

TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES
December 1, 2016

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BELMONT, MA

2016 DEC 21 PM 3:18

Present: Elisabeth Allison, Chair; Charles Clark; Joseph DeStefano; Barbara Fiacco, Vice Chair; Karl Haglund; Raffi Manjikian

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development Liaison

1. **7:02 PM - Meeting called to order**

2. **Continued Public Hearing**

a. 10 Anis Road – Two-Story Addition (SR-C)

Mr. Wheeler stated that as a result of working with the Working Group, the Applicant revised his plans so that he did not need a Special Permit; therefore, the Applicant requested to withdraw his application.

MOTION made by Mr. Clark to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.

MOTION Made by Mr. Clark to accept the withdrawal. Seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.

3. **Review Modification to Previously Granted Special Permit**

a. 9 Westlund Road - Raise the building 9” because of soil conditions.

Norman Kherlop, Architect, requested a revision of a previously granted Special Permit. He noted that because of unexpected soil conditions the building will need to be raised 9 inches higher than granted in order to avoid a water problem.

MOTION made by Ms. Fiacco to accept the modification to raise the building by 9”. Seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.

4. **New Public Hearing**

a. 75 Oliver Road – Second Story Addition (SR-C)

Ms. Fiacco read the notice of Public Hearing.

Laura Caputo, co-Applicant, stated that she currently lives at 50 Oliver Road and needs a larger home for their growing family and that they would like to have a house on the pond. Brian Caputo, co-Applicant, stated that the house needs renovation since it hasn't been update in over forty years. He added that they plan to do this in a way that is responsible and enhances the neighborhood. Mr. Miller, their architect, noted that their plans met the newly

adopted GR District Design Guidelines, even though the property is located in the SR-C District. He reviewed many of the details of the proposed plans including windows, architectural details, landscaping and HVAC. He noted that the Applicants have already received approval from the Conservation Commission.

Comments from the Audience:

1. Niall Johnson, 42 Lodge Road, stated that he lives across the street and is concerned about the height of the garage. He noted that the proposed ridge line of the garage would obstruct his view of the pond. He expressed concern about the aesthetics of the proposed addition and that it could negatively affect the resale value of his property.
2. Nelson Gore, 81 Oliver Road, expressed concern about disruption that the renovation could cause. He noted that he is retired and he is home during the day.

Ms. Allison stated that it is GFA in the SR-C District, not TLA, which is the controlling factor. She noted that comparisons to other homes were limited because the PB only had information on TLA for the surrounding neighborhood. She added that it is a problem that will need to be addressed in the future. She also noted that the Design Guidelines are for the GR district and not for the SR-C District. Ms. Allison reviewed the quartile analysis.

Mr. Manjikian stated that the threshold for size of additions in the SR-C was 30% and this came in at about 50%. He noted that this was a large addition. Mr. Fiacco stated that this was an interesting case in that most of the recent applications for additions were for increasing the size of a home in neighborhoods where the homes had not yet been expanded and this was the opposite situation. She added that the PB has recently been dissuading the upward increase of nonconformities in terms of side setbacks. She noted that she appreciated the Architect's attempts to follow the GR Guidelines as it helped the PB focus on the gatekeeping issues. She also noted that the pond setbacks created more open space than normal and that the PB should take that into consideration.

Mr. DeStefano asked the Applicant to lower the garage height to restore the views. He noted that the homes on the pond have two fronts - Oliver Road and the pond. He asked if the Hill Estates can see the rear of the home. He added that he felt that the TLA of the house at 2,200 square feet is not an overpowering size. He also added that the issues to work around were aesthetics, windows, views, sidelines and setbacks. He requested the Architect to reconsider the rear windows so they would be more cohesive with the front.

Ms. Allison stated that the PB tries to be consistent across applications in the SR-C District. She noted that extending existing nonconformities has come before the PB before and that in other cases the PB has been very unenthusiastic about extending them. Ms. Allison summarized her major concerns - the proposed four livable floors, the garage height and the raised decks. Ms. Caputo presented a picture of the rear of the adjacent homes to note that the contemporary windows are consistent with the adjacent homes.

Mr. Clark asked Mr. Caputo to explain how he will address his neighbor's issue about the

garage height. Mr. Caputo stated that he believed that the garage height will be low enough for the neighbor to still view the pond. He noted that in terms of value, the existing home was unattractive and that a nicely designed, high-end renovation would add to the overall value of the neighborhood. Mr. Miller stated that the garage height was well below the allowed height and that the gable was to allow light into the room not to expand TLA.

Ms. Allison suggested that the Applicants meet with a Working Group to help work out some of the issues of nonconformities, setbacks, size and height. Mr. Miller agreed to work with the Working Group and to reappear before the PB on December 20, 2016. He again stated his view that the current plans respected all design guidelines. He also highlighted his clients' concerns about the length of the permitting process and their financial impact. Ms. Allison stated that the PB cares about the cost to the Applicant. She explained that the PB tries very hard to reflect the spirit of Town Meeting as well as the particular language that was voted and that a 50% addition to TLA is a large addition in terms of density and size.

Mr. DeStefano and Mr. Manjikian agreed to be on the Working Group.

MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to continue the public hearing to December 20, 2016. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.

[Mr. DeStefano left the meeting at 8:12 PM.]

3. Update on Cushing Village

Ms. Allison stated that updates on the Cushing Village will be provided throughout the coming year. She explained that the due date for the demolition and foundation submissions is December 5, 2016 and that there will be more definitive review at the meeting on December 20, 2016.

Ms. Allison stated that the list of conditions was long and it would be helpful to put them into perspective. She explained that the required documentation for starting demolition and site work was already submitted. She noted that the majority of the nine conditions required for demolition and foundation work were common to all building projects in Belmont. She reiterated that although the PB will closely monitor the progress of the project, the PB was not the enforcing body; that was the responsibility of the Office of Community Development.

Mr. Wheeler reported on the preconstruction meeting and noted that most of the documents required prior to the issuance of demolition and foundation permits were previously approved except for one, the Erosion Control Plan, which will be reviewed by the Board on December 20, 2016. He stated that Toll Brothers will submit revised documents by Monday, December 5, 2016. He also noted that the spreadsheet and the documents related to these conditions were currently available on the Town's website.

4. Review of Study Plan for Various Commercial Districts

Mr. Wheeler provided maps to the Board members and explained that they were those that

were discussed at the Board's last meeting. He noted that they were Local Business I, II and III Districts and included Brighton and Pleasant Streets, and Central, Palfrey and Waverly Squares. Ms. Allison stated a primary goal for the PB was to build a commercial base that contributes to the Town in terms of quality of life, economic vitality and net fiscal benefit. She noted that this project was a commercial stimulus project not a beautification or redesign project. The PB agreed to look at the large commercial areas that have not recently been the focus of the Town's attention. It was agreed that the next step should be a public discussion on Waverly Square and North Pleasant Street, to be held on January 19, 2017. Mr. Clark stated that the invitation should be clear and should emphasize that the general public is also invited.

5. Discussion of Signage for Potential By-Law Change

Ms. Fiacco stated that Mr. DeStefano, Mr. Wheeler and she met to discuss signage by-laws and looked at what they want to accomplish. They compared the By-Law with several other communities and identified areas where the Town's By-Laws fell short. She added that it will be important to get a handle on sign By-Law before Cushing Village commercial space becomes available. Ms. Allison stated that if the PB wanted to submit to Town Meeting, public conversations will begin in January 2017 with hearings in February 2017. Mr. Wheeler stated that the new Staff Planner will review comparable By-Laws. He noted that he had a conversation with Mr. Clancy, Director of Community Development, and that Mr. Clancy provided a list of issues for the PB to take into consideration.

6. Updates on Potential Cases and Planning Board Projects and Committee Reports

- a. Mr. Wheeler stated that the Historic District Committee will present the Historic Survey on December 8, 2016.
- b. Mr. Wheeler noted that the public records law was amended and becomes effective on January 1, 2017 and invited the Board to hear a presentation on the changes to the law.
- c. Mr. Haglund stated that the CPA got its state match, which at 20.6% is the lowest since Belmont adopted the program.

7. Preview Agenda for the December 20, 2016 meeting

The Board reviewed the items for the agenda

8. Review and Approval of Minutes

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to approve meeting minutes with two changes.
Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed.**

9. Adjourn 9:02 PM