

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 22, 2013**

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7:05 p.m. Meeting called to order.

Present: Sami Baghdady, Chair; Michael Battista; Elisabeth Allison, Charles Clark, Joseph DeStefano, Karl Haglund; Andres Rojas, Board of Selectmen Liaison; Jeffrey Wheeler, Staff Liaison to the Planning Board

**7:05 p.m. Richardson Farm Historic District Report –
Discussion and Recommendation**

Mr. Baghdady noted that the properties owned by the Ogilby family extend to 306 Washington Street, the Joseph Wright House; 336 Washington Street, the Thomas Richardson House; and 34 Glenn Road, the ten acre farm. The Ogilbys are proposing to create an historic district with these properties. The Historic District Commission is required to present the proposed district to the Planning Board prior to going before Town Meeting. The Board will submit a recommendation to Town Meeting. A public hearing is not required.

This issue raised two conflicting interests - the benefit to the community if this were made an historic district versus the rights of the property owner. However, in this case since this is being proposed by the property owner no such conflict exists. Mr. Baghdady noted that the Board's discussion could be different if the property owner did not give consent to the creation of the district. Mr. Clark and Ms. Allison agreed.

All members of the Board expressed support for the Richardson Farm Historic District.

Mr. Battista and Mr. Clark were asked to draft a recommendation from the Planning Board to Town Meeting.

Mr. DeStefano re-cused himself at 7:15 p.m.

7:10 p.m. Public Hearing Continued: Cushing Village Application

Mark Donahue, attorney for the Applicant, stated that size, scale and mass, inclusionary housing, streetscape and landscaping would be discussed this evening. Mr. Quinn, Mr. Eric Rodin, and Mr. Blair Hines will present revised plans relating to the architecture and landscape of the development. Mr. Donohue added that the traffic review was not complete and will be presented at a future meeting.

Mr. Quinn made the following comments about the Pomona Building:

- At the request of the Planning Board, the building has been stepped back 8 feet.
- The size and scale of the corner cornice has been reduced.
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Mr. Rodin made the following comments about the Hyland building:

- The 4th story has been pushed back 8 feet.
- The roof line has been reduced.
- Columns have been introduced on the private patios.
- The total percent of the 4th floor is 37 percent.

Mr. Baghdady asked if tonight's presentation was the same as presented at the meeting on January 14, 2012, and Mr. Quinn responded that the presentations were identical.

Mr. Donahue stated that the Applicant's team believed that the goals of the Overlay District By-Law have been achieved and were looking for feedback from the Board. Mr. Battista stated that the neighbors felt that the rear corner of the Pomona Building still extended out too far. Mr. Baghdady wanted the 4th story corner pushed back more, noting that a more dramatic setback was needed along Horne Road. He urged the developers to speak in absolutes and not averages and noted that "a few feet here and there will go a long way." Mr. Donahue responded that the Pomona façade facing Horne Road could be moved back further. Mr. Clark commended the developers, stating that creative ways have been found to address the concerns that have been raised. Mr. Rojas noted that the sides of the 4th floor of the Hyland Building are vertical and asked that they be canted to reduce the visual impact of the mass and make it more visually pleasing. Mr. Donahue noted that the back of the Hyland has been setback 12 feet. Mr. Baghdady suggested sloping the 4th story might help reduce the massing. Mr. Haglund wanted to know how many units were on the 4th floor of the Hyland, and asked for the developers to provide plans that clearly showed what was on each level. Mr. Donahue responded that there were 3 units and the egress on the 4th floor. Mr. Quinn noted that information previously submitted to the Board contained the plans for each level.

Discussion ensued about step backs as mandated by the By-Law. Mr. Rojas noted the Hyland is 3 stories on Belmont Street, but then becomes 4 stories because of the slope along Common Street. He added that this issue is one of definition and it needed to be clarified. Mr. Baghdady suggested transparent railings on the balconies for the 4th floor of the Hyland Building. Mr. Haglund wanted to see more effort made to increase the setbacks for the Hyland Building. Mr. Starr stated that he and his team would work to reduce the visual impact on Horne Road while preserving square footage.

Mr. Donahue stated that the Development Team needed to know that the issue of size, scale and mass would not be re-visited in the future. Mr. Baghdady responded that they needed to see the landscaping, economic analysis and other factors in context and would not "close their eyes" to further discussion of size, scale and mass, as these issues could be vastly affected by future relevant matters. Mr. Rojas added that the Board cannot simply ignore issues of size, scale and mass.

At this point in the meeting, members of the Belmont Housing Trust were invited to join the Planning Board to discuss Inclusionary Housing requirements.

Mr. Donahue said that according to the By-Law, the Applicant must provide 12 ½ percent of the housing as affordable. He stated that if 112 total units were constructed, that would mean that 8 two-bedroom units and 6 one-bedroom units would be set aside for affordable housing. Mr. Baghdady stated that rather than having a fractional unit, a cash payment could be made to the Housing Trust Fund. Mr. Clark noted that if the Applicant rounded up the number of units that this would be a moot point. Mr. Baghdady encouraged the Applicant to come up with definite numbers so the Board could know what they were approving. He also asked the developers to submit in writing the rental charges per affordable unit. Mr. Donahue said that the cost of an affordable two-bedroom rental will be \$1,369.00 and the cost of a one-bedroom rental will be \$1,166.00.

The Board took a brief recess to allow Mr. Hines to set up for his presentation.

Blair Hines, Blair Hines Design Associates, gave a presentation on landscaping. He stated that there are 5 components to the design:

- 1) Streetscape landscaping features.
- 2) The plaza behind the Winslow Building will have informal seating around, a dining terrace, and there will be a major pedestrian area for relaxation.
- 3) The Horne Road Plaza will be developed in a manner that emphasizes its pedestrian nature, and there will be plenty of benches.
- 4) Residential landscape.
- 5) Mitigation on residential abutters.

He ended the presentation by stating that a unified landscape would be provided in the development.

Mr. Baghdady urged the Applicant to mitigate impacts on the adjacent neighbors and urged them to come up with suggestions for fences that the abutters liked. Mr. Battista inquired about the height of trees next to the abutters and was told that they would be 10-12 feet in height. Mr. Rojas noted that transformers are completely exposed and not screened. He urged the Applicant to take a pro-active approach to screening. He wondered if the utility meters would be screened. He noted that there ought to be protective shields to prevent automobiles and other vehicles from driving onto the pedestrian walkway. This is a safety issue that needs to be addressed to protect pedestrians.

Mr. Donahue asked that the Board to hold a special meeting on February 5th in order to address the traffic component.

Moved by Mr. Clark to continue the Cushing Village Public Hearing to February 5, 2013 at 7:00 pm. Seconded by Mr. Haglund. Motion passed unanimously.

9:35 p.m. Religious and Municipal Building Preservation By-Law Discussion

Mr. Baghdady asked members to review the list of properties impacted by the proposed By-Law and to think about which properties that should be subject to the proposed By-Law.

9:40 p.m. Committee Updates

Mr. Battista reported that the Capital Budget Committee continues to prioritize current and future projects, as well as come up with fundraising ideas.

9:45 p.m. Approval of Minutes

Moved by Mr. Battista to approve the minutes of September 27, 2012. Seconded by Mr. Charles Clark. Motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Mr. Clark approve the minutes of October 9, 2012. Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed unanimously.

9:45 pm Adjournment