

**Belmont Historic District Commission  
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, March 12, 2024  
Meeting Held Remotely via Zoom

**Staff Present:** Ferguson Delia

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: May 29, 2024  
TIME: 9:02 AM

**Commission Members Present:**

- Carl Solander, Co-Chair
- Carol Moyles, Co-Chair
- Matt Schonewald
- Jacqueline Appel
- Drew Nealon
- Michael Chesson
- Komal Mahajan

**Community Members Present: William Turville, James Rice, Vince Stanton**

- 1) 7:02 PM Meeting Called to Order**
  - a) Carl Solander, Co-Chair, presiding; Komal Mahajan Minutes
  
- 2) New Public Hearings**
  - a) Case 24-03 582 Pleasant Street

During the meeting, applicant James Rice and Architect William Turville presented plans for masonry repairs to multiple facades of the church. Mortar and brick will be the best possible match to the existing materials. Following discussion Carl Solander motioned to approve the application as presented, contingent upon a member of HDC reviewing and approving the replacement samples of masonry and mortar. This motion was seconded by Carol Moyles and unanimously passed.

- 3) New Discussion**
  - a) None
  
- 4) Continued Public Hearings:**
  - a) None

**5) Approval of Minutes**

Approval of Draft 02.29.24 Minutes; edits were made on the spot. Jacqueline Appel made motion to approve the Minutes as amended, seconded by Carol Moyles. Motion passed unanimously.

**6) Continued Discussion:**

a) *Updates to the Demolition Bylaw*

During the meeting, updates were given on the demolition delay bylaw, with discussions on properties of concern from last month and analysis on MBTA Community zoning implications for demolition-delayed properties. Follow-up was mentioned on 10 Juniper Road, where Habitat intends to work on the entrance area. Engagement with Habitat was suggested, especially concerning landscape changes designed by Frederick Law Olmsted's firm. While Habitat's plans are mainly landscape-focused, the importance of preserving significant vegetation and historical aspects was discussed. The history of the Olmsted Brothers involvement, spanning over 40 years, was noted, with acknowledgment that changes may have occurred over 60 years since their last plan. It was clarified that the commission's role is a supportive and informal one as it relates to the scope of work for this project.

b) *Community Path Project updates*

During the meeting, the first PDF document regarding Phase 1 of the Belmont Community path design was described by Vince Stanton. Background details were provided, including the engagement of Niche engineering in 2019 for the design extending from Brighton Street to the Clark Street Bridge. Schedule and milestones were reviewed. Carl noted the importance of HDC review for the portion of the project that is within the historic district. Key project elements highlighted include the connection to the Belmont Center train station, existing boarding platform, future path location, and e accessibility.

Questions arose regarding surfacing on the bridge, with clarification provided about a chain link fence separating path users from the rail. There was a discussion about the fence material on the bridge, considering alternatives to chain link. It was noted that a new drawing identified elements of the existing fence to be preserved or repaired. The challenge of achieving climbing resistance with an aesthetically pleasing option was acknowledged. Carol suggested salvaging materials and integrating historic elements into the project. Carl and Carol asked about the possibility of reducing the height of the fence on the bridge to maintain the historic appearance of the overpass as seen from the street below. Plans were discussed for potential schedule changes to accommodate upcoming meetings.

c) *Propose HDC schedule changes*

*1. Changing HDC meeting date to accommodate a Minutes Taker*

Delia inquired about whether we could get a permanent minutes-taker from the town. The person responsible for this task is occupied on Tuesday nights. After discussing possible alternatives, it was decided to take a vote on switching the monthly meeting to the fourth Tuesday starting next month. The committee members present voted in favor of the change. It was suggested to check the town calendar to ensure there were no conflicts with other meetings on the fourth Tuesday.

*2. Set April 2024 meeting date*

The meeting date for April 2024 was set for fourth Tuesday.

*d) Review draft letter to owners of historically significant properties.*

Discussion tabled until a future meeting.

*e) Review MBTA Community Zoning proposals and discuss HDC recommendations*

Four proposed zoning maps were discussed. Participants raised questions about the inclusion of properties listed on the demolition delay register, particularly IL Casale, which is not on the list. Ownership status and potential agreements were also discussed.

Concerns were expressed regarding the density increase along Leonard Street and its impact on the area's historic character. Carl suggested that preservation incentives for historic properties be considered, considering the presence of large demolition delay properties in many of the proposed zoning maps.

*f) HDC Membership Discussion*

Procedures regarding the appointment of new members were discussed.

John Beaty, historic district resident and applicant, introduced himself. Members expressed support for his candidacy. Plans were made to follow up with the Select Board if a decision was not reached promptly. Additionally, Mike Chesson provided updates on his potential replacement, indicating Henry Ogilby's interest in joining the commission.

*g) Updates from the 1/10/24 CPC meeting*

Jacqueline Appel provided an update from last CPC meeting which was held on February 14. She said the focus remained on evaluating funding applications and their potential benefits to the town, which provided valuable insights for attendees, particularly those with limited prior experience. Much of the discussion centered on off-cycle applications, resulting in approvals for additional funding toward projects like the Community Path. A significant concern emerged regarding the need to track approved projects and available funds to prevent overcommitment. ions, it provided valuable insights into funding allocation processes and town considerations.

*h) Design Guidelines Discussion*

Carol Moyles presented a map depicting the Pleasant Street Historic District boundary. This is an updated map which is a prototype for creating a set of graphically consistent maps for all of the historic districts.

*i) Demolition Delay Properties Update*

Demolition delay properties update had been previously discussed.

*j) Work Plan*

It was agreed to table the work plan discussion until the next meeting.

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Carl Solander motioned to close the Meeting, seconded by Carol Moyles.

**Meeting Adjourned at 9.30 PM**

Respectfully submitted by Komal Mahajan