

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 23, 2012**

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7:10 p.m. Meeting called to order.

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

7:10 p.m. Public Hearing Continued: Wellington School Building Committee

Mr. Baghdady reported that the Wellington School Building Committee requested a continuation to December 11, 2012 in order to allow more time to implement the noise abatement measures.

Moved by Mr. Battista to continue the Wellington School Public Hearing to December 11, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Clark.

Motion passed unanimously.

**7:10 p.m. Public Hearing: 3-11 Brighton Street
Special Permit for Free-Standing Sign**

Mr. Battista read the notice of Public Hearing for a Special Permit for two free-standing signs.

Mr. Baghdady noted that the notice had not been sent to the abutters in Cambridge and asked if the Applicant wished to proceed anyway, stating that there could be the possibility of a procedural challenge. Mr. Noonan, one of the property owners and representing the other owners, agreed to proceed. He gave some background on the signage at the property. Mr. Noonan clarified that the height of the sign is measured from the top of the post to the bottom of the post, and that the maximum distance from the ground is 18 inches. He noted the following:

- Each sign is to be 4 feet high by 4 feet wide, including the posts;
- The signs are 38 inches across;
- The sign will be 5' from the street and 4' from the building; and
- No additional free-standing sign will be proposed.

Mr. Rojas asked if the signs conform to the Town's Sign By-Law, and Mr. Wheeler confirmed that the signs did conform to the By-Law. Mr. DeStefano had concerns that signage erected by other tenants might be out of balance and scale. Mr. Wheeler stated that tenants to the left of the signs could put up a smaller sign because their space was smaller. Discussion ensued as to the effect of additional signage on the aesthetics of the property and the neighborhood.

Steve Tomchyck, 47 Hamilton Road, asked Mr. Baghdady for clarification of the By-Law as it related to the proposed signs. Mr. Baghdady responded that he spoke with the Building Inspector who said that each tenant could have their own free-standing sign.

**Moved by Mr. Clark to close the Public Hearing. Seconded by Mr. Battista.
Motion passed unanimously.**

The Board proceeded to discuss the Sign By-Law and agreed that it should be reviewed.

Mr. DeStefano commented on the height, noting that because the ground was sloped, that the sign would really be five feet tall. Mr. Wheeler noted that because the area was established as an industrial area, a large sign was allowed.

Moved by Mr. Clark to grant a Special Permit for two free-standing signs as shown on the plans and as discussed today. Seconded by Mr. Baghdady

Moved by Mr. Baghdady to amend the motion to include a condition limiting the site to just two free-standing signs. Seconded by Mr. Clark.

The motion to amend the original motion passed by a vote of four members in favor, with Mr. DeStefano abstaining.

However, the amended motion failed, with two members voting in favor (Mr. Baghdady and Mr. Clark), one opposed (Mr. Battista), and two members abstaining (Ms. Allison, Mr. DeStefano.)

Therefore, the Special Permit for two free-standing signs was not approved.

**7:45 p.m. Continued Public Hearing: 307 Trapelo Road
Design and Site Plan Review for One-Story Bank Building
Special Permit for Free-Standing Sign**

Mark Vaughan, attorney for TD Bank, presented the following changes to the proposal:

- The shield signs and TD emblems have been eliminated;
- Shields have been added to all of the light bulbs in the parking lot to eliminate glare in the neighborhood;
- A small trash enclosure has been added;
- Information relative to the roof sound and decibel level has been submitted;
- The caliper of trees has been increased to 3 ½-4 inch;
- Information regarding the solar panels LEED certification and evidence of compliance with the By-Law was submitted; and
- The Applicant opted not to change the cornice of the building since the current design appears more appropriate and in scale for the building as proposed.

Mr. Baghdady reviewed a “check off list” to ensure that all the Planning Board’s concerns had been addressed by the Applicant. He raised questions about the noise levels of the mechanicals and drive-thru teller. Mr. Sperling, engineer for TD Bank, noted that the reading was not much lower than 50 decibels for typical ambient noise in this area. Before it reaches an abutter, the noise level is 50-56 decibels (and drops to 31 decibels at 3 feet away). He said that he is confident that the HVAC units and the noise from the drive-thru speaker will not exceed ambient noise levels. Mr. Baghdady noted that Belmont’s noise By-Law states 45 decibels, not 50-56.

Mr. Battista stated that he would not want an occupancy permit to be granted until there is evidence that the noise criteria have been met. Mr. Baghdady agreed, stating that an occupancy permit would not be granted until further information was provided on the noise levels for the drive-thru and the HVAC.

Discussion ensued about the issue of the double exit and a one entrance driveways. Mr. Baghdady noted that the Police Department recommended one egress on to Trapelo Road and cited safety reasons. Their concern was that a two way exit may block fire trucks and emergency vehicles from responding to a call. Mr. Sperling passed out a drawing of the drive to the members of the Planning Board. He stated that the existing plan reduced the intensity of use on site and diffused the number of vehicles. He also noted that the drive would be moved five feet away from the Central Fire Station. He noted that having two ways to enter and exit was something that the bank felt very strongly about, as it directly impacted their ability to provide a quality level of customer service. Mr. Baghdady suggested putting a sign up within the site to redirect traffic after going through the drive thru as a way to help eliminate backups. He also suggested a placing a sign would alert cars of fire station calls. Mr. Haglund felt that moving the driveway five feet from the Fire Station will have a negligible effect. He felt that the Board should go with the recommendation of the public safety officials. Ms. Allison read a letter from the Fire Chief, which said in part that there needed to be sufficient site lines to the emergency lights at the head quarters. Mr. Sperling responded that ample site distance would make the concern a manageable one. Mr. Battista asked what was to keep two directional traffic from staying in the lane and from blocking traffic on Trapelo Road. Mr. Sperling said the double yellow line would direct people. Mr. Baghdady suggested that TD Bank have a discussion with the Fire Chief to address safety issues. He stated that before closing the public hearing, the Board want to hear the recommendations of the Fire Chief.

Mr. Battista asked if there was a transformer on site. Mr. Sperling responded that it would be either underground or pole vaulted, but would notify the Board if there were changes.

Members Battista and DeStefano both remarked that they felt uncomfortable with approving the plan now since there were some outstanding issues.

Moved by Ms. Allison to continue the Public Hearing to November 13, 2013 at 7:00 pm.

Seconded by Mr. Battista

Motion passed unanimously.

7:45 p.m. Public Hearing: Cushing Village

Mark Donahue, attorney for the Applicant, introduced Rebecca Brown of TEC Inc., who gave a presentation on the Traffic Impact, Access and Parking Study. She stated that the Study addressed safety benefits, traffic impacts, parking supply, and looked at the area from various intersections. She highlighted the following:

- Bump-outs will be provided at major crosswalks for the safety of pedestrians;
- Separate left lanes turns will be created;

- Improvements will be proposed along Trapelo Road and Common Street such as re-striping the northbound approach and widening the sidewalks;
- The length of time for the cross walk signals are proposed to be increased;
- Relocating the "No Turn on Red" sign at Common Street is proposed to be moved to increase its visibility;
- 173 on street parking spaces, and 76 commercial, 50 municipal, and 108 residential off street spaces will be provided once the project is complete; and
- Peak parking demands were determined to be from 12:45 pm to 1 pm on weekdays, and 11:15am to 1:30 pm on Saturday mornings.

The summary conclusions of the report were that the mixed use development will have negligible impact on traffic operations and parking supply will exceed demand.

Kerry Pike, Traffic Consultant for the Peer Review Consultant, briefly responded to the Traffic Study. Mr. Baghdady asked her to submit her review to the Planning Board.

**Moved by Mr. Battista to continue the Public Hearing to November 13, 2013. Seconded by Mr. Haglund
Motion passed unanimously.**

9:30 p.m. Committee Updates

Mr. Battista reported that the Capital Budget Committee continues to explore the list of capital projects.

Adjournment: 9:40 p.m.