

TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES
January 20, 2011

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TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA.
JAN 27 2 10 PM '11

7:30 p.m. Meeting called to order.

Attendance: Sami Baghdady, Chair, Michael Battista, Jenny Fallon, Andres Rojas, Karl Haglund; Jay Szklut and Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff.

Mr. Baghdady opened the meeting by introducing the Planning Board members and staff, welcoming the audience to the first public forum on South Pleasant Street, and inviting all to participate in the Planning Board sponsored event.

Approximately 35 to 40 persons were in attendance.

Mr. Haglund gave a brief review of the history of the area, and discussed its existing development and the current zoning.

Mr. Rojas reviewed possible land uses and design standards which can help define this area of Town.

Mr. Baghdady then opened the discussion to the residents in attendance. He emphasized that the purpose of the forum was to solicit from residents their vision for the future of South Pleasant Street.

There was a lively discussion among residents and Planning Board members. Comments from the audience were posted by Ms. Fallon and Mr. Battista. A summary of the comments is attached to these Minutes.

Mr. Baghdady concluded the meeting with a poll of the audience on whether they preferred to see commercial, residential or mixed use development on South Pleasant Street. The results of the poll were as follows:

Strictly Residential, Single and Two Family -1;

Apartment House – 3;

Strictly Commercial – 15; and

Mixed Commercial and Residential - 7.

9:15 p.m. Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 26, 2011, 7:00 p.m.
Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Hall

List of Documents presented:

- Audience Comments
- Forum Evaluation

1/26/10 Minutes Approved

**SOUTH PLEASANT STREET FORUM I
AUDIENCE NOTES – January 20, 2011**

MICHAEL'S NOTES

- Continue car uses?
- McLean R & D and assisted living – develop with these in mind.
- Reflect historic area in design of new development.
- Coordinate development with other projects and areas in town. (What can Belmont support?)
- Commercial vs. residential or mix?
- Different than the rest of Belmont going forward. Think out of box.
- Affect on residential neighborhoods behind municipal land – sight, sound, smell, etc.
- As Rt. 60 and a high traffic area parking and reason to stop is important stickiness!
- Farmer's market, small merchants (Fanuil Hall like) – green environment.
- Municipal swaps – police, etc.
- Is there an appetite for neighbors to isolate existing residential neighborhood from South Pleasant Street?
- Pedestrian crossovers over railroad.
- Route 60 to Trapelo Road is supposed to add traffic lights as part of McLean Project.
- Extend downtowns into South Pleasant Street. Bridges, tunnels, etc.
- Town versus developer trade-offs.
- Need map with footage – Assessors.
- Height is a concern for some.
- Dealership use has been a good use.

South Pleasant Street Forum I
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- Trade-offs – if higher building can open space be increased.
- Viewscape important to neighbors.
- Similar to Kendall Square – multi-use.
- Air rights over railroad to extend development.
- Integrate with Waverley Square.
- Commercial development and tax revenue.
 - High end R & D (Genzyme type).
- High tech auto uses.
- Kids recreation center – teens.
- Restaurants.
- Indoor sports complex (public/private) hockey rink/climbing wall.
- Office space.
- Large scale day care.
- Dog park.
- Not an office park?
- Project vision for future by attracting start up next tech businesses.
- Exclusively Commercial – retail, restaurants, office.
- Mix retail, office and residential.

JENNY'S NOTES

- Develop pedestrian and bike connections as part of vision.
- Potential to change atmosphere.
- Reconfigure auto connections as well?
- Make use of White Street extension?
- Try to visualize total transformation extend downtown areas?
- Get estimate for White Street Bridge?
- High end biotech, R & D, other development to expand tax base?
- Leaning toward commercial uses?
- Continue to support automotive uses? Especially of future.
- Opportunity for something to happen soon.
- Actually relatively close to neighborhood off of Waverley Street. Sight lines go across to Pleasant Street.
- Should we consider more than one zone?
- Not very walkable – vehicle access.
- Visualize like sidewalk businesses? BBQ, Farmers Market, Fanuil Hall as model?
- Should it be considered as continuous with the other side of tracks?
- Municipal uses in swap?
- Should the properties fronting on Trapelo Road be included? (Shaws, Car Wash)
No? Part of Waverley? Take out Shaws?
- Post prior requirements (came before McLean Agreement).
- Be aware of traffic implications.
- Plan design – consider connection to Historic District – make visually pleasing.

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- Consider infrastructure and services and what Belmont is capable of.
- What would make it attractive and inviting.
- Mall type use incorporating spaces for young people to gather?
- Hardware store? Good parking.
- Look realistically at commercial development ideas – significant investment.
- Will involve traffic.
- Sports complex. Day care.
- Design will be crucial in making a substantial commercial development work.
- Tech uses?
- What does “substantial” mean?
- Where will height work? Not block view from Waverley?
- Surface parking? Visual aspect – what is tradeoff to give incentive to hide parking?
- Vision more like Kendall Square?
- Air rights development? Connect the neighborhood?
- Poll:
 - Residential – 1
 - Apartment House – 3
 - Commercial – 15
 - Mixed use – 7

Feedback
Planning Board Forum on South Pleasant Street
January 20, 2011

1. Overall, how would you rate tonight's Public Forum?

<u>1. Not Useful</u>	<u>2.</u>	<u>3. Average</u>	<u>4.</u>	<u>5. Very Worthwhile</u>
n/a	n/a	1/2	4-1/2	7

2. What was the most helpful part of this Forum for you?

- Hearing what other residents support in terms of commercial/business area development. Best aspect of the forum was that it is proactive, not reactive
- Hearing developer talk.
- Good dialogue, context
- Open discussion
- Hearing a diversity of ideas.
- Brainstorming citizens concerns, notably with only a little "assessment"
- Wonderful ideas with the reality that there will need to be trade-offs – higher heights for more open space
- Diversity of participants (citizens, elected officials, developers, elders)
- Open, thoughtful dialogue
- Challenge of rezoning for entire area

3. What was the least helpful part of this Forum?

- Map needs to be bigger, with vacant lots highlighted
- Too much talk without much substance.
- That owner of the parcel kept quiet until 8:40 and didn't hear much of what was said.
- None
- Nothing – every comment in a forum is of value
- Audience expected to hear clear visions – that was unrealistic
- Being limited to discussing rezoning entire area instead of the "elephant" in the room – the DiMilia property – map was very confusing.

4. Any comments or suggestions for next steps?

- Invite all parcel owners to forum so they can hear what Tocci is hearing – Town's vision for that strip of Pleasant Street.
- More specific

4. Continued - Any comments or suggestions for next steps?

- Better visual aids:
 - 1) much more comprehensive map, including context surrounding
 - 2) photographs illustrating the viewscape from various perspectives
- Hard thinking about what can happen – what cannot happen throughout the length of this area.
- Better visuals – maps, sites, uses; Economic presentation (basic) – i.e., costs, yields (return), taxes
- Continue discussion
- Better maps
- Better maps showing all details of area and more info on zoning – options, current, changes? I would like to see the Clark Street bridge opened to ease traffic flow