

BOARD OF CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS
May 2, 2017 7:30 AM Meeting Minutes
Belmont Town Hall – 455 Concord Avenue

**RECEIVED
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BELMONT, MA**

DATE: August 31, 2021
TIME: 3:38 PM

Alexander E. Corbett, III, William Chemelli, Ellen O'Brien Cushman
No other attendees

AGENDA

Ellen and Bill congratulated Alex on his top of the ticket win in the April Town election

Organizational Vote - Bill Chemelli made a motion that Ellen O'Brien Cushman be re-elected to serve as Chair, Alex Corbett as Clerk. Seconded by Alex. Unanimous vote in favor.

Discussion and vote to comment on the current Belmont Day School Proposal, requesting Site Plan Review by the Planning Board. Alex Corbett announced that he would need to recuse himself from all the Day School project discussions because his employer may be bidding on the project. He then left the meeting.

Ellen reviewed her letter sent 4-6-17 on behalf of the Cemetery Commission to the Planning Board, attached, expressing concern on specific features of the proposal, asking the Board members to approve/endorse the letter. Unanimous Vote, Corbett not present. 2-0. The Board then agreed that Ellen should submit another letter with the following major points, also indicating that Alex has recused himself:

- Stormwater management – As a Board, we request a full Peer Review, per General Bylaw 60-325 D (2), of the Stormwater management system proposed by the Belmont Day School to protect the interests of the Town of Belmont, through its Board of Cemetery Commissioners, on behalf of current and future Belmont families who choose to inter their loved ones in Highland Meadow Cemetery. A cursory review of the proposed road/driveway permeable surface, reveals that the drainage for this critical item will NOT be tied into any containment system for the site, instead relying on continuing and adequate maintenance of the permeable surface to ensure that the silts and fine particles will not clog the top pavement, turning it into a cement-like coating. The explanation offered by the Day School at their neighbor meeting held April 26th confirmed that the permeability would be completely reliant on ongoing maintenance. A failure causing a large volume of water to flow toward the cemetery is absolutely unthinkable; we want to ensure that the systems in place capture and channel the stormwater to appropriately-sized holding facilities and not discharge toward the cemetery or our residential neighbors and onto Concord Avenue. We aren't interested in knowing that enforcement could make the Day School fix any problem after the fact; the system should be designed to prevent any flow issues. In addition, as all Belmontians know, for decades Concord Avenue was plagued with running water and frozen ice patches that was mostly solved by the DPW installation of a new storm drain system along Concord Avenue. We need to ensure that the Day School plan does not return Concord Avenue to that condition.
- Aesthetic border – Hundreds of Belmont residents have already purchased lots at Highland Meadow Cemetery, not just for its design but for its surroundings. If a road/driveway that is nearly 1000 feet long is constructed immediately adjacent to the existing cemetery wall, without an adequate and mature vegetative buffer, the integrity of our environmentally blended cemetery design would be compromised. No longer would grief-stricken relatives be standing in a woodland zone with a fieldstone wall amongst the trees. With 1000 cars a day passing by, it's hard to imagine that the grieving family member won't be "on display" for all to observe, as the cars jockey for position in the drop off or pick up line or wait for

parking. In 2005, the former Head of School for Belmont Day, asked the Cemetery Commission to eliminate a walking path outside of the bordering wall (intended for pedestrian neighbor use) because it would offer easy and direct access to the school grounds by strangers. Ironically, we now see the Day School plan to add a 7 ft sidewalk in that very location, this one terminating on Concord Avenue with nowhere to go. We object to the placement of the sidewalk and parking along the driveway/road for privacy, buffer and safety concerns. The Cemetery Commission, and we are certain the Planning Board, have already received emails and phone calls from families who want to know if we would refund their money because of this new proposed intrusion. When The Woodlands condominiums Zone 1A, were developed on the former McLean land, an acceptable mature dense vegetative buffer was a requirement of Site Plan Review; we would expect nothing less to preserve the pastoral integrity of Highland Meadow Cemetery. For this reason, we also request that parking along the road/driveway should not be permitted.

- Public Safety – Since the Day School has indicated that the Belmont Police Chief and Fire Chief have requested this new road layout, we ask that each provides formal comment on the proposed plans.
- Driveway/Road Surface – In winter conditions, what will be the plan for disposal and storage of snow that has been plowed? We ask that a snow storage area be designated on the plan and that absolutely no snow be plowed off the site, onto the cemetery, Lone Tree Hill, across Concord Avenue or onto neighboring properties.
- Traffic – we do not support the new entrance driveway/road as proposed. We are concerned about proper sightlines and turning onto the proposed road/driveway, we also endorse the request by residential neighbors for a peer review of the traffic studies provided by the Day School.
- Lights / Evening Activities – Absent from the Day School application is their intent to expand their evening programs at the school, though stated by the Day School representatives at the Land Management Committee for Lone Tree Hill. We ask for further definition, times and frequency of same because the comment made that the lights on 12 ft poles, creating a runway-like entrance will be left on one hour after the activity concludes. This lighted roadway will allow easy access to the cemetery and conservation land after access is prohibited, specifically after dusk. An evening rendering showing the lights and what neighbors will see would be appreciated.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Chairman

