

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
October 18, 2006**

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6:30 p.m. Meeting called to order.

Attendance: Karl Haglund, Chair; Jennifer Fallon; Sami Baghdady; Andres Rojas; Jay Szklut, Staff; Christine McVay, Consultant

Absent: Andrew McClurg

6:45 CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING: WAVERLY WOODS: MCLEAN ZONE 6, PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

A motion to waive the reading of the public notice was adopted by the Board.

The Planning Board and applicant discussed proposed conditions as drafted by staff. There was concern over what exactly was being approved given that final site plans had not yet been submitted. The Board agreed that an approval of the project as shown in the drawings submitted to date subject to Board's review and approval of all final drawings as shown in conditions 1 and 2 is acceptable. Both the Board and the Applicant agreed to other minor editorial changes recommended by various individuals. The conditions as revised were accepted by both the Board and the Applicant.

Motion by Fallon to continue the hearing to November 13, following the close of Town Meeting at the Town High School
Second by Rojas
Approved Unanimously

7:15 CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING: CUSHING SQUARE OVERLAY DISTRICT ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT

A motion to waive the reading of the public notice was adopted by the Board.

Chris McVay presented an overview of the proposed overlay zoning amendment.

Nancy Marsh was concerned that sufficient parking be provided. Noted that the 40 unit building in the square had only 18 spaces and was difficult to market. Also, she noted that the character of Cushing Square should be preserved.

Response: The Overlay requires one space per unit. This is reduced from typical suburban parking requirements because of proximity to public transportation and the persons most likely to live in mixed use residential units tend to have fewer cars.

Mathew Sullivan, Town Meeting Member and resident, disagreed that the Square currently has sufficient parking and noted that enforcement is an issue.

Don Becker, Town Meeting Member and resident, urged that the special permit criterion for three story structures be retained and that Section 7.4.3 of the Zoning By-laws be added to the review criteria for special permits.

Response: There is a concern that requiring a Special Permit may discourage investment and redevelopment of properties in the Square. If appropriate controls, such as FAR and perhaps a 2-½ story rule were added that controlled massing of third floor, would a special permit criterion still be needed.

Don Becker, Town Meeting Member and resident, felt that the Special Permit criterion gave more assurances to abutting residents.

Chris Starr, landowner, agreed with Mr. Becker that the special permit criterion would not hinder redevelopment in the square since developers already had to appear before the Planning Board for Design and Site Plan Review.

Charles Hamann, resident, is concerned that this new zoning be used. If it is not friendly than it will sit on the books and no changes to the Square will occur.

Dennis Whitford, resident, stressed the importance of design criteria.

Mark Clarke, Town Meeting Member and resident, noted that the renderings failed to show the trackless trolley above ground wires.

William Engstrom, Town Meeting member and resident, questioned whether development on the northern side of Trapelo from Common to Willow may result in negative affects on residential properties including casting of shadows on those properties. He also noted that the sidewalks on that side of Trapelo are very narrow.

Response: The Overlay district gives the Planning Board the ability to consider many factors in approving a proposed development. Additionally, larger developments are most likely to occur in the denser center of the Square and not the outlying areas. Further, the guidelines note that developments approaching the areas outside the proposed overlay zone must be sensitive to the nearby residential properties. Regarding width of sidewalks, the Traffic Advisory Committee is considering that element as they continue in their design of the Trapelo/Belmont corridor.

Heidi Steinart, resident, asked about the impact on neighboring property values should the zoning pass.

Response: While the zoning change itself may have no impact, should development occur as a result of the zoning change, those developments would certainly have an increased value and most likely would also enhance the values of neighboring properties.

Chris Starr, landowner, noted that real estate ads often highlight nearby amenities , shopping, etc. in marketing properties.

Paul Winters, resident and property owner, is concerned that the designation of properties as historic would be seriously detrimental to property owners, including himself, wishing to redevelop their properties. He urged that the by-law not force historic designation on properties.

Response: The by-law recognizes that for some properties a review of historical character is appropriate and allows for recommendations by the Historic District Commission. It therefore suggests that redevelopment of potential historic properties be sensitive to the historical nature of the property and incorporate to the extent possible those historic features in subsequent redevelopment.

Don Becker, Town meeting Member and resident, felt that there is a focus on large lots and was concerned with how smaller lots would be treated.

Response: The by-law allows development of larger lots and by so doing encourages lot consolidation. However, review of large lots does not differ from that of smaller lots.

Carolyn Bishop, resident, believes that historic buildings are an important part of the character of the Square and that 4 and even 3 story buildings are out of place.

Rosemary Burke, resident, asked about the consequences of adding the special permit criterion to 3 story buildings.

Response: The Board will discuss this revision and if necessary will seek additional input. However, at this time the sentiment is that it would have a minimal impact on potential redevelopment.

David Johnson, resident, stressed that an architectural and historical theme present in Cushing Square is that the Commercial Structure were developed to simulate residential construction, and that the theme should be a critical element in considering future projects.

Dennis Whitford, resident, asked whether the Town had begun to look at how the parking issue would be resolved and whether any population estimates for full build-out had been generated?

Response: Concurrent with the zoning overlay, the Town is investigating development of a centralized parking structure to serve the square. Due to the number of variables affecting any potential population estimates and the recognition that increasing residential density in the district is a critical component for revitalization estimates were not warranted.

Because written comments on the By-law had been received from Town Counsel and from Chris Starr, a landowner, and because a written draft of the By-law is required for the town meeting warrant for next week, the Board terminated public discussion to discuss the proposed submitted revisions and those brought up during the public hearings to date.

Revisions suggested by Town Counsel were approved. (These were mostly wording changes)

Town Counsel also recommended establishing specific conditions for special permit approval of uses greater than 12,000 square feet. The Board felt the conditions as currently noted in Section 7.4 of the by-laws were appropriate and would be referenced in the proposed by-law.

The following comments by Mr. Starr were also approved by the Board. FAR calculations to exclude underground parking and other spaces. Wording on sustainable development was changed to reflect that LEEDS is not a set of criteria but is a scoring system. Exclusion of automated banking facilities to specifically reference stand alone or on exterior facing wall.

The Board approved adding reference to Section 7.4.3 of the Zoning By-law to Section 8.6.2 of the proposed by-law and to adding a special permit requirement for developments of three story buildings.

Finally, the Board added that the maximum office space on the first floor allowed in a CSOD development is 2,500 square feet.

Motion by Fallon to continue the hearing to October 24 @ 7:30 pm at the Belmont Public Library, Assembly Room

Second by Rojas

Approved Unanimously

10:15 Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 24, 2006
Belmont Public Library, Assembly Room
7:00 pm – 10:00 pm

10/24/06 Approved Unanimously