



February 6, 2022

Patrice Garvin  
Town Administrator

Belmont Planning Board  
Office of Community Development  
Homer Municipal Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
19 Moore Street  
Belmont MA 02478

Dear Ms. Garvin and the Belmont Planning Board,

I am writing to share an important and positive update: in tandem with the formal town review process for our East Campus Proposal for new parking and related facilities, we have been meeting with our nearest neighbors to understand their concerns and find a path forward. We are pleased to share today that we have reached agreement around a set of changes to the project that address the neighbor's most significant concerns.

The attached statement from our three nearest abutters recaps the major shifts in the project, which we will share in preliminary format during the upcoming Planning Board meeting on Tuesday, February 7, 2023. In summary, these changes include:

- Removing the proposed outdoor above ground fuel storage tanks
- Shifting the parking lot layout to increase the distance from the closest abutter
- Moving the fence between the parking lot and the property line (no closer than 5 feet from the pavement)
- Relocating the facilities building further away from an adjacent property (reducing the number of parking spaces)
- Adding additional plantings to reduce visual and environmental impact

In addition, we will maintain our commitment to the changes we proposed last fall. These include relocating the entrance to the East Campus parking lot, which required a redesign and additional property purchase; increasing the distance between the lot and abutting yards; and changing the fence design to support wildlife movement.



We are confident that the updated proposal is sensitive to the environment, wildlife, and landscape of the community; limits any traffic impacts; responds to the most substantive abutter concerns; and aligns with our commitment to being a good neighbor.

We appreciate the time and effort the neighbors to this site invested in participating in a thoughtful discussion. We look forward to continuing the formal town review process, with the goal of earning approval for a project that is important to the school's long-term future.

Greg Schneider

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G/S", is placed over a light gray rectangular background.

*Ronald M. Drucker '62 Head of School*  
Belmont Hill School

Enclosure:     Abutters Letter dated February 5, 2023  
                     Modified Project Plan dated February 6, 2023

cc:     Town Counsel  
         Select Board  
         Zoning Board  
         Conservation Commission

February 5, 2023

Dear Fellow Members of the Belmont Community,

As neighbors of the Belmont Hill School, we have been working collaboratively with the leadership of the School to address some issues raised by their proposed development of their East Campus. We are pleased to report that Belmont Hill has agreed to a number of changes that we believe reduce impact on neighbors, improve sightlines, add greenery to the project, and limit disruption to local wildlife.

For background, Belmont Hill School originally proposed replacing their facilities building and adding a parking lot, both on property across from their Main Campus, in an effort to expand parking options for athletic and academic purposes. While the school believed the project would address its long-standing concerns about traffic flow and safety, especially during large campus events, as the nearest neighbors we were concerned about a number of specifics related to the plan, including the impact on neighbors and wildlife, and the presence of potentially dangerous above-ground fuel tanks in a residential neighborhood. After initial meetings between abutters, Greg Schneider (Head of School), and his project team, Belmont Hill offered to make certain updates to their proposal (increasing distance between the parking lot and abutting properties and modifying the perimeter fence design). While these changes were a step in the right direction, we believed more needed to be done to address the impact of the project on surrounding areas. Abutters asked for, and Belmont Hill readily agreed to, additional meetings to discuss these concerns.

Today, we have reached an agreement on a new plan that allows us to offer our support of Belmont Hill School's East Campus Project. The agreed modifications include the following:

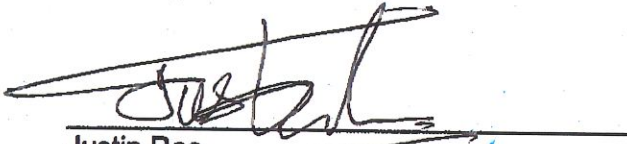
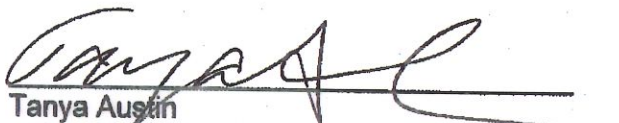

- Increase the distance between the parking lot and fence and abutting properties, allowing for greater wildlife movement and access to the wetlands;
- Increase the distance between the facilities building and the easterly property boundary to allow greater wildlife movement, and access to the wetlands;
- Remove the proposed outdoor gas tank; and move the proposed outdoor diesel fuel tank inside the facilities building;
- Store materials for wintertime de-icing in a covered area adjacent to the the facilities building;
- Eliminate 6 parking spaces (3 on the Main Campus and 3 on the East Campus)
- Plant a diverse collection of primarily native shrubs and trees under the guidance of arborists and landscape architects to create a diverse, healthy, sustainable and resilient landscape;
- Retain additional existing trees along the Rutledge Road property line;
- Take measures to minimize potential heat impacts from the parking lot itself, by using a semi-permeable parking surface material and planting trees that will shade parts of the lot; and
- Create frequent breaks in the fencing that enhance the movement of wildlife.

With all of these changes, much has been accomplished.

Both the near neighbors and the leadership of Belmont Hill appreciated the opportunity to participate in candid and respectful conversations that resulted in substantive changes to the original plan. We approached these conversations with an open mind toward balancing the needs of the school with legitimate issues raised by local citizens.

As the formal planning board process continues to unfold and address other potential areas of concern to the citizens of Belmont, we hope that the conversation will continue to focus on a productive and civil dialogue that accurately reflects both the available facts and a shared commitment to solving challenging issues in a collegial manner.

Sincerely,

  
Justin Roe  
Tanya Austin  
Donald L. Hafner





**LEGEND**

- PROPERTY LINE
- LIMIT OF WORK
- 100' WETLAND BUFFER
- 15' BUILDING SETBACK FROM PROPERTY SIDELINE

RELOCATE FENCE FURTHER FROM ABUTTING PROPERTY LINES, CLOSER TO PARKING LOT

ROTATE PARKING PODS TO INCREASE DISTANCE FROM EDGE OF PAVING TO PROPERTY LINE (FROM 25' TO 31')

REBUILD FULL PORTION OF EXISTING WALL TO ACCOMODATE GRADING

REMOVE 2 PARKING SPOTS

REMOVAL OF 1 PARKING SPOT

ROTATE BUILDING TO BE IN PARALLEL WITH PROPERTY LINE, INCREASE NARROWEST DISTANCE FROM BUILDING TO PROPERTY LINE (FROM 19' TO 44')