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Belmont Historic District Commission

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 10, 2016, 7:00 pm, Belmont Town Hall

Commissioner members: Lisa Harrington, Terry McCarthy, Lauren Meier, Sue Pew, Michael Smith
Lydia Ogilby, Chairman Emeritus

Not present: Joseph Cornish, Jacob Cohen

Additional attendees: Representing Direct Energy Solar: Marty Burque
Representing Verizon: Michael Giaimo – Robinson & Cole, Maureen Bowman – EBI Consulting, Steven Bozkurtian, SCG
Public attending: Michael Cragg, Judith Ananian Sarno, Ron Creamer, Glen Herosian, Don Elwell

Agenda and Discussion:

1. Rooftop Solar Panels – 509 Pleasant Street

- Since the project was not received by Community Development the requisite 3 weeks prior to the hearing, Lauren Meier reported that this would constitute an informal discussion, with the official public hearing at the next meeting.
- Marty Burque presented the proposed rooftop solar panels proposed for the new addition at 509 Pleasant Street. Panels on the [flat] roof of the new addition will be tilted at a 30 degree angle to face south; panels on the small connector will be flush on the roof.
- Mike Smith reported that he had met with the homeowner, Nushen Yazdi, to review the project onsite. The panels are only marginally visible from Pleasant Street.
- The Commission asked clarifying questions regarding the design. There were no concerns expressed by the Commission.
- Michael Cragg suggested that the owners review the project with their abutting neighbors.

2. Verizon Wireless Section 106 Review – response needed to EBI Consulting’s letter dated April 18, 2016, requesting comments as part of the Section 106 review process for the proposed telecommunications facility installation at 582 Pleasant Street (Plymouth Congregational Church)

- Lauren Meier gave a brief summary of the agenda item – informal review as per the Section 106 process (not a public hearing or a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness) in response to plans prepared by Dewberry Engineers and EBT Consulting; N.B. plans show “03/09/16 for submittal” as the most recent date.
- Michael Giaimo, attorney for Verizon, gave a summary of the revised project. The proposed exterior alterations have been changed in response to the HDC’s earlier comments on the project. This includes deleting two exterior elements of the previous design: the condensers and replacement of the existing louvers with a substitute material. The new design has a small white

GPS unit, approximately the size of a small water bottle, mounted on the inside of the solid corner baluster on the steeple. Four sets of antennas will be located inside the steeple.

- Lauren reported that she had visited the church with Joe Cornish to evaluate the visibility of the proposed GPS unit as that is the only exterior alteration, and therefore the only part of the project potentially subject to HDC review. They walked up and down Pleasant Street, Alexander Avenue, and to the crest of the hill on Somerset and could not see the inside corner of the baluster from any of these locations.
- Michael Giaimo suggested that given the lack of visibility of the GPS unit, the project should qualify for a Certificate of Non-applicability. There was considerable discussion about whether or not this required a public hearing; Lauren will consult with the Office of Community Development to determine the process and report back to Mr. Giaimo.
- Public comments:
 - Glen Herosian: asked that there be a public hearing for the Certificate. He also raised concerns about heat dissipation inside the steeple. Response from Michael Giaimo: he understood a public hearing would not be required, reported that Verizon has evaluated technical issues and declined to comment on issues outside the jurisdiction of the HDC.
 - Judith Sarno shared a photograph of the antennae inside the cupola at the Belmont Savings Bank. In that installation, the antennae is clearly visible as the cupola has a wood frame and glass enclosure. Commission response: this is a different installation. Also note that there is a pending article for Town Meeting that would require Site Plan Review for interior installation of interior cell antennas.
 - Ron Creamer raised the issue that a change in use constituted a change in character and therefore an adverse effect. There was discussion with Maureen Bowman of EBT Consulting regarding what happens if a project “is not successful” through the 106 process. Answer: MOA with local entity to address mitigation.

3. Old Business

- Survey: Lauren reported on Lisa Mausolf’s progress. Joe is working with her to wrap up the project. Lisa Harrington will review the schedule for completion with the CPA committee, particularly with regard to the public presentation. Lauren suggested that we ask Lisa to come to our next meeting if we are to do a public presentation in June.
- Demolition Delay: Lauren reported that the extension was approved by Town Meeting. The Commission will need to work diligently in the upcoming months to be ready for Spring 2017.
- 467 Pleasant Street: Joe heard from Steven Panosian that work will begin soon. Sue Pew provided photographs of the streetscape and raised concerns regarding the condition of the landscape, including vegetation growth around the stone monument. All agreed that this is a very significant property in Belmont and that the condition of the landscape is unfortunate. Terry suggested that perhaps the Garden Club could take over maintenance of the area around the monument.

- Sue Pew introduced a motion to develop a plan for meeting minutes. Lauren suggested that we take that up under new business.

4. New Business

- HDC Membership:
 - Lydia introduced Michael Cragg of 5 Somerset Street, who attended the meeting and expressed interest in joining the Commission. Terry McCarthy will scan and forward Michael's resume to Commissioners. Mike Smith gave Mr. Cragg a copy of the volunteer form. Next step: Mr. Cragg should complete the form and submit it to the Selectmen.
 - Nushen Yasdi has expressed interest in joining the Commission.
 - Mike Smith reported that he has sent a request to the BSA (Boston Society of Architects) as we are required to have a BSA member on the Commission.
 - Joe Cornish will not be renewing his appointment. Lauren conveyed his new email address for communications to HDC: BelmontHDC@gmail.com.
- Minutes: Lauren agreed with Sue Pew regarding improving our meeting Minutes. Lauren suggested that we rotate taking Minutes amongst Commission members. Lauren will write up minutes for May 10 to serve as a "template" for future Minutes, and will circulate in draft prior to the next meeting. Terry suggested we should be voting/approving Minutes at each meeting.
- HDC Process: Lauren reported that she, Joe Cornish and Mike Smith had met with Jeffrey Wheeler and his assistant Gaelle, to update the forms and directions related to the HDC process. The Commission needs to update the Guidelines as well – adding in new historic district, etc.
- 56 Waverley Street: Don Elwell brought plans for his barn and asked that the Commission provide guidance about what would be acceptable in order to proceed with alterations under the Barn/Accessory Building bylaw. Mike Smith and Lisa Harrington will find time to visit the property and review the project with Mr. Elwell prior to our next meeting. Lauren will contact Joe Cornish related to historic photographs. We will add this to the agenda for our next meeting if so desired by Mr. Elwell.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.

Next regular meeting: Tuesday, June 14, 2016

Minutes approved May 25, 2016