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## Belmont Historic District Commission

### MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday January 10, 2017

Belmont Town Hall Room 4

**Commission Members Present:** Lauren Meier, Co-Chair, Lisa Harrington, Co-Chair, Michael Chesson, Terry McCarthy, Elizabeth (Sue) Pew, Michael Smith, Nushin Yazdi, Lydia Ogilby, Member Emerita.

Jeffrey Wheeler – Office of Community Development (OCD), Spencer Gober (OCD)

**Not Present:** Jacob Cohen, Kathy Fahey, Karl Leabo

#### 1. 7:00 PM Meeting called to order.

#### 2. Continued Public Hearing:

504 Concord Avenue; Revised Scope: subterranean Garage and associated site work

Rebecca Verner, Lombardi Landscape Design and Steven Hart, Hart Architects presented the updated scope for the proposed subterranean garage and entry courtyard.

- Site grading has been mediated to lower the wall.
- Top of garage and balustrade will be made of Haddenstone (balustrade will be visually permeable).
- Re: balustrade – create plantings to encourage falling vines to soften the appearance, and try to work with the existing wall of three fieldstone piers – rock-based granite cap: New England Brick Co. will supply old brick to match those existing on house.
- Previously approved pool enclosure fence has been lowered, and reconfigured adjacent to the house.

#### Questions/Comments:

- Ms. Yazdi asked for clarification regarding how one gains entry to the house. Answer: from the new garage into the lower (basement) level of the house. There still is exterior parking adjacent to the side/kitchen entrance.
- Concerning drainage, Ms. Harrington suggests that the plans indicate an increase in impermeable surfaces; questions raised about the need to mitigate drainage flow.
- Ms. Harrington also raised questions raised regarding heftiness of the wall, and whether or not it will be visible from a public way. The landscape architect replied that the height of the wall has already been approved [in a previous Certificate of Appropriateness].
- The Commission discussed stone piers on front façade of garage. Ms. Meier and Mr. Smith raised questions regarding if all of the materials (brick, stone, plantings) will be visually compatible with the balustrade. They noted the garage should be clearly a secondary structure to the house. Ms. Meier noted she would like to see an elevation of the entire front of the house, and the landscape architect shared an elevation from a previous presentation.
- Mr. Smith discussed the design of the balustrade – should it be treated without brick piers? The landscape architect noted that the brick piers helped to break up the long run of the balustrade.

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- Ms. Meier noted that the plans submitted for the COA must agree with the building permit.
- The Commission discussed whether or not drawings submitted were sufficient to grant Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Smith suggested a need to revise the Certificate of Appropriateness Application to reflect removal of the front stairs and updated drawings submitted for hearing. HDC will make notes to that effect directly on the COA.
- Mr. Wheeler: "The application will be the decision. Our application form will be amended next month."
- HDC had a general discussion regarding amended approach to the project, which was generally favorable.
- Mr Smith: "Moved: to approve the proposed project as submitted, regarding new garage, walls, and 'chip and seal' materials." The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### 3. Continued informal project discussion:

a. 504 Concord Ave. scope: bathroom addition

The owner is rethinking their approach to this project so it was not discussed at the meeting.

b. 721 Pleasant St. Scope: replacement of existing windows with new door; replacement of existing door with new windows.

Romain Aubanel, owner and Ryan Pinkham, architect presented renovation ideas for feedback from the Commission.

- The owners wish to update the house so as to make exterior access consistent with other interior work. They wish to replace a small window with a French door to an existing patio.
- They also wish to free-up the kitchen leaving one window and series of matching windows on the west façade that will satisfy their wish for more interior light. This change will result in higher ceilings and taller windows. Removal of the chimney in the kitchen was also discussed.
- The rear stair has been removed as has a first floor bathroom because another door conflicted with this bathroom door. A new bathroom is proposed on the main (first) floor.
- The owners also wish to create a master-suite on the third floor with skylights visible from the rear.

### Comments:

- HDC discussed the need to retain existing chimney, referred to HDC guidelines
- Mr. Smith discussed dormers vs. skylights with comparison to approval of solar panels. Suggested that the pattern/placement of skylights should match the roof plane so that they visually relate to exterior view of the house.
- Mr. Wheeler had a concern that the flow of people should not be through the kitchen.

### 4. Continuing discussions

a. Historic Resources Survey project:

- Historic Recourses HDC documents were prepared by Lisa Mausolf, consultant for the town.
- The Commission thanked Lisa Harrington who has skillfully guided the completion of this report, made possible by Town Meeting awarded Community Preservation Funds. This

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survey allows for future updating. A discussion was held regarding the need to provide more documentation.

- Motion: To accept the report as presented with supplementary materials and appendices. Motion seconded and approved unanimously.

b. Demo Delay Bylaw – update review of a draft list of significant unprotected historic buildings.

- Comments were made regarding including all of Snake Hill and all of Colonial Terrace as historic properties. The Karl Koch House should be included as the Gropius House is and labeled as historic. Also the former Harvard Lawn Fire House conversion to be included.

#### **5. New Business**

a. Sons of Italy CPA project request: Ms. Harrington discussed the project request as the HDC representative to the CPC. Commission discussed the appropriateness for our Belmont (Town) Commission supporting financially the work of the (statewide organization) Sons of Italy project to research and conserve their historical artifacts.

- Consensus of the Commission is that it is important to convey that the Commission does support the project and the effort being put forward by the Sons of Italy, but that Belmont Community Preservation Act funds are not the appropriate entity for this venture.
- Moved: that the Commission not financially support this request for funds. Motion was seconded and passed. Letter will be drafted to reflect HDC support for the project generally, but not through CPA.

b. New Public Records Law:

- It is necessary for each Commission member to be aware of the Anderson Kreiger "Public Records Procedure Checklist for Records Access Officers of Municipalities" contained in "An Act to Improve Public Records Chapter 121, Acts of 2016. It has been suggested that each such officer make paper copies of business records so that they are kept in a place of consistent reference.
- Ms. Meier also discussed the need for all HDC email communication to be copied to OCD, as the town liaison.

#### **6. Review and approve minutes from December 2016**

- The minutes were approved with the following amendment:  
"Ms. Pew reported that her home at 27 Wellington Lane in the Pleasant St. Historic District, after a visit from an insurance company inspector, was advised that the garage roof needed replacement. Mr. Leabo and Ms. Yazdi have agreed to visit the home during the next week to evaluate the need and procedure, if appropriate."

#### **7. Meeting Calendar and Minutes assignments for 2017:**

THURSDAY Feb. 16 - Karl Leabo

Tuesday Mar. 14 – Terry McCarthy

Tuesday April 11 – Nushin Yazdi

Tuesday May 9 – Michael Chesson

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Tuesday June 13 – Lisa Harrington

**Next Meeting: THURSDAY Feb 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM**

Respectfully submitted by Sue Pew.