

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
April 19, 2007**

7:30 p.m. Meeting called to order.

Attendance: Karl Haglund, Chair; Andrew McClurg; Jennifer Fallon; Sami Baghdady; Andres Rojas; Jay Szklut, Staff; Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff

Minutes of March 27 were approved.

Jay reported that he had been contacted by McLean Hospital that the ledge face at the bottom of the new Olmsted Drive was ready for inspection. Jay could not find any reference in the decision to the ledge face and was trying to identify exactly what it is that he should be inspecting. Mr. Haglund and Mr. McClurg could not recall the specific issue and suggested that Jay contact Joseph Burrell, former member and chair of the Board. Jay will do so.

Committee Updates

Traffic Advisory Committee - Mr. McClurg noted that the Committee would be hosting a public meeting on May 3 to finalize the 25% design plan for the Trapelo/Belmont Corridor.

7:40 p.m. Update - Senior Center Building Committee

Karen Pressey distributed a revised landscape plan. The new plan relocates the generator, removes the dumpster, and labels the parking spaces in the rear of the building as "compact." The Board acknowledged the efforts of the Building Committee to modify the site plan. Mr. Rojas noted to the committee that an actual site plan stamped by a civil engineer would be required for final approval. Mr. Haglund questioned the labeling of compact parking spaces at the entrance to the parking area. These had not previously been labeled as compact and the landscape plan shows no dimensions for these spaces thus making it difficult to determine whether the label is needed. The Board requested the building committee to provide a stamped site plan with the dimensional information to be provided. The Building Committee agreed to meet with the architect to inform him that a stamped site plan is needed. The Board then briefly discussed whether the entire Board needed to review the final site plan or whether the authority to sign the site plan approval could be delegated to Mr. Haglund and Mr. Rojas upon receipt of the final site plan.

Moved by Fallon to delegate to Mr. Haglund and Mr. Rojas the authority to sign final approval of the Senior Center site plan review on behalf of the Planning Board .

Second by Rojas

Approved Unanimously

8:00 p.m. Discussion - Comprehensive Planning

Board members commented on the most recent draft of the memo authored by Ms. Fallon. Jay distributed data on the status of Master Plans among municipalities in the region. He also distributed copies of the Table of Contents from two representative plans. Mr. McClurg felt that

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there needed to be an increased emphasis on the scope and purpose of a comprehensive plan. There was again some discussion on the purpose of developing a Master Plan for the Town. The Board reached a general consensus that there is a need to examine the "larger" picture of where the Town is heading and for example how the Town should think about 'density' in its future planning. Ms. Fallon will provide another revised draft for comments to be received no later than April 27, 2007.

8:20 p.m. Discussion - Transition Zones

The Board scheduled the Trapelo Road walk for May 8, 2007 at 4:30 PM. Members will meet at the CVS on Trapelo Road. The Board will adjourn at 6:30 for dinner and reconvene at 7:30 at Town Hall for their regularly scheduled meeting.

8:30 p.m. PUBLIC HEARING: CITIZEN PETITION AMENDMENT TO ZONING BY-LAW

1. Allow conversion of public buildings smaller than 10,000 sq. ft. to residential use in all zoning districts limited to a maximum of three units

The Chairman opened the public hearing on a proposed zoning amendment filed via citizen petition. Mr. McClurg read the public notice.

Stephen Chung of Urbanica, sponsors of the amendment, presented an overview of what the amendment would allow to happen at the Harvard lawn fire station. He informed the Board that the additional unit would allow a better restoration of the historic structure. The design calls for three 1 and 2 bedroom units rather than two 4 bedroom units as currently conceived.

The Board questioned how many buildings this zoning change would affect. Staff provided a list of municipal owned structures less than 10,000 square feet in size. Ms. Fallon noted that the school administration building and the White field house were not included on the list. Staff would research these two buildings but in any case it was highly unlikely that either of those buildings or the other buildings on the list would be affected by the proposed zoning change.

Mr. Haglund opened the meeting to public comment.

Dan LeClerc, 36 Beckett Road - requested information on how this would affect density of the neighborhood.

Mr. Rojas responded that because the number of bedrooms would be reduced, the additional unit would actually result in reduced density.

Jeffrey provided information on average lot sizes and number of units per lot in the neighborhood. This project at three units would result in a larger lot size per unit than currently exists, i.e. reduced density.

Joe White, Precinct 4 - Requested information on the timing of the amendment and why the sponsor did not request a variance or special permit to obtain a third unit.

Jeffrey explained that the Town does not allow use variances and therefore the only method for allowing a third unit at this site is through a zoning change.

Cynthia Fields-Belanger, 17 Newton St. - concerned that the new units would be too small and that condo owners do not shovel their sidewalks during winter snowstorms.

There were no further comments from the public.

Moved by Baghdady to close the public hearing.

Second by Rojas

Approved Unanimously

Mr. Baghdady stated that he was opposed to the amendment. He felt that the Town had made it clear that only two units were to be developed on this site and should an increase in units be approved, the Town should benefit from the increased value.

Several other Board members voiced their concerns with the process the Town utilized to sell the property but felt that the proposed amendment would yield a better project for the neighborhood and the Town. Mr. Haglund wondered whether there had been sufficient public notification and input. Jay reminded the Board that this was a citizen's petition, the proponent had notified residents and held a meeting at the site, and the amendment had been discussed two nights previously at the League of Women voters/Warrant Committee meetings. It was further noted that approval of the amendment meant that the project would need to go before the Planning Board for site plan review.

Several members also noted that the amendment really applied to only one building. Jeffrey reminded the Board that the original by-law had been crafted specifically for the Waverley Fire Station and that in reality public buildings most likely needed to be treated on a case by case business. They are unique and do not lend themselves to a standard redevelopment formula.

Moved by Rojas to vote favorable action of the citizen's petition amendment

Second by Fallon

Moved by McClurg to amend motion by adding a statement that the process that allowed the zoning to not be addressed prior to the issuance of the RFP should not be repeated

Second by Fallon

Approved Unanimously

Amended motion approved unanimously.

9:50 p.m. Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 8, 2007 (following Trapelo walk)
Town Hall, Conference Room 2

5/2/07 Approved