

**TOWN OF BELMONT  
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**October 18, 2016**

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BELMONT, MA

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Present: Elisabeth Allison, Chair; Charles Clark; Raffi Manjikian; Barbara Fiacco, Vice Chair; Joseph DeStefano; Karl Haglund

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development Liaison

**7:02 p.m. The meeting was called to order by Chair Allison.**

Ms. Allison introduced her colleagues and began with the first item of business.

**1. Organization of the Board**

Ms. Allison stated that the PB needed to elect a Chair and Vice Chair for the coming year. She noted that the PB will do some, but not all of the committee appointments and the remaining ones will be continued on November 1, 2016.

Ms. Allison opened the floor for nomination for Vice Chair.

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to nominate Ms. Fiacco. Seconded by Mr. DeStefano. The motion passed unanimously and Ms. Fiacco was re-elected as Vice Chair.**

Ms. Allison opened the floor for nominations for Chair.

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to nominate Ms. Allison. Seconded by Mr. Haglund. The motion passed unanimously and Ms. Allison was re-elected as Chair.**

Ms. Allison noted that Mr. Haglund will be representative on the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Mr. Haglund stated that the CPC met last week to discuss the preliminary applications and will provide an update at the Board's next meeting. Mr. Manjikian agreed to continue to serve on the Capital Budgeting Committee.

**2. Review General Residence District Design Guidelines**

The Board reviewed and discussed each section of the Guidelines. The PB discussed what various terms meant and edited the sections accordingly. Minor grammatical edits were briefly discussed as well.

Mr. Clark asked how the 2,200-2,600 square foot single-family size was determined. Mr. DeStefano explained its origins and noted that it had been presented to Town Meeting in May of 2015 and added that it mostly applies to the smaller lots and to a house that is by Special Permit. The PB agreed to consider the appropriate size of two-family homes on a case-by-case basis.

The PB discussed the Mass and Building Height section. Mr. Haglund referred to 55 Concord Avenue as an example of grade change and how reducing the grade would have reduced the

height of the building. Mr. DeStefano suggested asking for the proposed wall height benchmarked against the crest of the abutting street. Mr. Wheeler noted that corner lots will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. The PB agreed to revisit this section since it is important to be very clear on what the PB wants. Mr. Manjikian stated that the new By-Laws are about the character of the neighborhood and that each Special Permit application will be considered on a case-by-case basis. He added that the Guidelines will not be able to cover every single scenario but that they will help an Applicant get started in their design.

Mr. DeStefano stated that dormers are design elements and should not be used to increase total livable area. The PB agreed that the proportionality of dormers in relation to the house is important. Ms. Fiacco suggested that dormers should not increase the sense of height or mass of the house. PB discussed the wording to best communicate how a dormer should be designed.

Mr. DeStefano stated that the Front Porches and Decks section could be helpful to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Clark asked if language about a deck size could be added and he noted that a deck that is covered can become a storage space. Mr. Wheeler suggested that in an application for a new or expanded deck every reasonable effort should be made to meet the setback requirements. Mr. DeStefano added that decks should be stepped back at least two feet from the side façade of the house. The PB agreed that it was important to discourage the use of pressure treated materials where the possibility of skin to surface contact was high.

The PB agreed to set up a working session so that it could finish reviewing the Guidelines so that they could be voted on at the PB's November 1 meeting.

### **3. Continued Public Hearings:**

#### **a. 60-62 Channing Road – Second Floor Deck**

Ms. Allison stated that the case will be continued to November 1, 2016 since the PB did not get the revised materials in time for them to be reviewed. The updated materials were distributed to the PB for a brief discussion.

Alexander Stolyarov, the Applicant, apologized for the delay in getting his materials in on time and explained that the requirement of the timing was not communicated to him. He reviewed the updates made to his plans.

Ms. Allison noted that the PB needs to look at this in light of what has discussed in regards to the GR Design Guidelines discussed earlier in the evening. Mr. DeStefano asked the Applicant to encapsulate the pressure treated posts. Ms. Allison asked the PB to look at the plans over the next few days and to submit comments to Mr. Wheeler to forward to the Applicant so that he can prepare responses for the next meeting.

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to continue the public hearing to November 1, 2016.  
Seconded by Mr. Clark. The motion passed unanimously.**

**b. 132 Sycamore Street, Two-Story Deck**

Ms. Allison asked Mr. Haglund to review his findings of the existing landscaping. He stated that there are no plants on the back of the house and the proposed deck would be within inches of the existing paving. He noted that it will be a challenge to make this area more hospitable since there is no space between the paving and the proposed deck. Mr. Liu, Applicant, explained that he visited Home Depot and that they suggested new plants.

Mr. Haglund asked if there was a written agreement to allow the shared driveway. Mr. Liu stated that he is not aware of a written agreement or an easement. Mr. Wheeler stated that the proposed deck encroaches on the paved area by one foot. He suggested that the paved area could be cut back 3 to 4 feet in order to make space for a planting bed and that this could be a condition of approval.

Mr. DeStefano stated that the proposed deck is too big for the house and the lot and the right size would be 12' x 6'. He added that the parking is ambiguous and reducing the size of the deck solves many problems. Ms. Allison noted that if the deck was shortened there would be room for a planting bed. Mr. Wheeler asked the PB to give the Applicant more guidance on deck size and landscape details.

Ms. Fiacco requested more details for his landscape plan. Mr. DeStefano stated he would be happy with a landscape plan from Mahoney's. Mr. Haglund suggested that the Applicant draw on his plot plan where his new landscaping will be located. Mr. DeStefano stated that the Building Department will need a new certified plot plan to reflect the reduced deck size. The PB agreed that the Applicant will need to bring back a detailed landscape plan, update the building and the certified plot plans, and provide details on plans for the pressure treated wood.

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to continue the public hearing to November 1, 2016. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. The motion passed unanimously.**

**4. Review and Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to approve the minutes of October 4, 2016, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed.**

**5. Updates on Potential Cases and Planning Board Projects, and Committee Reports**

Mr. Wheeler asked the PB to confirm that it will meet on December 1, 2016 in the Art Gallery instead of December 6, 2016. The PB concurred that this date was acceptable.

Mr. Wheeler stated that the Applicant for 47 Payson Road would like to set up a working group meeting. Mr. Clark and Mr. DeStefano agreed to be part of the working group.

**[Mr. DeStefano recused himself at 9:17 PM]**

## **6. Public Hearing**

### **a. 35-37 Chandler Street – Two-Story Deck**

Ms. Fiacco read the public hearing notice.

Mr. Jingke Weng, Applicant, appeared and stated that it had been one year since the first application and now he was before the PB to rebuild the two-story porch and increase their size. He stated that the backyard is very big and these porches will make very subtle difference to the yard.

Mr. Clark observed that the plot plan still had the formerly proposed third floor deck. The Applicant stated that the updated drawings reflect the new changes with the two-story decks. After discussion with the PB, it was determined that the updated plot plan was left out and that dimensional information was missing on the revised plans. The PB agreed that it would be difficult to approve the new plans without having the revised plans to review.

Mr. Weng asked if the PB if the new 15'x 12' deck size was acceptable. Ms. Allison stated that the plans were incomplete and that the PB would need all of the revised plans in order to make a decision concerning the allowable dimensions of the deck as well as other aspects of the plan.

The PB briefly discussed landscaping requirements. The Applicant described his concerns with the process. Ms. Allison provided the PB's perspective on the process, noting that the original application was not consistent with the design guidelines.

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to continue the public hearing to November 1, 2016. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Adjournment 9:49 p.m.**