

TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
May 27, 2009

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7:02 p.m. Meeting called to order.

Attendance: Jenny Fallon, Chair; Karl Haglund; Sami Baghdady; Andres Rojas; Carla Moynihan; Jay Szklut and Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff.

Minutes of May 13, 2009 were approved as presented

Belmont Housing Trust - Ms. Moynihan reported that the Housing Trust had received the request to appoint a member or two to the Inclusionary Zoning study committee.

Staff reported that work on the patio area of the fire station is complete.

7:16 pm PUBLIC HEARING – Oakley Neighborhood Proposed 40R Development

Ms. Fallon reads the public hearing notice.

Attorney Dan Harrington speaking for the applicant introduces the development team and provides a brief overview of the proposed project. Harrington notes that the proposed project seeks a waiver from the number of allowed curb cuts on Lawndale St.; one is allowed and the applicant seeks two.

The project engineer, Jack Sullivan, reviewed the site plan, and described the storm water system. Mr. Sullivan noted that the proposed plan decreased the amount of impervious surface by 33% from that currently existing. As a result, no changes to the existing system are proposed. At the former senior center site, runoff from the new buildings would be piped into the existing storm drain catch basins. At the 15 Lawndale site, two curb-cuts allows parking in garages under the building, removing the need for paved parking behind the building as currently exists. Additionally, all project utilities will be placed underground.

The developer, Ron Lopez addressed landscaping, building design and affordability issues. He noted that no trees were to be removed as a result of the project. Two affordable units were planned for building A with the 3rd unit incorporated into the structures on the parking lot. All townhouse units would be 3br, 2½ bath. The two single family homes would be 4 br, 2½ bath. The new structure proposed for 15 Lawndale would be a close replica of the existing building. In response to some concerns raised at their meetings with the neighborhood, several garage units would be designed with a carriage house style of door. The project proposes no grade changes with the exception of the 15 Lawndale structure where there would need to be a change to access the proposed garages. This would result in the need for a 2 ft retaining wall.

Attorney Harrington concluded the presentation noting that the contamination on site due to a leaking oil tank necessitated the demolition of the 15 Lawndale building.

Michael Smith from the Historic District Commission submits a letter to the Board regarding the demolition of the 15 Lawndale structure. He also comments on the grade to the garages proposed under the plans.

Mr. Rojas expressed his concern with the failure to include a licensed architect or a registered landscape architect in the designs of the proposed project.

Mr. Haglund also expressed a concern with the slope leading to the garage doors. He noted the recent zoning change to prevent steep slopes leading to garages under the principal structure.

Elizabeth Gibson, 15 Oakley Road noted that the Oakley Neighborhood Association would be meeting over the next few days to review the project proposal and would have comments prepared for the next meeting.

Moved by Mr. Rojas to continue the meeting to June 24, 2009 @7:15 PM in the Board of Selectmens Meeting Room, Town Hall.

Seconded by Mr. Baghdady

Motion passed unanimously

8:13 p.m. Discussion – Climate Action Plan w/ Sustainable Belmont

Jan Kruse, John McAlpin and Jennifer Paige from Sustainable Belmont presented the draft climate action plan and asked for comments from Board members on recommendations related to zoning changes and other areas of Board interest. The Board requested some type of prioritization of the plan elements. Also, it would be helpful to have some recommendations specific to zoning for energy use (i.e. regulating solar panels) as well as more detailed and specific suggestions for goals or actions to be considered for the Comprehensive Plan.

The Board was asked if any elements of the CAP were antithetical to the comprehensive plan as is being developed. Board members felt that the two plans complemented one another.

8:52 p.m. 5-minute recess

8:57 p.m. Discussion – Waverley Square Rezoning

Members briefly discussed how to proceed with the Waverley Square rezoning initiative. A public meeting with residents was tentatively scheduled for June 23. The purpose of the meeting is to foster a discussion with as broad as possible a group of residents about appropriate changes for the Square and focusing on one part of Waverley Square to develop appropriate zoning regulations. Staff will report to the Board at the June 10th meeting on a proposed strategy.

9:31 p.m. Discussion – Potential Zoning Articles

Major Development by-law – Staff recommends that this by-law be removed. The by-law essentially places control of any development over 40,000 sq. ft. before Town Meeting. However, it does not seem that this is a reasonable role for Town Meeting. The by-law discourages large developments by delegating authority over a project to a policy setting body rather than a regulatory body. Board members generally agreed with the staff analysis. There was some discussion about whether this potential by-law change would be proposed as part of a comprehensive set of changes or as a stand-alone amendment. Staff will draft proposed zoning amendments for Board consideration.

Building Set-back lines – Staff recommended removal of these pre-zoning regulations for siting of buildings. Essentially these duplicate the set-backs established for zoning districts. Ms. Fallon recommended tackling the lines affecting residential properties as a possible first step as those regulating commercial properties often generated intense discussion. Staff

however felt that because the residential districts are built out, conflicts with the building set back lines rarely arose in those areas. However, in commercial districts where current thought is to eliminate setbacks from street lines, the building setbacks could conflict with quality commercial center development. Staff will present more detailed data for next meeting.

9:48 p.m. Meeting Adjourns

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 10, 2009
7:00 p.m., Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Hall

6/10/09 Minutes Approved