

**UNDERWOOD POOL PROJECT**  
Belmont, Massachusetts

2014 NOV -4 AM 9:30

**BELMONT UNDERWOOD POOL BUILDING COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**

June 17, 2014

Belmont Town Hall – Board of Selectmen Conference Room

**Attending:**

**Belmont Planning Board Members** - Michael Battista (Chair), Karl Haglund, Charles Clark, Elizabeth Allison (Vice Chair), Joseph DeStefano, Jeffery Wheeler (liaison)

**Underwood Pool Building Committee (UPBC)** – Anne Paulsen (UPBC Chair), Adam Dash (UPBC Vice Chair and Warrant Committee member), Joel Mooney, David Kane (Recreation Commission Chair), Mike Smith (Historic District Commission Co-Chair), Ellen Schreiber (UPBC Secretary)

**Also in attendance** –Peter Castanino (Director of Public Works and UPBC liaison), Tom Scarlata (BH+A), Kyle Zick (KZLA), Deborah Marai (PCI), members of the public

**Call to Order:** See item 2. below.

1. **Planning Board Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.**
  - Chair Michael Battista introduced Planning Board members.
  - First item on the agenda is review of UPBC application for design and site plan review; Mr. Battista invited UPBC to present.
2. **UPBC Chair Anne Paulsen called UPBC meeting to order 7:05 p.m.**
  - There is a quorum of the UPBC in attendance.
  - Anne Paulsen made opening statements and introduced attending members of UPBC, architect Tom Scarlata from BH+A, landscape architect Kyle Zick from KZLA, and owner's project manager Deborah Marai from Pinck & Co., Inc.
  - Anne Paulsen provided information on the background of the Underwood Pool project and timeline of work performed by the UPBC and team, including the previous informal meeting with the Planning Board in February. The team has addressed many of the concerns expressed by the Planning Board earlier.
  - Regarding the gable desired at the center of the west bath house by some of the Planning Board members, Anne Paulsen indicated there is a difference of opinion; the UPBC and architect believe they have put forward a design that is appropriate for the project, the site and the historic nature of pool. She hopes that after the presentation, the Planning Board members will understand the rationale of the UPBC and its team, there is a discussion and come to resolution.
  - Tom Scarlata will present; Mike Smith will also make comments.
3. **Tom Scarlata of BH+A presented drawings submitted to Planning Board**
  - Site
    - The character of the Underwood Park is important given its historic nature and its prominence on Concord Avenue. The design maintains the view up across the pool and up the hill from Concord Avenue.
    - Program of the bath houses is broken up into separate buildings because of square footage of the program requirements relative to the size and organization of the site.
    - The design maintains the depressed skating area.

- The design maintains the 10 existing parking spots. If parking requirements were to be based on bather load/area of pool, would need 88 spots. During the Feasibility Study, there were conversations with school department regarding summer parking requirements at the Wellington School, and it was determined that there is capacity for Underwood Pool parking, particularly during peak pool hours.
- The design includes a seasonal drop off area on Concord Avenue and improves safety at the existing parking area with sidewalks and curbs.
- The design takes into account requirements of the Town's fire and safety officials with visibility across the site and by maintaining emergency access.
- The design proposes to cover over the existing culvert to incorporate more lawn area into the pool for seating and activity.
- The design raises the site to make it level and assist with universal accessibility.
- Buildings:
  - The east bath house is the control point with the main entry to the Underwood Pool facing the new sidewalk from Concord Avenue; it includes the control room, pass through to the pool, family/ accessible toilet/shower/changing rooms and first aid.
  - The filter building is a compact building and includes a separate small vending area and individual toilet room.
  - The west bath house includes the lifeguard rest area, storage, men's and women's bathrooms.
  - A benefit to splitting the program between the two bath houses is that most uses can be accommodated in east bath house; during non-peak times, the west bath house bathrooms can be closed.
  - There is both natural and additional required mechanical ventilation; fans and exhausts are positioned away from Cottage Street and are of very low velocity; noise will not be an issue.
- Pool:
  - The team worked with the pool staff and Recreation Department to insure the new design matches the current lifeguard staffing levels.
- Where we started and where we ended up – addressing comments from the Community:
  - Moved programming from east side to west bath house to create smaller footprint across from the neighbors on Cottage Street
  - Reduce the overall square footage of the bath houses by decreasing the number of individual toilet/shower/changing rooms and increasing the facilities in shared or gang bathrooms
  - Bath house and filter building on east side were separated even further to address visibility concerns of neighbors immediately across the street.
  - Addressed concerns about roof lines after Town meeting – comments from UPBC, neighbors, others in community. Current design has a more unified vocabulary, all buildings that work together (clerestory ribbon at top of buildings allowing for light and ventilation; articulated ends with small louver that also help with ventilation).
  - Building will have solid color stain or paint. At first, painted fiber cement siding was proposed; not a natural product and with limitations. The design responded to the Planning Board and others regarding natural materials being more appropriate for the park setting, and now the buildings include natural cedar siding.

- West bath house plan - separation of men's and women's room entrances because of Planning Board and Public Safety concerns (increased footprint).
- West bath house roof line design remains as presented, and the preference and recommendation to the Planning Board is to stay with the uninterrupted roof line. Tom Scarlata has no issue with the proposed long roof; the design is subjective. There is nothing at the center of the west bath house to celebrate or call out; a center gable or pediment would be just a decoration. Also, language does not work at other buildings. However, the team has looked at options for a center roof gable per request of the Planning Board. Cost is an issue, needs to be simple over-frame; Tom Scarlata would not propose to do more glazing. If breaking up the roof line is the main concern, Tom recommends a simple shed dormer with functional ventilation. Various sketch options were shown to the Planning Board.

#### 4. Questions from Planning Board

- Mike Battista: West bath house design
  - Separation of men's and women's rooms at west bath house works better – but there are a lot of doorways. He is also concerned someone could go through lifeguard area from men's side to women's side.
  - Response: Started with storage room door accessed from rear of building, but not practical and a security concern; need 2 doors at storage because of the different functions in room. There 2 doors at each restroom because of flow; these can be high volume areas. Lifeguard area is a dedicated programming space; lifeguards go there during mandatory breaks, so the room will be typically occupied or locked; Dutch doors were chosen for each side to allow for audible connection to each restroom. The recessed entry to the restrooms is a function of privacy; design prevents direct view from pool into restrooms.
- Mike Battista: Pediment asked for at west bath house will be visible from Concord.
  - Joe DeStefano: The west bath house may be the secondary building, but it is an 80' wide feature. It does not make sense to have that with nothing in middle of it; he feels it is not proportional.
  - Mike Battista: The west bath house is also replacing what is there. He is not a fan of louvers in the gable.
  - Tom Scarlata verified if there is a gable at the west bath house, the overhang will be a shadow line.
- Karl Haglund: Sidewalks
  - Regarding the sidewalk at the parking island, he feels there is no reason to put sidewalk in there; this appears to be an extra sidewalk since there is one parallel at the street.
  - He feels the sidewalk should continue up Cottage Street on the west side of the tree line.
  - Tom Scarlata indicated the team had planned to extend the sidewalk to make it continuous on the pool side of Cottage Street, but a new sidewalk in the park would need to be handicap accessible and the grades prevent that unless a large area of park is used to zig-zag down the hill; the right of way is too narrow to add a sidewalk. BH+A has approached the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board for an opinion.
- Charles Clark: No comment.
- Joe DeStefano: Feels the project is headed in right direction with the proposed gable at the west bath house,

- Mike Battista: The Planning Board has tried to be open and mention as many of these things up front. The pediment is an important design element to him; it relates to the character of buildings in town.
- Jeffery Wheeler: Showed slides of examples of buildings in the area.
- Anne Paulsen: UPBC asked BH+A to put together renderings to respond to the Planning Board comments about a center roof gable at the west bath house. The UPBC did take a vote last week on their preference for the west bath house, and the consensus was to maintain design without gable. The UPBC feels the design as it stands is appropriate for project, and the proposed gable throws off the unified architecture. Also, the emphasis is on the park; when people walk along Concord Avenue, what they see is the park. A center element on the west bath house indicates something significant is happening in that building, which is not the case.
- Mike Battista indicated that during the working sessions with some members of the Planning Board and the UPBC, there were discussion about a gable; he wanted to look at options. The Planning Board would like to be heard. This needs to be done.
- Joe DeStefano said this is the first public outdoor pool in the country. He wants building to enhance pool and not just be utilitarian; meant to be simple, elegant, compliment the environment.
- Elizabeth Allison: Ventilation
  - She is concerned about potential noise from the mechanical ventilation and pool equipment; this is something difficult to fix once done. She requested numbers on pitch and decibel level.
- Elizabeth Allison: Parking
  - Regarding parking, the requirement is for 88 spaces and there are 10 existing /proposed. Her concern is about clogging the neighborhood streets.
  - Tom Scarlata said the team met with public safety; this needs to be worked on.
  - Anne Paulsen said that 90 spaces are available at the Wellington School.
  - Karl Haglund asked if there is any documented evidence that there is a problem now. Elizabeth Allison is concerned that history is not a good guide; the existing pool is geared more for children, the new pool is designed for adults as well,
  - Mike Battista said there needs to be a plan. The Planning Board is the authority that grants relief. There needs to be a parking plan, some type of enforcement plan.
  - Tom Scarlata said that people park where they park – across Concord Avenue, on Cottage Street, at the Wellington School. Team spoke with public safety about enforcement, such as when people park too close to driveways.
  - Anne Paulsen met with the Police Department on multiple occasions; they are comfortable with the proposed seasonal drop-off at Concord Avenue and the use of Wellington parking; it is only 1000' from the pool to the furthest section of Wellington parking. The Recreation Commission is going to emphasize parking options. Police will be helpful in making sure people's driveways are not blocked.
  - Peter Castanino said Anne Paulsen expressed a lot of what he was going to say. Attendance at pool depends on day of week and weather; programming will change throughout the day and week. People find parking now. Parking up at the school provides an opportunity to alleviate parking issue. He has been managing pool for 11 years and has never have had a parking complaint.
- Mike Smith: West bath house

- As Tom Scarlata clarified, the project team is comfortable with the continuous roof at the west bath house and supports the design as is. There are many issues to juggle, including costs. The Historic District Commission met on 6/10/14 and took up this issue. The HDC voted to endorse the current design. He applauds the architect's design and is thankful for the recommendation to stay with the design as is.
- Mike Battista appreciates this is not a restoration. He is trying to be open minded about it; this gable is a little thing that will go a long way.
- Planning Board needs:
  - Answers regarding noise levels of ventilation and pool equipment
  - Parking plan – education and enforcement

## 5. Public comments

- Resident from Myrtle Street: At first, wanted old New England feel, but is convinced that a contemporary building is appropriate; Wellington School is an example.
- Belmont Historical Society member: Supports Joe DeStefano.
- Town member (Bob Kennedy): The character in Belmont includes stone walls. He is hoping because this is a park, there will be a token amount of stone at entry; it costs money, but it would not take much.
  - Kyle Zick (landscape architect) noted the design using granite blocks salvaged from site to edge entry area at Concord Avenue, for retaining, and for seating within the pool. Not New England field stone wall, but salvaging what is on site.
- Town member: Favors Bob Kennedy's sketch for west bath house suggests, similar to library and what was there.
- Town member. Liz Allison's point about parking is critical. Also feels it is appropriate to reflect some of existing building in new. Wants to know why the pool is designed for 600+; nobody has given us an answer.
- Town member and neighbor of pool: Regarding the parking issue, people park around that neighborhood all of that time – school, school sports, pool, library; it is legal parking, not sure what the issue is. She hopes the issue of the gable does not delay moving forward with the project. A plan was presented to the Town that was overwhelmingly supported at Town vote and Town meeting; she is not quite sure how we are going to move forward with this issue, and would hate to see progress delayed.
- Anne Paulsen agrees that noise from mechanical equipment is an issue in town. This has been subject of much discussion by the UPBC; the information the design team comes back with should clarify this.
- Adam Dash: Liz's questions are great; both noise and parking need to be considered and have been discussed by the UPBC. UPBC vote on gable at west bath house was necessary to decide what to put in front of Planning Board tonight. The issue of the gable is subjective; he questions doing something that has no purpose if costs money. He supports existing design; it is not self-important, reflecting Belmont. The UPBC is working hard to avoid missing a pool season, and needs a final budget to go to bid. The project team has listened to Planning Board requests; addressed the last list of issues submitted. There is only one item that there is a disagreement about, and it is certainly not a project killing question.
  - Mike Battista: Chair of Board of Selectmen Andy Rojas is in favor of gable.
  - Mike Battista asked if solar is a reason why the UPBC is not in favor of the gable. Adam Dash said solar is not part of proposal because of cost. The UPBC would not want preclude solar panels for future; a gable would not make solar infeasible, just reduce number of panels.

- Town member: Concerned about Wellington Brook preservation. Used to be clock in bath house building.
- Town member: What the UPBC has presented is a unified approach to building. Thinks putting element on one of the buildings is superfluous. Supports the recommendation of UPBC and the architect. There have been many accommodations made related to Planning Board comments; all but this one.
- Town member: Supports architect's recommendation. Regarding potential future solar, thinks center gable will chop up roof and not look good.
- Town member (Helen Underwood Baker): In favor of clock. Think it is important. Cannot see why it would bother anybody.

#### **6. Closing Comments**

- Mike Battista indicated the Planning board will write a summary of comments to be addressed and get this to the UPBC.
- Planning Board agreed to meet 7:00 p.m. on 6/26/14 at to accommodate project bidding schedule. Mike Battista indicated he hopes there will be a vote on the Underwood Pool submission; Planning Board needs all the requested information and questions responded to.
- Planning Board took a break and moved on to other business.

#### **7. UPBC Meeting Continuation**

- Posted that meeting was moved to conference room 2.
- UPBC discussed things to be done before meeting with the Planning Board again next Thursday. Need full list from Planning Board. Until then:
  - Mechanical equipment noise: BH+A will put number together on noise levels of pool filter and ventilation equipment. He does not think noise level will be an issue. Design will add insulation to pool filter envelope.
  - Parking: Anne Paulsen and Peter Castanino will talk with Police Chief regarding parking. Enforcement (cannot police legal parking, but can enforce blocking driveways, etc. to not overrun neighborhoods) and education (when buy passes get information, also available at pool) elements. Peer Castanino: reassess at end of season to improve and insure continues not to be an issue.
  - West bath house gable: Agreed that if Planning Board is going to mandate a gable, put something forward that BH+A designed and UPBC approves of.
  - Clocks on buildings: Clocks will be equipment, something that gets taken in at the end of the season.
  - Sidewalks: BH+A to verify redundant sidewalk at parking island can be removed from design.

#### **8. Meeting Adjourned**

- Ellen Schreiber made a motion to adjourn the meeting, David Kane seconded the motion. The UPBC voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

**Adjourned:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

#### **Next UPBC Meeting Dates:**

- Tuesday, June 24, 2014: Conservation Commission Hearing then UPBC meeting

#### **Upcoming Milestones:**

- Thursday, June 26, 2014: Follow up discussion with Planning Board

Respectfully Submitted, Deborah Marai, Pinck & Co. Inc.