

Meeting Minutes of the  
Town of Belmont, Board of Cemetery Commissioners  
October 12, 2016 5:30 PM

2019 AUG 16 PM 12: 02

Belmont Town Hall - 455 Concord Avenue

Room 2 - Ground Floor

Members Present: Alexander Corbett, William Chemelli, Ellen O'Brien Cushman

Others Present: Frank Sartori (Belmont Cemetery), Brendan Largay (Belmont Day School, Head of School), Kelly Durfee Cardoza (Avalon Consulting Group for Belmont Day School), Donald Leavitt (688 Concord Avenue).

1. Belmont Day School Plans for Expansion: Request by Avalon Consulting, Representing the Day School

Kelly Durfee Cardoza and Brendan Largay introduced the proposed project to expand the Belmont Day School, following are some summary points on the project to date:

- In the recent past, a large tree fell across Day School Lane, blocking access for parents for the afternoon pickup. As a result, the Day School had to perform a release of their students by walking through Highland Meadow Cemetery to the Belmont Hill Club, where the children could await pick up by their guardians inside the building. This experience was the impetus for considering an alternative entrance/exit plan that would permit emergency evacuation if required. The focus therefore became installation of a loop driveway/road from Concord Avenue that would run between Highland Meadow Cemetery and Don Leavitt's house at 688 Concord Avenue, connect with the buildings and parking area and the roundabout and exit on Day School Lane.
- A planned "Barn" with a footprint 30,000 sq ft to house additional pre-K=>8 academic rooms and 2 tennis courts and basketball court, 2 artist rooms
- Plan to add 40-45 children to the existing grade structure, total enrollment would become 310 students.
- They have spoken with Fire Chief David Frizzell and will ensure radios have emergency access frequency.
- They are meeting with all interested neighbors and Town agencies.

- Parking will be re-configured, moving spaces to the new driveway, etc to retain the same number of spaces roughly.
- Invitations will be sent to neighbors to attend an overview meeting October 26th at 5: 30 PM.
- Site Plan Approval by the Planning Board is anticipated
- A Traffic count/study has been performed at Highland Meadow Cemetery, Day School Lane and Pinehurst Road with results expected mid-November to January.
- Barn will be 45 ft to the top of the dormer peak
- Historic stone wall will be considered and they will be sourcing similar stone. Is the historic stone wall considered an historic resource? Can it be altered?
- Construction timeframe expected spring of 2017 filing and approval by the Planning Board, construction begin spring/summer of 2017 to end of August 2018. Open the 2018-2019 school year in the new building.
- Using Shawmut Construction Company.
- Land width at intersection with Concord Avenue between Lone Tree Hill and new Barn is 38 ft
- Driveway length will be 600 ft to the curve from Concord Avenue.
- The plan calls for parking along the driveway, cemetery side, parallel parking. The roadway will be 15 ft setback from the Highland Meadow Cemetery wall and zero ft (0) set back from Don Leavitt's property line
- Staggered starts and stops
  - o 8 AM -4: 30 PM for Middle school with afterschool programs going to 5:45 PM
  - o 8:30 AM- 12:30 PM ending at 3:30 and 4: 30 PM
  - o 7: 30 AM - Early Bird before school care programs
- The Board of Cemetery Commissioners had questions and expressed some concerns with the proposed plans that were shown at the meeting (no plans were left with the Commission): • The entrance from Concord Avenue and the roadway/drive - the cemetery wall was placed on the property line in response to a request from the Belmont Day School Head of School. (The original plan called for a footpath between the

property line and the wall to allow neighbors to access Lone Tree Hill Conservation Land without having to walk through the cemetery. In 2007 the Head of School, Ms. Leanna(sp?) informed the Board that the Day School would prefer not to have an immediate access point to the school campus for any unknown persons. Now that the stone wall has been constructed right on the property line, it seems only right that a setback be provided to that wall so buses and cars don't hit it as they make the turn into the driveway. This thin roadway with parallel parking spaces seems a really thin entrance for school buses, vehicles, etc. in good weather with such a tight turn from Concord Ave, imagine the snow/ice. Will approaching buses and cars from the west be able to turn into the driveway without having to cross the center line? Mr. Leavitt echoed this concern. • The Day School calls is a driveway but the total length seems to be nearly 1000 ft to the proposed Barn - is this a road or a driveway? Will the Board of Survey need to meet? Mr. Leavitt shared these questions. • Parking on the entrance drive/road - the Board expressed concern about the parking on the roadway as shown immediately next to the cemetery wall - again to limit vehicles running into the wall and for respectful distance from families who would benefit from privacy. The Board is also concerned on encroachment to Mr. Leavitt's property, with zero ft setback expected. • Stormwater is a tremendous concern, there are many springs in the area - Highland Meadow Cemetery was constructed with a detention area to catch runoff from the cemetery and the Town installed a new catch basin system for upper Concord Avenue. Mr. Leavitt is especially concerned about drainage. • Historic stone wall through the Varkas property - can these be touched? Are they catalogued as historic resources? • Mr. Leavitt told the group assembled about the Easements on the Varkas strip. He and Ms. Cushman asked if the Day School read the Easements on the property deeds as provided by Ms. Varkas when the property was sold ? Is the proposed use consistent with the Easements? • Privacy and consideration for the grieving families is requested - cemetery

services occurring in the Woodland Zone, closest to the Day School. Mr. Leavitt echoed the privacy concern as well as the closest residential neighbor to the proposed roadway/drive.

The Day School representatives said they would consider all that the Board has said and include us in their invitations to the neighbor meetings. At this point, the Day School representatives and Mr. Leavitt left.

2. Review of Highland Meadow FAQ sheet - The Board reviewed the FAQ sheet and asked Ellen Cushman to make the necessary edits and get them to Nancy Fay at the Cemetery.

3. Review and possible vote: Fees for Services. - this item has been postponed until spring of 2017 for consideration of changes in FY2018.

4. Discussion and possible vote: Request by Jackie Sears for review of policy/regulations for placement of non-US flags on lots and removal the two cemeteries - The Board discussed Ms. Sears' request to permit any flags, particularly firefighter, affiliation flags on graves at Highland Meadow Cemetery to honor her family members. After much discussion, the Board voted unanimously to reaffirm the policy that only US flags will be permitted at Highland Meadow Cemetery, in keeping with the flat marker, no plantings, surrounding conservation land. Frank will inform Ms. Sears of the vote.

5. Belmont Cemetery Rules & Regulations - scheduled a detailed discussion to be held at the December meeting. Ellen Cushman will distribute her suggested edits based upon our past discussions along with the agenda to facilitate the vote.

6. Results of Survey from 2015: presentation by Cemetery Staff- delayed for future meeting

7. Veterans' 3 section replacement of plant material - The cemetery staff at Belmont Cemetery removed the overgrown boxwood bushes bordering the veterans memorial pathway. The Board strongly encourages the staff to replace the boxwoods, keeping them tightly trimmed as was original designed and intended in 1998/1998 construction. Ellen Cushman will search for the original landscape plan by Diana Thomas.

Meeting adjourned at 7: 20 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen O'Brien Cushman

Chairman