

PLANNING BOARD MEETING

Minutes, July 20, 2004
Selectmen's Meeting Room

Members present: Joseph Barrell, Deborah Emello, Karl Haglund, Andrew McClurg
Members absent: James Heigham

Also present: Tim Higgins, Senior Planner

7:05 p.m. There being a quorum Chairman Barrell opened the meeting.

1. General Business

- The minutes from June 29th were approved 4:0 with no corrections.
- Tim Higgins provided the Board with an update on the Belmont Uplands 40B Eligibility application that the Town replied to on June 29th. A seven page reply with an additional 113 pages of attachments was sent to MassDevelopment opposing the application. A copy of the reply with all of the attachments has been placed on the OCD website. No date has been set for the required site inspection nor is the date of a final reply from Mass Development known. Tim Higgins will keep the Board apprised.
- Tim Higgins provided a brief update on the status of the telecommunication tower at McLean. A building permit has been applied for and will be acted upon in less than two weeks. He is working closely with McLean, Town Counsel and the vendor, Tower Ventures II from Rhode Island

7:10 p.m. Public Hearing continuance on the Waverley Square rezoning option.

Ms. Emello read the public hearing notice. T. Higgins noted that the final report from the Waverley Square Fire Station Re-Use Committee will be filed with the Board of selectmen at the end of the week. Thus, the hearing should be continued until Board members and the public have an opportunity to review it. A brief discussion ensued about possible improvements to Waverley Square and possibly making it a "gateway" into the community. Karl Haglund reported a small group is looking at public improvements in this area. The use of McLean funds was mentioned. There are proposed sidewalk improvements within the plans according to Tim Higgins. These plans are being further developed now.

It was voted 4:0 to continue the hearing to 7:15 p.m. on August 31 after the report has been filed by the Waverley Square Fire Station Re-Use Committee.

7:15 p.m. Public Hearing was opened on the proposal for 454 Common Street restaurant proposal in the LBI zoning district.

Deborah Emello read the public hearing notice. Attorney Michael Kelley was present on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Kelley presented a petition to convert a portion of the building at 454 Common Street into a European style café. This request requires design and Site Plan Review as it requires five (5) new parking spaces. There is no room on site so parking will occur on the street and in the municipal lot on Trapelo road. There is ample on-street parking for the new use. Hours of operations would be from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Sunday. Refuse removal would occur off-hours by agreement with BFI Inc. Public comments then followed:

Loretta Thomas, Belmont Pet Shop, 447 Common Street stated that there is not sufficient on-street parking in Cushing Square. 3-4 additional parking spaces will be a problem.

Sue McDonough, 86 Palfrey Road also noted that parking is a problem on Saturday.

Tomi Olson, 10 Bay State Road, never found a problem to park to patronize the Salon.

Sue Bass, Concord Avenue believes there will be a need for a deck on the existing Cushing Square parking lot. She would like the business folks to help with the cost of this when that is done.

Alice Shann, Watertown, said parking is fine and walks to the square.

Nancy Simms, Woburn believes that restaurant patrons will be already within the building at the Salon.

Matt Hausmann, 87 Richmond Road read from the Vision Statement adopted by Town Meeting and believes the use “fits” into the objectives. Further, the proposed use fills a real need in the square and he strongly supports the petition.

Lillian ? a resident from 279 Payson Road, supports the proposal and can find a place to park.

Katherine Kline, 33 Clyde Street ,supports the proposal. Parking enforcement is good so the problem is not bad. Supports new, small businesses in Town.

Alice ? from 3 Payson Road, said parking is not an issue, the business is a good one and is positive for the Square.

Grace Callegian, Watertown shops in Cushing Square and supports the proposal and has no problem finding parking.

Rafael, a Cushing Square businessman, said parking is not a problem in the Square.

Dr. Martin ? from Boston said he has never experienced a problem parking in the Square and believes the proposed café will enhance business in the Square.

Nancy Marsh, a Cushing Square resident, supports the petition.

Mary ? a resident from 430 Common Street, disagreed and stated that there is a parking problem.

Deborah Emello asked about the total number of seats (16) and employees (4). Even when tables are moved outside in good weather, 16 seats will remain constant. Mr. Kelley then answered several questions from Chairman Barrell from a memorandum from member James Heigham who was not present. Vendors will be required to service the restaurant during the early morning.

George Moussallem, 18 Stults Rd supports the petition and does not think a quick hair cut will cause a parking problem. Supports a café and outside table to promote walking to the square and people to the area.

Cindy ? from Common Street supports the proposal and believes the restaurant and the properties are good for the square.

Carroll Tarry, a Belmont resident for 40 years, supports new businesses where so many are leaving.

Stacy from Common Street business person is concerned about parking problems.
7:50 p.m. There being no further comments or questions, the Board closed the public hearing and took the issue under advisement.

7:50 p.m. Demolition Moratorium

Chairman Barrell read correspondence from Marion Cote concerning the Planning Board response to the demolition by-law. Ms. Cote was present. She is concerned that a fall Town Meeting is rushing the issue and that the Board should take its time.

Karl Haglund believes the issue is important and wants neighborhood's comment before a September meeting of the board. Karl Haglund believes in waiting to hear from everyone before action is taken.

Tim Higgins requested additional guidance from Ms. Cote and the Board so he can provide additional information for the future public hearings. The Office of Community Development has created the 6/21/04 memo which is on the web site. It sets the stage for the initial discussion on this issue.

Karl Haglund would like to see examples of what has already occurred. He would like pictures posted on the internet of before and after photos of demolitions that have resulted in complaints. He has a problem with the garage doors with paving taking up the front

yard. Andy McClurg questioned the density/affordable housing issue. That needs to be addressed as well.

Deborah Emello would like to investigate all of the options and identify the real problems. She wants to reach consensus before considering options. It is not just a Waverley Square area issue.

David Johnson questioned how many teardowns have occurred. Tim Higgins noted there were 6 in 2003, 3 in 2002 and 5 in 2001. Contrarily, Wellesley experienced 26, 28 and 38 over the same time periods. This is not yet a big problem in his opinion.

Jennifer Page asked if mansionization was a problem. It does not appear to be now. Belmont does not generally have sufficient lot area to construct mansions.

Discussion ended when it was agreed that there would not be a public hearing on the issue until the fall. T. Higgins asked that any requests for additional information be forwarded to OCD.

8:45 p.m. The Salon De Paris application was then discussed. Karl Haglund believes long term parking is important but the 5 spaces requested is not a big deal. Mr. Haglund supports the petition. Deborah Emello believes the café is not a “destination”. Most of the clientele is there today.

Andy McClurg believes the problem is a good one to have (re: thriving businesses with folks looking for parking). Joe Barrell observed that he is in Cushing Square often and never has a problem finding a space in the public lot. If there is a parking problem it cannot be resolved by not approving the waiver for 5 spaces. A brief discussion ensued. Andy McClurg then moved to approve the petition and waive the 5 required spaces. The motion was approved on a 4:0 vote. Deborah Emello will draft the decision.

8:55 p.m. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting of the Board is on August 31, 2004.