

Belmont Historic District Commission
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 25, 2021
Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

Staff Present: Christine Zale

Commission Members Present:

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

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

Community Members Present: Steve Pinkerton, Chair, Planning Board; Wendy Murphy, Belmont Women’s Club, Janice Ellard, Belmont Women’s Club, 661 Pleasant Street; Andy Rojas, Rojas Design, Phil Thayer, Belmont resident, Stephen Knight, 504 Concord Avenue.

Lisa Harrington presiding; L.Harrington, Minutes

1. Continued Public Hearing:

661 Pleasant Street; Belmont Woman’s Club (BWC) 12 proposed parking spaces on the left side of the driveway, install a granite retaining wall, pave driveway and install asphalt curbing.

- C. Moyles summarized the site visit of 5.21.21. HDC comments were shared in a memo on screen as follows:
 - Holistic plan for the site
 - Avoid segmentation
 - Splitting parking to both side of house
 - Explore parallel parking
 - Add building envelope & ramp from Conservation Restriction Plan to base plan
 - Minimum 15ft set back from house to preserve grass terrace (e.g. edge of pavement)
 - Remove wall close to house – wall should be retaining only not free standing
 - Lower wall no more than 18-24” – use grading to deal with slope
 - Uniform angles to parking spaces, no striping between spaces
 - Survey plan that is clearer with existing topography – need to see the existing topography more clearly on the design plan.
 - Create a Working Group to help with design revisions.
- C. Moyles requested the Conservation restriction site plan be put on the proposed site plan as an overlay, that grade lines be darkened on the site plan for better visibility, reiterated the stone block retaining wall be lowered, and that a working committee be set up.
- L. Meier stated the HDC is not expecting a fully designed handicap ramp, but to think about the design in the big picture.

- W. Murphy reiterated they want to do as little as possible to intrude on the beauty of the site; the BWC does not want parking on both sides of the house; and feels a working group is not necessary and will only create more delay.
- M. Smith informed he had gotten a phone call from an abutter with concerns about the parking. M. Smith believes other options still need to be considered.
- W. Murphy feels that they (BWC and Rojas Design) have been accommodating. L. Meier asked if W. Murphy is asking if we will vote on the design if conditions are met based on the site visit comments. W. Murphy responded yes.
- Rojas responded to the above comments made by the HDC from the 5.21.21 site visit.
 - Is the 15' setback the same as is shown on the Conservation Restriction?
 - Lowering the stone retaining wall will create a steeper slope, creating drainage issues
 - Creating parking spaces on the right side of the building is too difficult and too costly
 - Making uniform angles of the parking spaces is unsafe
- S. Pinkerton suggested screening the parking; the property is zoned as residential, but it is really a commercial property as the zoning bylaw is written. S. Pinkerton also stated he could not predict how the Planning Board will respond or vote on this project.
- C. Moyles commented that Accessibility is a pressing issue for both current and future uses.
- M. Smith stated the HDC needs to be consistent in follow Historic District Guidelines and referred to specific sections of the Guidelines including use of natural materials rather than asphalt, etc. He also referred to language in the CR in preserving the natural environment of the property.
- The HDC members present took a poll of thoughts on how they might vote on the current and proposed modifications by the HDC. L. Harrington expressed she would support the design if the proposed HDC changes were made. L. Meier could not offer an opinion at this time. C. Moyles also could not offer an opinion as to how she would vote until seeing at least a diagrammatic plan of accessibility included in the plan. M. Chesson is skeptical of the plan based on what has been presented, but would be on board if L. Meier and C. Moyles were to approve. M. Smith does not support the plan even with proposed modifications.
- S. Pinkerton pointed out that discussion of the location of handicap accessibility should be considered now so this plan does not have to be modified later to accommodate a ramp.
- A. Rojas explained he has given comprehensive consideration of the options for handicap accessibility and described the options. S. Pinkerton expressed the need for these kind of discussions. L. Meier stated she likes/appreciates A. Rojas' design approach to handicap accessibility.
- The HDC was in agreement that this Case will need to be continued to the next HDC meeting of June 8, 2021, to review changes to the proposed documents based on tonight's discussion and previous site visit.
- It was confirmed that all required information will be submitted to the Town by June 4, 2021 for review before the next scheduled HDC meeting of June 8, 2021.

Meeting adjourned 8:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Harrington