

TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

July 14, 2010

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BELMONT, MA.

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7:06 p.m. Meeting called to order.

Attendance: Jenny Fallon, Chair; Andres Rojas; Sami Baghdady, Karl Haglund (arrived at 8:00 PM); Jay Szklut and Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff.

Minutes of June 21, 2010 and June 23, 2010 were approved.

The Board agreed to cancel the scheduled August meetings.

7:10 p.m. Deliberations – 30 Somerset Street Special Permit

The applicant appeared at the meeting and informed the Board that there would be a transfer of ownership from her children back to the applicant thereby establishing the applicant as the owner.

Given the new development, the Board members felt they could approve the project subject to submission of appropriate legal documents.

The meeting was continued until Mr. Haglund arrived so a vote of 4 members, as needed for a special permit, would be possible.

7:15 p.m. Discussion – Incorporating Design into Zoning

Following up on the Board approved action, as noted in the June 9, 2010 minutes, staff introduced Chris Klutchman of Eaton Planning who has been hired by the Office of Community Development to discuss with the Board various approaches to incorporating a stronger design component into the Town's Zoning By-Laws.

Ms. Klutchman presented a memo to the Board outlining 5 approaches to incorporate design into zoning. These approaches are not mutually exclusive. Two approaches deal with the use of design standards or guidelines while the remaining three focus on approaches to the review process.

Mr. Rojas suggested that the design criteria needs to be incorporated within the Town's Design and Site Plan Review By-law. Mr. Baghdady agreed that the Town's current Design and Site Plan Review By-law is "weak" and needs to be amended to, at a minimum, include design criteria.

Another suggestion by Mr. Rojas was to include illustrations of the design criteria. This would give residents and developers more certainty in the design review process. Board members generally agreed that more pictures would help clarify design standards.

The Board was asked to review the memo and to be prepared at the first meeting in September with further questions and thoughts. Discussion to be continued September 8, 2010

8:25 p.m. Deliberations – 30 Somerset Street Special Permit (cont) (Mr. Haglund now present)

Moved by Mr. Rojas to approve conversion of the Historic Accessory Structure, a carriage house, at 30 Somerset Street for use as a dwelling unit subject to submission of documents providing satisfactory evidence of ownership by the party which will be residing in the primary residence and conditions as specified in the written decision on file in the Office of Community Development.

**Seconded by Mr. Baghdady
Motion passed unanimously**

8:30 p.m. Discussion – Implementing the Comprehensive Plan

Staff submitted a list of action items/recommendations included in the comprehensive plan. Several of these items were to be considered for policy development or future action. The items were divided according to the Board or Committee that would have the major responsibility for implementation.

There was considerable discussion among Board members on what the next steps for implementation should be and whether the Board should “slow down” to allow the community time to review and understand the comprehensive plan.

Concern was noted by Mr. Baghdady and Mr. Rojas that the plan contained several areas of disagreement and that the Board should meet with the community to resolve those issues prior to proceeding with implementation. Both Mr. Rojas and Mr. Baghdady were concerned that the plan had not been adopted by Town Meeting and Mr. Rojas felt that the plan should be. Mr. Haglund interjected that he was content with just the 9 major recommendations, as had been presented in the resolution, gaining acceptance by Town Meeting. Comprehensive plans by nature will contain controversial items and thereby create many groups opposed to a specific item thereby making it highly difficult for the plan in its entirety to be approved by Town Meeting.

There was consensus that the Board needed additional time to review the list, rank items from short to long term in priority, and consider next steps. Board to email comments to staff with further discussion scheduled for September.

9:10 p.m. Discussion – South Pleasant Street Draft Zoning Amendment

Staff presented a map outlining a proposed “light industrial” district for South Pleasant Street that included all of the current LB II zoned property with the exception of the Shaw’s Supermarket site. Also presented was a revised description of the district including purpose, allowed uses, and some dimensional considerations.

Mr. Baghdady questioned whether the Board should consider rezoning at the same time as the feasibility of consolidating the two train stations was under study. Staff noted that design and build of a new train station, if feasible, is connected to the potential use allowed above the train

station. That use is the subject of a rezoning and is independent of whether a train station locates below any proposed building.

Mr. Baghdady once again noted that the use of the term "light industrial" for the name of the district causes concern among some residents. In response, Ms. Fallon asked the Board whether a different name should be used and the Board recommended a name change to the "South Pleasant Street Zoning District."

Mr. Rojas asked why Staff was not recommending residential and restaurant as allowed uses. Staff noted that in their professional opinion, based on existing uses and traffic, and the size and location of the parcels, residential use was not appropriate. Staff also noted that it was likely that only a destination restaurant would locate on Pleasant Street. It was unlikely that a destination restaurant would create pedestrian traffic that would enhance the vitality of either Waverley Square or Belmont Center. Further, a destination restaurant would certainly increase the traffic load on Belmont Street. Finally, given the desire to attract restaurants to Waverley Square and Belmont Center, a destination restaurant on Pleasant Street would likely have a negative impact on those commercial districts rather than positive.

Ms. Fallon asked for further discussion on whether the current Waverley Landscaping parcel should be included in the new district. Mr. Haglund noted that any changes to the South Pleasant zoning should take into consideration the bike path coming through the McLean property onto Pleasant Street.

The Board was again asked to submit to staff questions and comments on the rezoning as none had been received previously.

9:40 p.m. Town Planners' Report

Open Meeting Law – Staff advised the Board that copies of a guide to the new open meeting law is available on the Town's web site and the Attorney General's website.

Belmont Center Transportation Study – Staff disseminated a copy of the scope of services provided to the consultant working on the Center Transportation Study.

Waverley Square Study – Staff disseminated a copy of the Waverley Square: Commercial Market and Development Analysis.

9:55 p.m. Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 28, 2010, 7:00 p.m., Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Hall

List of Documents presented:

- Memorandum from Eaton Planning re: Incorporating Design in Zoning
- Staff List of Comprehensive Plan Action Items
- Staff draft of a Light Industrial Zoning District
- Belmont Center Transportation and Parking Study draft scope of services
- Copy of Waverley Square Commercial Market and Development Analysis

7/28/10 - MINUTES APPROVED