

## Belmont Historic District Commission MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 11, 2021  
Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

**Staff Present:** Christine Zale

### Commission Members Present:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lisa Harrington, Co-Chair | <input type="checkbox"/> Sue Pew                             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Chesson           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Smith, Alternate |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lauren Meier              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carl Solander, Alternate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Terry McCarthy                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nushin Yazdi, Alternate  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carol Moyles              |  |

**Community Members Present:** Wendy Murphy, Belmont Women's Club, Andy Rojas, Rojas Design, 661 Pleasant St.; Mark & Nancy Jarzombek, homeowners, Jeanne Mooney, abutter, 41 Willow Street Barn

### 1. 7:03 PM Meeting Called to Order.

Lisa Harrington presiding; M. Smith, Minutes

### 2. New Public Hearing

- a. Case # 21-08: Certificate of Appropriateness Application (COA), 661 Pleasant Street, Belmont Women's Club; install 12 parking spaces on the left side of the driveway, install a granite retaining wall, pave the driveway, and install an asphalt curb.
  - L. Harrington opened the public hearing at 7:05.
  - Wendy Murphy, representing the Belmont Women's Club, summarized the contents of the COA. She said the Land Trust was okay with regrading in the area of the proposed granite wall "because the vegetation has no value." She said a homeowner directly across the street on Concord Avenue had expressed a concern about the visibility of the parking from his home and she told him that plantings will be done to shield the view from Concord Ave. She said the Planning Board meeting was rescheduled to June 1.
  - Andy Rojas, architect, joined the meeting at 7:12.
  - L. Harrington said an elevation drawing showing the proposed parking within the context of the house and surrounding site should be provided.
  - C. Moyles expressed several concerns:
    - The elevation of the wall
    - The photos of the granite materials show their different shapes and sizes to be inconsistent with the design of the proposed wall; and, the materials are inconsistent with the granite on the house and other parts of the site.
    - A need to look at the ground collectively within the historic context of the Homer House. The house sits on a landscape plinth, a level berm, eroded over time, and this proposed

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DATE: September 23, 2021  
TIME: 2:40 PM

wall and parking is a further intrusion on the historic landscape. It may be possible to regrade the site to avoid such an intrusion.

- An accessibility study should be done to show how access to the building will be achieved from the designated parking space, another potential intrusion of the landscape.
- The conversation of the design should also be held with the Planning Board as they will likely have other interests related to parking spaces, circulation, etc.
- W. Murphy responded:
  - The Women's Club has no money for the project. No more can be done than what has been shown. The only reason this is being done now is because everyone involved is donating their time and materials; and the Land Trust gave \$10,000.
  - It is difficult to rent the house for functions without parking, especially for older people. The WC cannot make any money to care for the house without parking.
- M. Smith:
  - Explained that the HDC should have been consulted in advance of all the design work that has been completed to date.
  - Requested that a subcommittee of the HDC be formed to meet on site with the proponents to discuss each of the issues raised.
- L. Meier expressed the following:
  - The need for a better understanding of the proposal including the regularized design of the granite blocks shown on the plan; and the parking lines patterns, groupings, and materials.
  - The handicap parking space seems too close to the building.
  - An accessibility study should be done to understand any future phase of impact on the site.
- A. Rojas:
  - Objected to the requests for more design and studies.
  - Said he is studying an accessible path, not a ramp, to the house.
- C. Solander asked if consideration could be given to getting the wall lower as it gets closer to the house and keeping it further away from the house. A. Rojas replied it would mean losing one or two parking spaces. L. Meier and C. Myles affirmed the concern of the wall height and proximity to the house.
- W. Murphy said that some town employees and members of the Police Department are given permission to park on the site.
- L. Harrington appointed C. Moyles, L. Meier and M. Chesson as a subcommittee of the HDC to meet at the site. W. Murphy said she would be happy to meet.
- M. Chesson made a motion to continue the Public Hearing; M. Smith seconded; motion approved unanimously.
- L. Harrington closed the public hearing.

### 3. Informal Discussion

- a. 41 Willow Street – adding artist studio with bathroom to carriage barn (Historic Accessory Building Bylaw)
  - Mark and Nancy Jarzombek summarized the materials provided to the HDC including existing and proposed plans. The barn has been largely used for storage. The plan is to convert the

space to an artist studio with no change to the front elevation and minor changes to the side and rear, all using materials and styles appropriate to the historic character of the building.

- L. Meier, M. Chesson, N. Yazdi each expressed their support for the design.
- Jeanne Mooney, direct abutter, spoke in favor of the project.
- L. Meier noted that this project is subject to the Accessory Building Bylaw and will require approval from the Planning Board. The HDC needs to take a vote to affirm that the property is historic and eligible to the Historic Preservation Accessory Building Bylaw and a vote of support for the project. The Owner needs to file an application with the Planning Board following the input of the HDC.
- C. Solander noted that the bylaw requires that the HDC needs to hold a Public Hearing. L. Meier suggested that the Office of Community Development review the procedure to be followed. C. Zale to follow-up.
- L. moved that the barn at 41 Willow Street meets the requirements of the Historic Accessory Building Bylaw; N. Yazdi seconded; unanimously approved.
- L. Meier moved to support the design for the rehabilitation of 41 Willow Street as presented; N. Yazdi seconded; unanimously approved.
- L. Harrington will write the letter of support. C. Zale will coordinate with the owners for the application process with the Planning Board.

b. 455 Concord Ave.

- M. Smith said he received a phone call from David Blazon stating that the Town would like to make repairs to the Select Board Room including plaster wall and ceiling repairs and paint, carpet change and arrangement of Select Board photos displayed on the walls. M. Chesson reached out to the Historical Society and found no photographic evidence regarding colors. L. Harrington said that underlying colors may be investigated on site. M. Smith and L. Harrington will meet as a subcommittee with David Blazon.

#### 4. New Business

a. McLean Barn – adaptive reuse study; graffiti removal

- M. Chesson said Jeffrey North of the Conservation Commission and Land Management Committee called him and said the video cameras on the barn are working and they have footage. The evidence seems to show just one person doing the graffiti.
- L. Harrington clarified that tonight's discussion is toward the next phase, an adaptive reuse study and submitting a proposal for CPA funds. M. Chesson said that CPA Administrative Funds would not be eligible for such a study. L. Meier said it appears that the HDC will need to submit an application for Town meeting approval. L. Harrington replied that such funds have been used on previous projects. She will reach out to find out what has changed. M. Chesson will reach out to the CPC at tomorrow's CPC meeting to get clarification.

b. Town Complex Condenser

- M. Smith said that a new large condenser and concrete pad has been installed next to two existing condensers next to the Town Hall. None of this new work had been done with HDC

approval. David Blazon called and asked if a screen wall and/or plantings might be used to shield the view. L. Meier and C. Moyles will take a look and make suggestions.

c. Town Complex Masonry and Roof Repairs

- M. Smith said that masonry and roof repairs within the Town Complex had been submitted and approved by the CPC; however, the HDC never received nor approved such plans. Perhaps because of delays during the pandemic, the work was not performed and conditions have worsened. The Department of Public Works (DPW) took over the project when Steve Dorrance, former Facilities Director, resigned. Now, the DPW Director, Jay Marcotte, and David Blazon have just met to discuss next steps. An architect has been retained by the DPW to perform an up-to-date conditions analysis. M. Smith explained to both J. Marcotte and D. Blazon that the work will require approval of the HDC.

d. McLean Development

- C. Zale said that Northland has submitted a design package for the Planning Board's review and upcoming meeting. The materials have been posted to the Planning Board website.
- L. Meier said a subcommittee of the HDC should meet and review the materials and provide. C. Solander and N. Yazdi volunteered.

## 5. Continuing Discussions

a. Administrative Matters – GIS Map

- C. Zale said there are no current updates regarding the status; however, hopefully by next meeting.

b. CPC Request

- No update on compiling a catalogue of historic structures and buildings for potential CPA funded projects.

c. BSA Nominees for HDC Members

- L. Harrington said the HDC nominee proposals are awaiting action by the Select Board. She will clarify with the Select Board the positions and terms of service on the Commission the HDC recommends.

d. Demolition Delay

- L. Meier reminded that the DD Bylaw is set to expire this year. The HDC needs to decide any adjustments to recommend; and make such recommendations to the Planning Board, Select Board, etc.

e. Police Station

- M. Smith provided an update on the progress of construction, nearing completion.

f. Municipal Light Building

- L. Harrington said the CPC approved proposal has been sent to the Town Administrator's Office and awaiting action. M. Chesson to check status at the upcoming CPC meeting. L. Harrington to confirm ownership of the building.

## **6. Minutes**

- a. April 13, 2021 by Carol Moyles – M. Smith moved to approve; L. Meier seconded; unanimous approval.
- b. April 27, 2021 by L. Meier – C. Solander moved to approve with one spelling correction; L. Meier seconded; unanimous approval.

**L. Harrington made motion to adjourn; seconded by N. Yazdi. Adjourned 9:22 PM**

Respectfully submitted by Michael Smith