

TOWN OF BELMONT  
PLANNING BOARD

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MEETING MINUTES  
July 10, 2012

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**7:00 p.m. Meeting called to order.**

Attendance: Sami Baghdady, Chair; Michael Battista, Vice Chair; Charles Clark, Joseph DeStefano (recused himself before the continued public hearing of the Cushing Village application), Karl Haglund (arrived at 7:15 p.m.); Andres Rojas, Liaison to the Board of Selectmen; Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff

The agenda was re-ordered so that Mr. DeStefano could participate before recusing himself prior to the continuation of the public hearing on the Cushing Village application.

**7:00 p.m. The Woodlands at Belmont Hill – Request to reduce road surety**

Mr. Wheeler stated that the bond to construct the road at The Woodlands has to be renewed and the developers are requesting a reduction in the amount of the bond. Mr. Wheeler gave a brief overview of the status of the roadways and stated that he and Ara Yogurtian, Resident Engineer for the Town, conducted a site visit. Mr. Yogurtian recommended the bond be reduced to \$150,000 since one of the roads needs a top coat and another one needs to be constructed.

Mr. Moore, Director of Construction for Northland Residential (the developer) stated that the original road bond was obtained back in 2007 and that ninety percent of the road work was complete - the utilities were installed in the roadway and they are expected to be complete in November. He added that sales have been good and he expects to complete housing construction within the next year or so. Mr. Moore stated that Northland supported a reduction of the bond to \$150,000 as recommended by the Town Engineer.

**Moved by Mr. Clark to reduce the amount of the road surety bond to \$150,000. Mr. Baghdady seconded the motion.  
Motion passed unanimously.**

**7:10 p.m. Election of the Planning Board Officers**

Mr. Baghdady asked whether the Board wanted to elected officers or wait for the Board's vacancy to be filled. Mr. Rojas stated that the Board of Selectmen could appoint the new Planning Board member at its next meeting on August 13th. The Board agreed to wait until the vacancy was filled and to vote on the officers in September.

**7:15 p.m. Committee Updates**

Mr. Clark reported on two issues under review by the Housing Trust, both involving the Inclusionary Housing Zoning By-Law. First, the Trust agreed that formal regulations should be put into place in order to implement the Inclusionary Housing Zoning By-Law. Second, the Trust agreed that the Inclusionary Housing Zoning By-Law did not apply to all developments

recently completed. Mr. Clark added that the Housing Trust continues to look for sites to develop.

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### **Approval of Minutes**

**Moved by Mr. Battista to approve the minutes of April 10, 2012 (morning meeting).  
Seconded by Mr. Clark.  
Motion passed.**

**Moved by Mr. Battista to approve the minutes of April 10, 2012 (evening meeting).  
Seconded by Mr. DeStefano.  
Motion passed.**

**Moved by Mr. Clark to approve the minutes of April 12, 2012. Seconded by Mr. Battista.  
Motion passed.**

**Moved by Mr. Battista to approve the minutes of April 17, 2012 (morning meeting).  
Seconded by Mr. DeStefano.  
Motion passed.**

### **7:20 p.m. Public Hearing Continued: Cushing Village Application**

Mark Donahue, attorney for the Applicant, reviewed the latest site plan based on his understanding of the comments by members of the Board at the last public hearing. He stated that the Hyland Building would have a 3 story appearance on Belmont Street and Horne Road. The Pomona Building would maintain the setback in line with the residences on Horne Road and there would be a step back on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors. The Winslow Building would have the appearance of a three story building.

Mr. Rodin, architect for the Applicant, reviewed in more detail specific changes with the Hyland Building. He stated that the Hyland Building had been pushed into the hill to reduce its height which allowed for the creation of a 3 story building; the tower was lowered by 2 feet, and the portion of the building on Horne Road is 2 ½ stories. Additionally, Mr. Rodin added that there was an 8 foot setback on Horne Road and 14-15 foot setback on Common Street.

Mr. Clark asked how many apartments were proposed for the Hyland building. Mr. Rodin responded that the actual number has not been determined since the layouts have not been defined. Mr. Clark then asked how many square feet of residential space was proposed. Mr. Quinn responded that a small amount of livable area has changed, though not substantially. Mr. Steven Heikin of ICON Architecture, peer review consultant, stated that there were approximately 41 units.

Mr. Baghdady questioned whether or not there would be a 5<sup>th</sup> floor on the Hyland Building because of the topography. Mr. Rodin stated that there would not be one. He also stated in this new presentation there was a breakdown of mass in the building. Mr. Baghdady responded that it still felt congested to him and still felt like too many stories in height. Mr. Haglund stated that

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he was more comfortable with the ICON Architecture approach that was presented to the Board at the prior public hearing. Mr. Clark stated he was concerned about the mass of the building. He said this reminded him of trying to put something too big into a smaller box and that it keeps spilling over. He noted that the architecture keeps changing, but does not know if the size is actually changing. Mr. Battista said he would like the balcony facing Horne Road to be stepped back 8 feet.

Mr. Baghdady asked the Board Members if they were happy with this presentation on bulk, size and mass or happy with the ICON presentation. Mr. Rojas stated that although this design was significantly better, he felt that the ICON envelope was better than what they were presented with tonight. Mr. Baghdady agreed that he also liked the ICON envelope better.

Mr. Donahue stated that the discussion on June 26 centered on pulling the building back. Mr. Rojas stated that the ICON envelope reacts to setbacks on Horne Road and Common Street much better than currently proposed. Mr. Rodin stated that they could go further to respond to setbacks.

Mr. Haglund wondered if any of the images being presented had been posted on line. He stated he felt uncomfortable with making a decision right now and felt that more time was needed to give people a chance to see them and discuss the plans and elevation.

Mr. Battista suggested deeper balconies and deeper setbacks.

Mr. Baghdady summarized the Board's thoughts stating that the Applicant was right direction, but not with respect to the Horne Road setbacks.

Mr. Rodin then reviewed the gateway to Horne Road. He stated that the entrance was widened; the cornices on both the Hyland and Pomona Buildings were aligned; and there would be an alignment of the height. Mr. Haglund stated that he did not feel that these two buildings should be treated equally and that the Hyland should be subservient to the Pomona building and as such should not have aligning cornices or height.

Mr. Baghdady stated that the Planning Board's direction to the Applicant is that ICON recommendations needed to be incorporated more into the proposal. Mr. Rojas agreed and added that the setback on Horne Road should be greater.

Mr. Donahue stated that on the Winslow Building, the entire 4<sup>th</sup> floor had been eliminated. Mr. Quinn added that the mass of the Winslow Building had been reduced by 5 percent. They presented several design options incorporating a half story with dormers and other various bump outs. Mr. Heikin stated that because of the strong desire of the Planning Board not to have a 4<sup>th</sup> floor, the Applicant tried to incorporate a half story. He questioned how pleasant those units were in the half story. Also, Mr. Heiken stated that trying to squeeze a fourth floor within the Winslow, while trying to make it look like a three story building, just does not work. The building looks too cramped and jammed.

Mr. Rojas stated that the presentation on the Winslow was less successful than the Hyland. He

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stated that the design of the building looked like a box and that it was too tall, and that the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> floors look cramped and squeezed. He added that the Winslow should be a straight 3 story building and that he thought that the Board had always been clear about that.

Mr. Donahue stated that the Planning Board's recommendation was not ignored, but rather this was a work in progress. Mr. Baghdady stated that all along the Board has said that the Winslow should be 3 stories. Mr. Haglund agreed and added that 4 stories will have too much of an impact on Williston Road. He further added that the Planning Board has been open to the possibility of a half story, but having seen several schemes, he is not persuaded. Mr. Baghdady agreed with Mr. Haglund. Mr. Donahue stated that the half story is critical to the development. Mr. Rojas stated that the Board all along did not want three 4 story buildings on this site, and suggested eliminating the half story. Mr. Baghdady felt that the loss of that ½ story on the Winslow was not significant.

Mr. Rojas reminded the Applicant that the recommendations on setbacks for the Pomona had not been followed. Mr. Quinn responded that the setbacks for the first story of the Pomona will be 8 feet and the second story setback will be 15 feet; and that a larger entry off Horne Road will be created. Mr. Donahue asked if the Board was open to the idea of a vestibule. Mr. Baghdady asked to have the entrance begin at the setback line. He stated that the corridor should be a pedestrian open space and reminded the Applicant that open space is very important, and urged the developers to look at the ICON recommendations.

Based on the discussion this evening, Mr. Donahue stated that the Applicant will need to evaluate whether or not it intends to proceed with the project. He said that the Planning Board will get a letter from him by the first week of August regarding the Applicant's willingness to proceed.

**Moved by Mr. Haglund to continue the public hearing to September 11, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.  
Motion was seconded by Mr. Battista.  
Motion passes.**

**Adjournment: 9:00 p.m.**