

TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
September 19, 2023

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BELMONT, MA

DATE: November 28, 2023
TIME: 2:39 PM

Present: **Jeff Birenbaum: Chair; Carol Berberian: Vice Chair; Thayer Donham;
Andrew Osborn; Taylor Yates; Renee Guo**

Staff: **Ara Yogurtian, Assistant Director, Offices of Community Development
Chris Ryan: Senior Planner, Town of Belmont**

This meeting was held remotely using Zoom video conferencing technology, as permitted by the Massachusetts Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations, which became effective July 16, 2022. Update 3/30/23: The State has extended authorization for virtual public meetings through March 31, 2025.

1. Meeting Called to Order at 7:00 PM

Mr. Birenbaum introduced the Planning Board members and reviewed a summary of the items that were on the agenda.

2. The Economic Development Committee and Vision21 Implementation Committee will present to the Board 2 proposed amendments to the zoning bylaws to facilitate the opening of restaurants in Belmont. Vision21 has voted to endorse these amendments.

Taylor Yates, Chair of Vision 21 Implementation Committee, Town Meeting Member Precinct 2, said that the two proposed zoning by-law amendments that allow three things. First, to make it easier to open a restaurant in Town by allowing restaurants by-right in all business districts. Second, to close the existing chain restaurant loophole by creating a special category for a formula-based food service establishment that dictates guidelines for special permits. Third, to bring the parking requirements for restaurants in line with those of the surrounding towns. These are the first steps to improving the Town's commercial district and financial future for the town.

Paul Joy, Chair of the Economic Development Committee, presented:

- The proposed parking zoning by-law change
- The definitions in use case zoning by-law change
- The financial implications that this will result, and the potential next steps.

Mr. Ryan, Senior Town Planner, noted that this would require a Planning Board public hearing and the warrant must be signed by October 13, 2023. There will be a special meeting on Tuesday, October 10, 2023. Mr. Ryan noted that the text of the amendment has been provided to the Town Administrator and Town Council for comments.

Public comments will be heard at the October 10, 2023 meeting.

3. Continued Case:

Case No. 23-19 One Special Permit 87 Goden Street (SRC) - Kamel Alhady

Applicant requests One Special Permit under §1.5.4 C (2) of the Zoning By-Law to construct a Single-family dwelling at 87 Goden Street located in Single Residence C (SRC) Zoning District. Special Permit: §1.5.4 C (3-b) of the Zoning By-Law allows construction of new structures after voluntary demolition by a Special Permit granted by the Planning Board.

Kamal Alhady, Applicant, presented the proposal for the new home. He began by showing images of the house from all sides. He described the location of the proposed retaining wall. He reviewed the plot plan and the zoning compliance checklist. Mr. Alhady presented the elevation of the proposed house and described the height of the roof peak as being lower than the existing house by nine inches.

Ms. Berberian reviewed the neighborhood analysis for TLA and FAR. The TLA of the proposed home is just under the 80th percentile and falls within the context of the existing homes in the neighborhood. Mr. Birenbaum said that 2,600 square feet seems to fit within the size of the homes in the neighborhood.

Mr. Alhady reviewed the landscape plan. Mr. Birenbaum noted that there would be a condition to include a sidewalk replacement at the front of the property.

MOTION to approve was made by Andrew Osborn and seconded by Carol Berberian. Motion passed.

YES votes-

Ms. Guo

Ms. Berberian

Ms. Donham

Mr. Yates

Mr. Osborn

Mr. Birenbaum

4. Continued case:

Case No. 23-21 Design and Site Plan Review Approval 336 Concord Ave (SRC) - Belmont Public Library, Conrad Ello, AIA, LEED AP, agent

Applicant requests Design and Site Plan Review Approval to construct a Library at 336 Concord Ave. located in a Single Residence C (SRC) zoning district. Section 7. 3. 2

Mr. Birenbaum recused himself from the meeting at 8:15 PM. Ms. Berberian led this portion of the meeting.

Noel Murphy, noted that they would address the landscape design along Wellington Brook, exterior lighting, rooftop equipment noise, and contractor use of the Underwood Pool “golden bowl”.

Mr. Valentine, Stimson Landscape Architects, presented the landscape plan.

Mr. Gatzunis noted that the stormwater management plan will be in full compliance. He noted that there was no damage to the culvert in relation to the High School project.

David Conway, Engineer, noted that the Armenian Church is upstream of the library and they would be very careful not to make things worse for the Armenian Church. They will work closely with the Armenian church on stormwater issues.

Noel Murphy reviewed the exterior lighting plan for the library. He also reviewed rooftop equipment noise solutions; he said they have a good strategy for controlling noise. A plan is in progress that will meet targets and compliance with code and regulations. He also reviewed the contractor's use of the “golden bowl” in front of the underwood pool, he noted that there would be erosion control barriers to control runoff during construction. He walked the Board through the construction parking plan. Ms. Berberian asked if they could consider making the primary entrance on Concord Rd. and not on Cottage Street. Mr. Gatzunis noted that they would go back and look at it again.

Ms. Donham would like to hear more about the stormwater elevation plans for the first floor of the building and how they will be proactive in a storm situation and not end up with a flooded first floor. Ms. Berberian asked to have this addressed at the next meeting.

MOTION to continue to October 3, 2023 was made by Ms. Berberian and seconded by Ms. Donham. Motion passed.

YES votes-

Ms. Guo

Ms. Berberian

Ms. Donham

Mr. Yates

Mr. Osborn

5. Continued Case:

Case No. 23-17 Design and Site Plan Approval

297 Concord Ave. - Municipal Skating Rink Building Committee

Applicants request Design and Site Plan Approval to construct a new Ice Skating Rink at 297 Concord Ave. located in a General Residence (GR) zoning district. Section 7. 3. 2 a) of the Zoning By-Law requires Design and Site Plan Review Approval from the Planning Board for the construction of a non-residential building that has a total Gross Floor Area greater than 2,500 square feet or a proposal that results in the need for six (6) or more parking spaces.

Mark Haley, Chair of the municipal skating rink building committee, introduced Mr. Galante, Architect.

Mr. Galante reviewed the proposed plans for the building. He reviewed the material finishes (interior and exterior) and the overall look and feel of the building.

Mr. Gatzunis, Project Manager, noted that there was a slight change in the location of the fire department access lane. He said that the new building's life should be longer than 50 years.

Allison Link, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 8, asked for an update on the fieldhouse.

Mr. Gatzunis noted that the fieldhouse would remain through this fall season and demolition will begin December 1 and the site will be cleared of the building in February or March 2024.

Ms. Berberian asked for a timeframe for the material boards and Mr. Galante said it should be provided within two weeks or so.

Ms. Donham would like to see the construction plan for where the construction vehicles would be parked. Mr. Galante noted that Skanska would speak about this issue.

Mr. Gatzunis mentioned that the traffic coordination will be coordinated with the rink, the High School, and the library construction projects.

Ms. Berberian asked for a timeline on what is going to happen to the land between the rink building and Concord Avenue as the Fieldhouse comes down. Ms. Gatzunis said he would pull this together.

MOTION to continue to October 3, 2023 was made by Ms. Berberian and seconded Mr. Yates. Motion passed.

Yes votes-

Ms. Guo

Ms. Berberian

Ms. Donham

Mr. Yates

Mr. Osborn

6. Update on Cases, Planning Board Projects and Committee Reports.

There were no new cases to discuss.

7. Adjourn 9:32 PM.

The Planning Board's next scheduled meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 3, 2023