TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD

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MEETING MINUTES
December 16, 2014

Present: Michael Battista, Chair; Elisabeth Allison, Vice Chair; Charles Clark; Joseph DeStefano; Karl Haglund; Barbara Fiacco (Associate Member); Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development

7:05 p.m. Meeting called to order

7:05 p.m. Presentation on Belmont's Draft Housing Production Plan

Jennifer Raitt, Assistant Director of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), made a presentation on a draft Housing Production Plan for Belmont. She stated that this Plan endeavors to create a housing strategy that is appropriate for the Town and address its housing needs. She highlighted various aspects of the Plan including why Belmont should adopt such a plan, goals and strategies to increase the number of affordable housing units, and potential opportunities for development. She added the following:

- The Plan is a five year plan.
- It allows for more control over Comprehensive Permit applications if affordable housing in the Town constitutes less than 10 percent of the total housing stock.
- It identifies opportunities for development and promotes mixed use development.
- "Affordable housing" provides that 30 percent or under of household income goes to housing expenses.
- Affordable housing is deed restricted.
- The Plan identified that the biggest barriers to housing development are the current zoning by-laws and that there is very little undeveloped land available in Town.

Ms. Allison urged that the Board to submit their questions in writing. She also felt that this conversation had to consider the impact of the Uplands housing development on the Town's resources.

(7:35 p.m. – Mr. DeStefano recused himself from the meeting.)

7:35 p.m. <u>Review and Approval of CushingVillage Design Modifications</u>

Mr. Battista reported that the working group met with the developer and discussed the outstanding issues: window layout, detailing, vents, roof, and other issues. He stressed that the Board's representatives were firm that all venting had to go through the roof, as the Applicant had originally said that it would. He reiterated that the only additional square footage is for the community rooms on the roof and that no other additional usable square footage is being added. Mr. Battista added that the Board will add a caveat stating that if anything appears in the plans that were not previously discussed and approved, then the Board will have the right to bring it up at public meeting and vote on it.

Comments from the audience:

1. Don Becker, Horne Road, inquired as to roof line decisions and materials to be used. Mr. Battista stated that these items were not before them at this time, but did report that the architects maintain that volume to the buildings has not been changed. He added that, as required by the Special Permit, mock-ups of materials will be submitted for review and approval by the Board at a later meeting.

2. Nicole Gianoukas, Belmont Street, suggested that if the developer is having financial problems, then maybe he should build smaller in order to mitigate those issues.

3. Karen Sapolsky, Edgemoor Road, asked if the discussion on square footage and volume could be framed in verbiage other than FAR's. She requested that this be presented in more common terms

MOTION made by Ms. Allison to approve the design modifications for the Cushing Village development subject to the following conditions:

1 This approval is based upon and incorporates the revised plans as submitted, specifically:

   a. All mechanical venting to be through the roof, no venting through the side walls will be permitted;
   b. The mansard roof to be reconfigured; and,
   c. 2 additional windows to be added onto the Pomona elevation that faces Horne Road plaza.

2 No further modifications may be made without the approval of the Board, or a determination in writing by the Building Inspector that the modification is so minor that the approval of the Board is not required.

3 All conditions, associated with the July 27, 2013, decision as maybe modified by this approval are still applicable and enforceable.

4 This approval is limited only to those design modifications listed above and reviewed by the Planning Board; any modifications that were not presented to the Board are not part of this approval; additional modifications will need to be reviewed at a subsequent Planning Board meeting

Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed.

8:10 p.m. **Discuss Potential Zoning By-Law Amendments**

Retaining Wall Regulation/Zoning By-Laws

Kim Beers, Mr. Wheeler's assistant, presented a PowerPoint presentation on research she conducted on retaining walls. She asked the Board for guidance to whether or not a new by-law

should be adopted regarding this issue. Concerns of retaining walls focused on the scale of the wall, its visual impact, decreases in property values, whether or not abutters had been notified that a structure will be built, safety, and its maintenance. She added that the current by-law exempts retaining walls as structures.

Ms. Allison commented that it would be helpful to know how many permits had been issued in the past 5-6 years for retaining walls, and also to get a sense as to what comparable communities are doing in response to this issue. She wondered if a public meeting should be held to get input from the community on this issue.

8:40 p.m. **Planning Board Calendar**

The Board briefly discussed how much lead time it would need in order to have something ready for Town Meeting. It was also determined that the next Planning Board meeting would be held January 6, 2015.

Adjourn: 8:45 p.m.