

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
January 6, 2014**

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7:00 p.m. Meeting called to order

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

**7:00 p.m. Public Hearing – Site Plan Approval
20 Flanders Road – Construct Electric Substation**

Jim Palmer, General Manager of the Belmont Municipal Light Department (BMLD), provided an overview of the proposal. He stated that he already met with and gained approval from other boards and committees and that the project was moving forward.

Mr. Battista stated that the renderings were helpful to understand the plans. Mr. DeStefano agreed and added that given the location he did not think a better job could have been done.

Mr. Baghdady inquired about a party wall that had been previously discussed. Mr. Palmer replied that the party wall was gone and that this proposed building and the abutting one are separated by approximately 20 feet. He added that this was a vast improvement over the previous plans.

Mr. Haglund wondered why landscaping was proposed at the rear of the site to screen the railroad tracks. He requested that the landscaping be moved to the front of the building to hide the chain link fencing and barbed wire. He added that this would also make the building more neighborly. Mr. Palmer commented that the lot was tight to build on and that access to the transformers at the rear of the site must be maintained. Allen Raison, site engineer, stated that the landscaping at the rear was intentional to screen the back of the building. He added that the barbed wire exists at the side and rear of the building. While Mr. Haglund understood the issues, he urged the Applicant to move the building back and to put the landscaping at the front of the lot. He added that this could be the start of improving the area. Brad Black, architect, agreed with Mr. Haglund and added that this was worth looking at. He stated that he was not sure if this was possible because of MBTA easements that exist at the rear of the site.

Mr. Clark and Ms. Allison both stated that the Applicant did a nice job.

Comments from the Audience:

1. Phillip Thayer, 39 Oak Avenue, questioned whether or not the roof will be structurally sound enough to accommodate solar panels. Mr. Palmer stated that the roof will be structurally sound since it has been designed for such a structure, but, at this time, there are not any plans for the installation of solar panels.

Though Mr. Baghdady liked the idea of adding greenery to the premises, he questioned the

practicality of landscaping at the front of the building. Mr. Black added that there was not any space for landscaping at the front. He suggested adding landscaping to the gate and fencing at the side of the property. Mr. DeStefano cautioned about installing landscaping in a limited space. Ms. Allison raised 2 questions regarding the landscaping: first, given the surrounding area, does it make sense to require additional landscaping and second, she did not want the building to be too inviting since it is not a public building. Mr. DeStefano agreed. Mr. Battista and Mr. Haglund agreed to additional landscaping at the side of the building.

Moved by Mr. Clark to close the public hearing on the Site Plan Review for the BMLD substation at 20 Flanders Road. Seconded by Ms. Allison. Motion passes unanimously.

The Board deliberated on the application. Mr. Battista and Mr. Baghdady both stated that the Applicant did a good job and liked the additional landscaping.

Moved by Mr. Clark to grant Design and Site Plan Approval for the BMLD substation at 20 Flanders Road subject to the following condition:

Installation of additional landscaping in front of the fencing and along the side of the property.

Second by Mr. Baghdady. Motion passes unanimously

**7:30 Public Hearing Continued – Amend Site Plan Approval
 Install Roof Mounted Solar Energy System on Wellington School**

Dennis DaRu, project manager from Broadway Electric, provided a brief overview of the changes made to the plans since last before the Board. He stated that the inverters will be installed in the basement and therefore noise from the solar energy system should not be an issue. He presented revised pictures of what the panels will look like on the roof and mentioned that the previous pictures were not done accurately. He quickly reviewed the information that was previously submitted regarding noise and glare.

The Board asked questions about the condition of the roof and whether it leaks or not. Mr. Battista stated that he contacted the Wellington School Building Committee (WSBC) and was told that the leak appears to be a flashing issue. Mr. Battista questioned who would be responsible for repairing the roof after the system was installed. Mr. DaRu replied that according to the agreement, it depends on who caused the problem. Anthony DiCongliero, Finance Director for the School Department, added that insurance money can pay for the repair but that will be decided when this occurs. Mr. DaRu added that the roof warranty should cover the expense of the repair.

Mr. DeStefano stated that he wants a water tight roof before installing the solar system. Mr. Baghdady stated that he was fine with the application subject to assurances on the roof. Mr. Haglund agreed. Mr. Clark stated that Broadway Electric has been very responsive to the Board's and abutters questions. Ms. Allison had 2 issues: first had the previous noise issue been

resolved so that the panels will not have to be removed, second, she wants to be crystal clear about what has been stated with regard to noise and glare and expectations that the Board has about the system being added to the building. Mr. Battista stated that the WSBC thinks that the noise issue is under control and in the event that -further remediation is necessary the WSBC pay to have the panels removed.

Mr. Battista mentioned that when he was talking to the WSBC, he discovered that conduits for a system such as proposed may already be installed in the building and suggested that the Applicant look into this. He added that the consultant has supplied the information that the Board was looking for.

Comments from the Audience:

- 1 Darrell King, 30 Long Avenue, commended the Board for the time that they put into reviewing this application and Broadway Electric for being responsive. He urged the Board to approve the application.
- 2 John Kolterman, 106 Orchard Street, stated that he was very much in favor of this application.

Moved by Mr. Clark to close the public hearing on modifying the Site Plan Approval for the Wellington School at 121 Orchard Street in order to install a Solar Energy System. Seconded by Ms. Allison. Motion passes unanimously.

Moved by Mr. Baghdady to approve the application to modify the Site Plan Approval for the Wellington School at 121 Orchard Street in order to install a Solar Energy System subject to the following conditions:

1. Assurance that the representations regarding the impact of the solar system to the existing noise condition will be satisfied as presented;
2. Assurance that the roof is in a sound water tight condition before installation of the system;
3. Assurance that glare will be minimal as presented;
4. Installation of the solar energy system shall be coordinated with current noise remediation measures;
5. Confirm existence of conduit and utilize them in the installation of the solar energy system; and,
6. That the modifications of the Site Plan Approval is based on plans that have been revised throughout these hearings, especially in regards to the location of the solar panels and the inverters being relocated to the basement.

Seconded by Ms. Allison. Motion passes unanimously to approve the modification to the Wellington School Site Plan Approval to allow the installation of a solar energy system.

8:55 Ongoing/Upcoming Planning Board Projects Updates

Implementing the Demolition Moratorium

Mr. Battista reviewed the status of the zoning amendments. Mr. Baghdady suggested that the Board have a zoning forum within 30 days by the end of January.

Implementing the Demolition Delay Bylaw

Mr. Battista provided an overview of the status of implementing the Bylaw. Ms. Allison stated that she spoke with Mr. Battista about the possibility of the Historic District Commission applying for Community Preservation Funds next year in order to give cash incentives to preserve buildings. She stated that other towns have done this.

Mr. Battista stated that the only open issue was the definition of 'Substantial Demolition'. He commented that this definition needs to be clear so that the Building Department can enforce the Demolition Delay Bylaw.

Implementing Cushing Village

Mr. Wheeler reviewed the status – at this point, nothing is happening.

Issues and Potential Changes to the Cushing Square Overlay District By-Law

Mr. Haglund stated that he had had 2 telephone calls with the abutters and that a meeting to hear their concerns will be scheduled within the following week.

Zoning for Medical Marijuana Dispensaries

Mr. Battista reiterated that the Board needs to get on this issue right away. Mr. Clark and Mr. Baghdady have agreed to help review a draft by-law.

State Required changes to the Animal Control By-Law

Mr. Wheeler stated that he will follow-up with Mr. Russakow, Director for the Health Department, to find out exactly what is needed from the Board.

Underwood Pool Review

Mr. Battista provided a quick overview of this project and mentioned that he had already forwarded several questions to the Building Committee. He stated that Mr. Baghdady and Mr. Clark will be reviewing this proposal.

Planning Board Calendar

The Board discussed possible dates to meet during the month of January and possible dates for the zoning forum. All agreed to check calendars to see what works.

Adjourned – 8:30 p.m.