

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

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**MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 27, 2012**

JAN 23 2 30 PM '13

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

Attendance: Sami Baghdady, Chair; Michael Battista, Vice Chair; Charles Clark, Joseph DeStefano and Elizabeth Allison; Karl Haglund, Associate Member; Andres Rojas, Liaison to the Board of Selectmen; and Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff

7:05 p.m. Continuation of Public Hearing: Cushing Village Application

Mr. Baghdady read a letter from the Applicant requesting a continuance of the public hearing to October 9, 2012 in order to continue work on the plans and the economic impact analysis.

Moved by Mr. Battista to continue the public hearing to October 9, 2012 at 7:00 pm.

Seconded by Mr. Clark.

Motion passes.

7:05 p.m. Public Hearing – Request to Modify Site Plan Approval for 58-70 Concord Avenue

Mr. Battista read the public hearing notice.

Paul Finger, representing the Applicant Robert Orphaly, stated that the Municipal Light Department had determined after the final site plan approval that an electrical transformer was needed on site for the project. The transformer is located within the Applicant's property along Bright Road, between the sidewalk and the parking area. Mr. Finger stated that other locations for the transformer would have resulted in a loss of parking spaces. Additionally, Mr. Finger proposed the following modifications to the site plan:

1. Decrease the number of street trees along Concord Avenue from five to four, based on the request of the Fire Department.
2. Keep the street light at the corner of Concord Avenue and Bright Street in its current location, based on the request of the Light Department.
3. Replace Madam Lemoine Lilacs with Mariesii Viburnum and Mt. Airy Fothergilla plantings.
4. Move a street tree from Bright Road to within the parking area.

Mr. Battista commended the Applicant on the progress of the project, but stated that the location of the transformer was unfortunate. He urged the Applicant to provide better screening for it. Mr. Baghdady agreed with Mr. Battista and added that he would prefer plantings which will screen the transformer year-round from the street view. Mr. DeStefano suggested the use of evergreen trees to screen the transformer.

Mr. Rojas told the Applicant he understood the Fire Department's request to decrease the number of trees from 5 to 4, but suggested that the Town should still receive five trees. He suggested that the Applicant donate the fifth tree to the Tree Warden for planting in another location in Town.

Comments from the Audience

1. Kathy Philips, 31 Bright Road, stated that she lived diagonally across the street from the property. She did not want to view the transformer from her property, and would like it moved. She added that she is concerned about the possible health effects of the transformer, and inquired whether it would emit electromagnetic radiation. Mr. Finger responded that the transformer would be screened by evergreens so it would not be visible from her property. He added that he was not aware of any specific health effects associated with this type of transformer.
2. Kaspar Torosian, owner of 51 Concord Avenue, asked if the transformer hindered cell phone reception. He noted the poor reception in the area. Mr. Finger responded that he was not aware of transformers interfering with cellular reception. Mr. Haglund noted that there are dead spots throughout Belmont and that coverage varies from cell provider to cell provider and from town to town.

**Moved by Mr. Battista to close the Public Hearing. Seconded by Mr. Clark.
Motion passes.**

Discussion ensued among the members. Mr. DeStefano felt that the transformer should be screened with evergreens. Mr. Battista noted as the plantings mature and get taller, they will do a better job of screening the parking lot. Mr. Baghdady recommended that the Planning Board approve the modified site plan with the following conditions:

1. The tree that is being eliminated would be donated to the Town for planting elsewhere within the Town;
2. Evergreens will be planted around the transformer, to provide year-round screening of visibility from Bright Road and Concord Avenue; and
3. The conditions will be enforced by the Inspector of Buildings, to eliminate ambiguity about enforcement.

**Moved by Mr. DeStefano to modify the site plan with the conditions outlined above.
Seconded by Mr. Clark.
Motion passes.**

7:50 p.m. Public Hearing – Design and Site Plan Review for the Construction of a Commercial Building at 307 Trapelo Road

Mr. Battista read the public hearing notice.

Mr. DeStefano disclosed he owns a commercial property on Flett Road, within the public hearing notice area. Mr. Baghdady asked the applicant's attorney, Mark Vaughan, whether Mr. DeStefano should recuse himself from the public hearing. Mr. Vaughan stated that there was no objection to Mr. DeStefano participating in the public hearing as a voting member of the Board.

Mr. Baghdady next raised a procedural matter. He noted that the Applicant was not the owner of the property, and that no documentation (such as a lease) was submitted to show that the Applicant had standing to apply for permits. Mr. Baghdady requested a letter from the owner of the property, authorizing the Applicant to apply for permits to construct the improvements on the site.

Attorney Vaughn, representing the Applicant, gave a brief outline of the presentation. He noted that the site is located in a Local Business III Zoning District and that the building will be 2,500 square feet. The Applicant is proposing to demolish the existing building and construct a smaller building to serve as a TD Bank branch, and to install an outdoor drive-through teller and ATM that will be located in the rear of the property. Mr. Vaughn stated that the site will be an enhancement from a landscaping perspective, as efforts will be made to preserve and maintain the vegetation at the rear of the property.

Josh Spelling, engineer for the project, provided an overview of the site plan. He stated that the Applicant is seeking to install two curb cuts on Trapelo Road, one for a two way driveway, and another for an egress only driveway. He noted that there is ample parking on site, such that employees and customers would not have to park on Wilson Avenue or in the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Spelling stated that the landscape plan will include 13 trees and 270 shrubs, a significant enhancement of this site. He stated that bike racks will be installed as a way to encourage pedestrian activity in the area. He noted that there will be a walk-up ATM near Trapelo Road. The development will be LEED Certified, and the drive-through canopy will have photovoltaic cells integrated into the roof building materials. Finally he noted that a privacy fence will be installed along Wilson Avenue.

Mr. Baghdady raised a concern that the car lights from people using the remote drive-through would disrupt the neighborhood behind the bank, so he suggested that the fence run the entire length of the property along Wilson Avenue.

Joseph Nevins, architect for the Applicant, provided an overview of the design of the building. He stated that their goal was to obtain as high a LEED rating as possible. He stated that the building will use a high efficiency glaze. The building will be 17 feet tall and the towers will be 24 feet high. He stated that the interior will be open plan banking that will be open visually so that you can see from one end of the building to the other. He noted that the building materials will be of a high recycled content including pre-fabricated mechanical screen that will be the

same color as the building. He concluded by stating that the building will meet LEED standards by providing a 40 percent reduction in energy and a 30 percent reduction in water use.

Mr. Baghdady read comments from the Board of Health which stated that the site must have a dumpster and that the landscaping must not be a suitable nesting place for rodents. Mr. Baghdady read comments from the Police Department which recommended restricting the driveway closest to the Fire Station to a one-way entrance, with no exit. Discussion ensued about the traffic patterns and the pros and cons of having one or two means of egress from the site. Mr. Vaughn stated that two exit driveways are necessary to meet the Bank's customer-convenience objectives. Mr. Clark asked if there was a TD Bank close-by with a similar traffic pattern so that the Board could take a look at it. Mr. Spelling responded that there was one in Lexington.

Mr. Baghdady asked for confirmation that canopy over the drive-through would not interfere with fire truck accessibility. He added that the sign on the building facing the side yard, and the logos on the directional signs, are not allowed by the Sign By-Law. Additionally, he noted that signage at the rear could not be more than 65 square feet.

Mr. Battista noted that the plantings should not obstruct the ATM machine by Trapelo Road, as this would present security problems if the plantings could create a hiding place. He also asked about snow removal. Mr. Spelling responded that the bank's policy was to limit the height of the bushes to 36 inches, and that there should be sufficient space on-site for snow storage.

Mr. Spelling stated that the clearance at the remote drive-thru was 12 feet 6 inches. He stated that the development will not have an on-site transformer, as it was customary for NSTAR to provide pole transformers. He added that the hours of the drive-through teller would be the same as the banks hours. Additionally, he noted that the neighbors will not be able to hear the noise from the communication system of the drive-through teller. Mr. Baghdady requested Mr. Spelling to submit noise and decibel levels of the sound to the Board. Finally, Mr. Spelling stated that the landscaping will shield the car lights from the neighborhood along Wilson Avenue.

Mr. Rojas also noted that the cornice is flat and thin and is very linear and sterile looking. He pointed out that the cornice at the TD Bank in Fresh Pond is a nicer and more detailed design, and asked for a similar bracketed design for the Belmont location.

Mr. DeStefano asked that the landscape plan be resubmitted to reflect a larger scale. He suggested providing 5 inch caliper trees. Ms. Allison noted that the Applicant should have a conversation with Glen Clancy, Director of Community Development, to make sure that future Trapelo Road improvements will not have an impact on the proposed landscaping.

Comments from the Audience

1. Judy Arrigo, 21-23 Flett Road, was concerned about the overflow of parking into her neighborhood, and wanted to confirm that there would be no egress onto Wilson Avenue. Mr. Spelling confirmed that there would not be any egress onto Wilson Avenue.

2. Bill Dillon, 137 White Street and real estate agent for the Applicant, stated that he met with Glen Clancy who indicated that he was satisfied with a two way entrance and egress driveway as long as the Planning Board had approved it. He added that people living in the neighborhood liked the idea of a two way entrance and exit. He felt that having 2 ways to exit the property would diffuse backups and be a positive feature. He also noted that some neighborhood people do not want the fence to run the entire length of Wilson Avenue because it would cut off the path through the property to the bus stop on Trapelo Road.

Further discussion ensued about the traffic patterns. Mr. Spelling felt that a one way circulation pattern through the site would cause confusion. He noted that the distance between the two driveways would be about 90 feet and there would not be any conflicting movements. He noted that having two exits would result in shorter queues. He added that having two shorter queues would be better than one long one, as it would reduce anxiety and irrational movements of drivers. Mr. Baghdady stated that more information was needed to show how traffic would circulate around the islands which would be installed within Trapelo Road as a part of the road improvement project. Mr. Rojas and Mr. DeStefano felt that two egresses could be beneficial and provide better traffic flow.

Mr. Baghdady reviewed the additional items that the Applicant needed to address before the next the public hearing meeting:

1. Remove the sign from the side of the building not facing Trapelo Road;
2. Confirm the size of the sign at the rear of the building;
3. Show the tote dumpster on the plan, and provide screening;
4. Provide information about the screening of the roof top units;
5. Provide information on the noise and decibel levels of the roof top units;
7. Confirm that the photovoltaic system on the roof of the drive-through complies with the Town's Solar Energy Systems Bylaw;
8. Provide specifications for the lighting and shielding;
9. Provide more architectural detailing of the cornices;
10. Submit a more detailed landscape plan with 5 inch caliper trees;
11. Remove logos on directional signs;
12. Provide additional landscaping to screen car lights toward Wilson Avenue;
13. Provide more information on the traffic circulation pattern;
14. Provide information on the noise levels of the outdoor drive-through teller; and
15. Provide a letter from the owner of the property authorizing the applicant to apply for the requested permits.

**Moved by Mr. DeStefano to continue the Public Hearing to October 23, 2012 at 7:00 pm.
Seconded by Ms. Allison.
Motion passes.**

The Planning Board took a 5 minute recess

9:10 p.m. Proposed Religious and Municipal Building Preservation By-Law

Mr. Baghdady reported that idea of creating a by-law to help preserve religious and municipal buildings came when he heard that the All Peoples United Church (formerly the First Congregational Church) in Waverly Square was recently sold and that the developer may demolish it for new development. He expressed concern about the loss of this historically significant building and suggested that certain incentives, such as density bonuses, could be provided to encourage developers to preserve such significant buildings. He inquired how the rest of the Board felt about such a by-law.

Jeffrey Wheeler distributed a list of religious and municipal buildings indicating the ages and potential use of each structure.

Mr. Rojas noted that if a building is not designated historical, the developer could tear it down. Mr. Clark felt it was a good and interesting idea to create such a by-law to preserve older buildings that represent the Town's architectural heritage. Ms. Allison noted that age alone should not determine preservation. It was suggested that the proposed preservation by-law could apply to just a limited list of designated landmark buildings.

Mr. Baghdady recognized Joseph Cornish and Lauren Meier from the Historic District Commission.

Mr. Cornish and Ms. Meier stated that the Historic District Commission supported a by-law which would encourage the preservation of these buildings. Ms. Meier noted that some properties have more significance than others. She cited the fire station in Waverly Square as a successful project where an older municipal building was saved from demolition and re-purposed into residential housing.

Mr. Baghdady concluded that the preservation by-law would be discussed in further detail at future meetings.

9:35 p.m. Committee Updates

Mr. DeStefano announced that the applications for CPA funding are complete and people can start to apply for funding.

Mr. Clark reported that the Housing Trust has discussed the issue of Inclusionary Housing By-Laws and how it applies to re-development in the Town.

Adjournment: 9:40 p.m.