

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
May 9, 2006**

RECORDED
TOWN CLERK
BETH ANN
JUN 5 10 01 AM '06

7:06 Meeting called to order

Attendance: Karl Haglund, Chair; Andrew McClurg; Jennifer Fallon; Sami Baghdady; Jay Szklut, Staff; Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff; Christine McVay, Staff

Absent: Andres Rojas;

The minutes of April 18, 2006 were approved as submitted.

Board members discussed the presentation of the proposed Historic Accessory Structure bylaw for the May 22 continued Town Meeting. The Board requested that photos of the types of building affected by the bylaw be included in the presentation. Jeffrey noted that a slide had been added detailing the process the Planning Board followed in developing the proposed bylaw. Discussion on how the planning board should respond to the objections of the warrant committee followed. The Board felt that their presentation on the merits of the article should precede any presentation by the warrant committee on the reasons they objected to the article. Additionally, the Board should be prepared to respond to an amendment deleting accessory residential uses from the bylaw.

7:25 p.m. Discussion – Demolition Delay By-Law

Richard Cheek and Lydia Ogilby joined the Board on a discussion of a demolition delay bylaw. Karl reviewed the planning board history of looking into such a bylaw. It was noted that demolition delay bylaws dealt with historic structures and were not found in the zoning bylaws but the general bylaws of a community. Ms. Sue Bass noted that a general bylaw required a simple majority vote at Town meeting rather than a 2/3 majority of zoning bylaws. There was some discussion on whether a bylaw presented by the planning board would be more politically palatable to the community. Mr. Cheek noted that a representative from the Massachusetts Historical Society was available to speak on demolition delay bylaws but preferred speaking to a regional group. The Board requested that the Belmont Historic District Commission organize such a meeting to provide additional information on pros and cons of moving forward and to address some specific issues related to the bylaw. Mr. Cheek agreed to the HDC taking on that task.

8:05 CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING: SITE PLAN REVIEW 495 COMMON ST.

The applicant's attorney reviewed the additional documents submitted. These included several proposed additional parking solutions. The applicant noted that improvements and changes to the current parking lot would create two additional on-street spaces and one additional space on the lot itself. The applicant provided a letter documenting the ability to lease 6 spaces from a service station at the corner of Belmont and Common Streets. Additionally, the applicant could, subsequent to construction, apply for permit parking in the municipal lot. The applicant then introduced his "licensed site professional", who presented information on the contamination

existing on the site, the clean-up effort, and the need to move quickly to control the contamination. Finally, the architect for the project notified the Board that the applicant is willing to replace three trees along Common St. that are on Town property subject to the approval of the Town.

Karl thanked the applicant for the presentation but noted that demolition of the building and the timing of that demolition were decisions made by the applicant and not the result of a State mandate and that therefore consideration of the site plan is independent of the need to demolish the existing structure. Mr. McClurg thanked the applicant for his effort to meet the parking requirements but expressed concern that the Board is being asked to waive parking requirements for a structure that does not meet the planning goals for the Square. The applicant responded that he would prefer to build a different structure and would be willing to delay obtaining a building permit for a reasonable period of time.

Mr. Haglund suggested that the Board would be willing to provide a conditional approval of the site plan subject to providing the additional parking as presented this evening prior to the issuance of a building permit and subject to a condition that permits not be requested prior to a fall 2006 Town meeting. The Board requested the applicant's attorney to draft the noted conditions for consideration and action at the next meeting. The Board will also specify dumpster location and final landscaping concerns at that meeting.

The meeting was continued to May 30, at 7:15 PM.

9:30 p.m. Discussion – Cushing Square Rezoning

Chris McVay distributed a sample overlay zoning bylaw. She would like the Board to consider the issues raised in the sample and to prepare to discuss the appropriateness of each issue at the next Board meeting. She also presented notes from the meeting with the business and commercial property owners from the square. Overall, she reported that the meeting was very successful with a great deal of enthusiasm that the Town was taking some positive action to improve the Square's business climate. Comments received included allowing larger stores (>5,000 ft²) and that development should precede parking (noted by Jenny), separate height requirements from parking formula, the need for a village improvement plan, and design guidelines.

Chris also presented a draft timeline for preparing and presenting a zoning amendment to Town Meeting. The next step would be another meeting with residents to begin to establish appropriate and acceptable dimensional guidelines. She asked that the planning board consider these guidelines for their next meeting. Jenny noted that the Board should have a more general discussion on the various issues to insure all were on the same page. The Board agreed to continue the discussion to their next meeting.

9:45 p.m. Discussion – Smart Growth Overlay District/Our Lady of Mercy Site

As a follow up to Jay's meeting with the Oakley Neighborhood Association, Jay suggested that the Board consider proposing a Smart Growth Overlay (40R) District to encompass the Our Lady of Mercy properties. Roger Colton was concerned that the site may not meet the criteria for designation as a smart growth district. Jay will look into this. Jay suggested that prior to initiating any formal process the Board invite members of the neighborhood to a meeting to

asked what the advantages/benefits to creating a 40R district. Jay responded that although current zoning allowed single family development, the cost of the property may preclude such development resulting in vacant buildings occupying the property for a number of years or a 40B project. Under 40R the Town could promote affordable housing while limiting the density to two family structures which are more in conformance with the existing neighborhood structures. Additionally, a single family development would result in the demolition of the properties whereas a 40R zone may result in the preservation of the architecture if so desired. The Board agreed to place the item on their June 13th agenda and to invite neighborhood residents to attend that meeting.

Town Planner's Report

MBTA – Jay reported that the Town Administrator and one selectman met with MBTA representatives regarding their plans for the Belmont stations. They reported that the MBTA is not pushing for the closing of either station at this time. However, should the Town come forward with a proposal for changes to the stations, it would be considered.

Other

Belmont Center Planning Group – Sami reported that the BCPG was very interested in the Planning Board's efforts around Cushing Square. They would like to meet with the Planning Board to present results of the Belmont Center Charrette and to look at similarities and differences between Cushing Square and Belmont Center. The Board agreed to invite BCPG to their June 13 meeting.

10:30 Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: Tuesday May 30, 2006
Town Hall, Conference Room 2
7:00 pm – 10:00 pm

*MINUTES Approved
5/30/06*