

**PLANNING BOARD MEETING**  
Minutes, September 9, 2003

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

**Also present:** Timothy Higgins, Senior Planner  
Jeffrey Wheeler, Planning Coordinator

1. **7:00 p.m.** There being a quorum, Chairman Barrell opened the meeting.

- The minutes of July 29<sup>th</sup> were approved as written.

2. **7:05 p.m. Executive Session**

By a roll call vote of 4-0, the Planning Board entered into Executive Session in order to discuss pending litigation.

3. **7:30 p.m. Public Hearing on the Belmont Uplands Zoning Amendment to Allow Multi-Family Residential Development**

James Heigham read the Public Hearing notice.

Brian O'Neill opened the discussion by listing concerns he has heard about the proposed multi-family development:

1. include 25% affordable housing
2. limit height and impervious surface
3. reduce traffic
4. increase green space
5. limit fiscal impacts/schools

He then presented a revised plan of 250 units, including, 25% affordable units (63 units) 25% age restricted units (62 units), a parking garage (5 stories – to be constructed inside the boundaries of the building), less impervious surface than the previously proposed 188 unit building, and a sewage holding tank that will release storm water slowly into the system. He distributed a brochure illustrating the project highlights including 2 scenarios of the building's exterior.

Jim Ward, Attorney for O'Neill Properties, reviewed the general areas within the Belmont Upland Zoning District that will be amended to reflect these changes. Specifically,

1. the age restricted units will be on a separate 5 acre parcel,
2. all of the units will be condominiums,
3. the zoning will reflect one use, not both,

4. the maximum number of parking spaces will be 2 per dwelling unit with 20 surface parking spaces,
5. the project will comply with the Inclusionary Zoning By-Law,
6. the development will be a mix of one and two bedroom units with 1,400 square feet per 1 bedroom unit and 1,600 square feet for 2 bedroom unit.

Brian O'Neill reiterated that the zoning will allow just Residential and that the units would be offered in accordance with the Inclusionary By-Law. The affordable units will be evenly distributed throughout the building, within the age restricted units and non-age restricted and one and two bedroom units. Tim Higgins mentioned that the Town has retained a housing consultant who will review all the affordability provisions of the project.

Brian O'Neill added the traffic will be reduced since it will be contra flow, residents going to work as opposed to coming to work.

#### **Comments from the Audience:**

1. Don Mercier stated that he would like the entire development to be age restricted. He expressed concerns about the mix of 1 and 2 bedroom units and the number of parking spaces per unit.
2. Henry Kazarian wanted to make sure that this project was for a separate zoning district and would not be allowed in another parts of Town.
3. Jeanne Mooney expressed frustration about the process and where things were going.
4. Jim Graves mentioned concerns about the timing of meetings and environmental issues.
5. Ellen Maas expressed confusion about how to address the environmental issues and wanted to know the status of the R&D proposal. She added that residential development will have a greater impact on the environment.  
Brian O'Neill responded that the DEP is reviewing the commercial proposal and that it has not been withdrawn because the residential amendment has not been approved. Jim Ward clarified that the developer has appealed to DEP the Conservation Commission's denial of wetland delineation of the property.
6. Dave Frizzell, Deputy Chief of the Fire Department, wanted to make sure that the zoning does not jeopardize the fire safety of the residents of the building. He expressed concerns about access to the wings of the building, water supply and parking inside the building, though he conceded that these might be issues for Site Plan Review.
7. Andy Johnson stated that he would like to see the design of the building layout to be more contemporary.

At the conclusion of the public hearing, Brian O'Neill reviewed the issues heard during the evening: fire safety, timing of meetings, buffer zones, and exterior design.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing to Tuesday, September 30, 2003, at 7:15 p.m. in Town Hall.

#### **4. Discussion on Permitting Memo**

Tim Higgins reviewed the genesis of the memo. He discussed his meeting with the Zoning Board of Appeals and mentioned that the Board of Selectmen would like to meet with both Boards to discuss this issue and move proposals forward.

James Heigham stated that he wants to put forward only the Uplands amendments at Fall Town Meeting. He felt that the scope of the Uplands proposal will be too complex. Tim Higgins reminded the Board that a commitment had been made to have zoning amendments from the Corridor Study ready for Fall Town Meeting. He encouraged the Board to begin the public hearing process.

Karl Haglund expressed concerns about the “Fast Food” definition. He wants to make sure that this is a defensible definition. Tim Higgins responded that most of these proposed zoning amendments came from surrounding communities. He suggested separating the restaurant proposals from the rest of the amendments since they may be too controversial.

Andy Johnson, a member of BEDPG, expressed that committee’s desire to streamline the process and that these amendments should go forward to Town Meeting as soon as possible.

The Planning Board agreed to hold a public hearing on the proposed amendments on Tuesday, October 21, 2003.

#### **5. Economic Development Plan**

Andy McClurg gave an update on the proposed workshops. The purpose of these workshops would be to discuss design features of various segments of the corridor. He will contact the Traffic Advisory Committee and invite them to participate as well. The following dates have been set for the workshops: 10/7, 10/28, 11/4, 11/18, and 12/2, and each meeting will have a specific agenda relating to a specific segment of the corridor.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.