass windows.

Design issues:

*Window Frames.* Rather than putting insulating glass into the original window frames on the School Administration building, the committee decided to keep the old windows and window glass and put up new storm windows with screens—a cheaper and more historically appropriate option.

*Town Hall Doors.* The committee will specify that wood frames be used on all public doors within the building. Trim will be stained. Interior doors not accessible to the public may have metal frames covered with painted wood trim.

*Fire Code Compliance.* The Belmont Fire Department has reviewed plans for the Town Hall Annex and School Administration Building.

*Parking.* Kevin Foley, chair of the Belmont Center Parking Committee, and Donald Mercier, commercial property owner in Belmont, came before the Building Committee to request that more parking spaces be added to the complex. The Building Committee subsequently mailed a letter to the Board of Selectmen explaining that no more spaces could be added without violating local zoning regulations and accessibility requirements. Right now, the lot contains illegal spaces.

*National Register of Historic Places.* Richard Cheek is to submit an application to determine whether the Town Hall Annex is eligible for the National Register. If it is

determined to be eligible, the building could be designated as “partially preserved” by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Such a designation would provide relief from some building code requirements.

#### MCLEAN LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Richard Pichette, the HDC representative on this committee, reported that the group is studying ways to enlarge the open field in the North Meadow and maintain the Pine Allee. Both of these projects require funding. It appears that the new municipal cell tower to be located on the property will not generate much revenue from private companies. Only one company has bid on the right to install an antenna on this tower and the bid is not high.

The Land Management Committee has not yet determined whether bikes or dogs will be allowed.

#### 5 SOMERSET STREET

Richard Pichette circulated a draft of a Preservation Restriction for this property, which includes an historic house and barn with attached carriage house and greenhouse. The grantor would be Gillian M. Aguilar and the grantee would be the Town of Belmont, represented by its agent, the Historic District Commission. A state agency, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, would be a signatory to the agreement.

In order to preserve the open, agricultural quality of this former farmstead, members suggested that language be added to the draft that would specify those aspects of the landscape that need to be preserved. To help the Aguilars and their lawyer add the appropriate clauses to the agreement, a memo drafted on January 31 by Arleyn Levee describing the salient features of the landscape will be forwarded to the Aguilars.

#### PLEASANT STREET RECONSTRUCTION

Sharon Vanderslice and Michael Smith are discussing wiring and lighting design with the Municipal Light Department. No PWED grant money is available from the state to bury the wires during reconstruction, but the Light Department has said that it may be able to bury the primary circuits (the high wires) between Leonard Street and Concord Avenue in existing conduit. This would require that one transformer be pad-mounted on the ground. The HDC has requested that the existing cobra-style lighting fixtures be replaced with metal-halide, full cut-off fixtures that illuminate only the street and sidewalk. Tim McCarthy and Tim Richardson of the Light Department will engage a lighting designer to recommend possible replacement fixtures for the 50 or 60 lights along Pleasant Street, some of which are beginning to fail. (The new fixtures would be mounted on existing poles.) These recommendations will be reviewed by Smith and Vanderslice at a

subsequent meeting this spring. McCarthy said that full or partial cut-off fixtures would need to be hung at more frequent intervals than the existing fixtures in order to adequately light the roadway.

Arthur Wolfson of 737 Pleasant Street said he had three remaining concerns about the reconstruction project:

- 1) He is worried that the new stone walls to be constructed along one portion of the street will look nothing like the old ones. He recently paid a visit to Route 62 in North Reading, where the state is widening and reconstructing the roadbed. He noted “an uncomfortable marriage” there of old walls with new ones and wants to avoid this on Pleasant Street.
- 2) He is concerned that many privately-owned trees are not marked on the plan. He fears that these could be cut down during reconstruction and the state would not be required to replace them. He asked how this could be prevented.
- 3) He objects to the excessive number of “No Parking” signs marked on the plan: 10 between Concord Avenue and the Clark Street Bridge alone. He has spoken with Sgt. Hamilton of the Belmont Police Department, who agrees that this number is unnecessary. He asked the Commission to help reduce this visual clutter.

There was insufficient time to review the minutes of the February meeting. They will be reviewed at the Commission’s next meeting on Wednesday, April 2, 2003, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall.

*Minutes recorded by Sharon Vanderslice.*