

Zale, Christine

From: Moore, Mark <mark_moore@hks.harvard.edu>
Sent: Friday, April 03, 2020 1:33 PM
To: Zale, Christine; 'Martha Moore.'
Cc: Wheeler, Jeffrey
Subject: RE: April HDC Meeting
Attachments: Letter to Neighbors 4.docx

Hi Christine,

Thanks so much for getting this together and for letting us know. Do you need anything from us that you do not have? Will be glad to supply.

Jeffery, I am also wondering how soon we can at least file an application for a special permit. We sent out 55 letters to abutters informing them about what we were planning to do, and asking them to send back a form that gave them three options: 1) no objections, support plan; 2) have some questions, would like to discuss; 3) have serious objections – these are. (See above)

We have received about 20 forms back, and have had five conversations with individuals who are the nearest abutters. All have supported the project. One near neighbor was concerned about the increase in “stranger traffic” associated with the new use of the old Manse for the Catholic Church, and wanted to be sure that we had no intention and that current rules would prohibit us from using the barn as an “air-bnb”. Once she was reassured of this, she was happy to support project.

Obviously, everything has slowed down considerably, and I do not expect fast progress. I just want to get in the queue for the Special Permit hearing, which I suspect is often the biggest bottleneck in the system. If I am wrong about that, just let me know and I will stop bugging you. If I am right, I hope you will help us get on the queue as expeditiously as possible.

Thanks to you both for your attention.

From: Zale, Christine <czale@belmont-ma.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 03, 2020 11:50 AM
To: Moore, Mark <mark_moore@hks.harvard.edu>; 'Martha Moore.' <marmoor@aol.com>
Cc: Wheeler, Jeffrey <jwheeler@belmont-ma.gov>
Subject: April HDC Meeting

Hello,

I hope you are both doing well and staying safe. I know you have had some email communication with Lauren Meier and I wanted to let you know that the HDC will be holding their April 14th meeting at 7:00pm via remote access. The agenda has not been finalized yet but your carriage barn discussion will be on there. The agenda will also include instructions on how to connect to the virtual meeting.

Thank you very much for your patience as we’ve been navigating this new situation. Please let me know of any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Christine Zale
Office of Community Development

March 19, 2020

Dear

We are your neighbors at 331 Waverley Street, the yellow Victorian house next to the old Rectory for St. Joseph's Church. Mark is a Professor at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Martha is one of your representative town meeting members in Precinct 3. We have lived in Belmont for forty-five years, thirty of them at this address.

Our house was built in 1878 and includes a carriage barn from that same period. When we took up residence in 1987, the carriage barn was collapsing on its foundation. In 1990, we applied for and were granted a "special permit" to rebuild the barn, and to enable its use as a "home study" for Mark's academic work.

At that time, no specific rules existed to guide the Zoning Board's decisions about the preservation of historic accessory buildings. There were reasonable concerns that such buildings might be turned to new uses inconsistent with existing zoning rules. To guard against this, the "special permit" we were granted imposed conditions on use, and specifically prohibited the construction of a bathroom in the barn. (For details, see "Context" below).

More recently, Town Meeting passed a special measure that allows the Zoning Committee to grant a special permit for the "preservation of historic accessory buildings." This rule specifically allows construction projects that "allow a home occupation" in such buildings.

We are now initiating the process of applying for a "special permit" to construct a bathroom in the barn consistent with its use as a "home study." The proposed construction will *not change the exterior structure or appearance of the building*. Nor will it change *the use of the building*. It will essentially continue as it has for the last 30 years. The only change is that Mark will not have to make the walk through rain and snow to get to a bathroom.

This process wisely requires us to consult with our neighbors to be sure that our plans do not adversely affect their interests. This letter represents an effort to meet that requirement.

If you are willing to support our future application for the special permit, we are grateful, and we sincerely hope you will return this letter to us with your consent: Mark and Martha Moore, 331 Waverley Street, Belmont MA 02478 (Stamped envelope enclosed.)

If you would like more information, we would be glad to talk to you and to answer your questions either in person or by phone. Our phone number is 617 489-2129. You can also send an email message to marmoor@aol.com.

Thank you for your attention to this request

Mark and Martha Moore

Response to Consultation Request For Special Permit Allowing the Construction of a Bathroom in
a Carriage House Located at 331 Waverly Street

☐

I have no objections and support this project.

☐

I have some questions and would like to talk by phone or visit the site.

☐

I have some serious concerns. They include the following:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Street Address: _____

Historical Context

Our current residence at 331 Waverley Street includes a Victorian house built in about 1878, and a carriage barn that was constructed at the same time. We purchased and moved into this house in 1989.

At the time that we purchased the house the carriage barn was collapsing on its foundation. We thought the barn enhanced the historic aspect of the property, so we decided to see if we could preserve it.

We learned from Belmont's Zoning officials that the carriage barn was a "non-conforming structure". No construction project could be approved for this structure without a "special permit."

Such a permit could be granted if the existing dimensions of the original building exterior and its location were preserved, and if no significant change in use was contemplated that would change the existing nature of the neighborhood.

Further, we learned that our application for a "special permit" would be heard at an open meeting in which our neighbors would have the opportunity to comment to the Planning Board on the plans submitted at a public hearing.

In 1990 we applied for a "special permit" to rebuild the barn. Our reconstruction plan called for lifting the entire structure off its foundation, pouring a new foundation below, and then setting the building back down on the new foundation, installing a long I-Beam to fortify the structure, and completing exterior repairs and some interior work. We also requested permission to include space on the second floor for Mark to use as a study.

Once the process was complete, permission to build was granted with several conditions: 1) that the original external dimensions and appearance of the carriage barn would remain the same as in the past; 2) that the privacy interests of abutters would be protected; 3) that no commercial use of the property would be allowed; 4) that no permanent residency of the property would be allowed; 5) that no "parties" or "large gatherings" would be held in that property, and 6) that there could be no bathroom.

We accepted these conditions and have lived with them for the past 30 years.

We plan *no changes* in the exterior dimensions or appearance of the building; all changes will be inside the building and invisible from the outside.

We plan *no changes* in the uses of the carriage barn. It currently contains a private study for Mark on the second floor and a garage area and a storage room on the floor below. On perhaps a dozen occasions, the study has served as an overflow sleeping space for one or two grandchildren.

The *only change* is that the special exercise program that involved a walk down the stairs, across the driveway, up the stairs, into the house and back again to reach a bathroom will no longer be required.

