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**Belmont Historic District Commission  
MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, May 24, 7:00 pm  
Belmont Town Hall, Room 2**

Commission Members: Lauren Meier, Co-Chair, Terry McCarthy, Jacob Cohen, Lisa Harrington  
(Alternate Member), Michael Smith (Alternate Member)

Not Present: Joseph Cornish, Sue Pew

Public Attending: Glenn Herosian, 585 Pleasant Street  
Chet Messer, Plymouth Church, 582 Pleasant Street  
Damian Schmalz, Dewberry Engineering Inc. (Verizon)  
Michael Giamo, Robinson & Cole, LLP  
Chuck Webberly, Structure Consulting Group

**7:05 pm Meeting called to order**

**Old Business:**

- Assignment of Minutes for May 24, 2016 – Mr. Smith agreed to take minutes.
- Review and approve Meeting Minutes for May 10, 2016. Ms. Harrington offered two non-substantive typos; Mr. Smith moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Harrington. Minutes approved 4-0.

**Verizon Wireless Application for a Certificate of Non-applicability – Plymouth Congregational Church, 582 Pleasant Street, Belmont**

- Ms. Meier explained the process for the meeting. The proponent will introduce the project, followed by questions and comments from the Commissioners, then questions and comments from the audience, then back to the Commissioners for final comments and a vote. Verizon has filed an application for a Certificate of Non-Applicability requiring review within 14 days from the filing of the application in accordance with Historic District Commission Rules and Regulations and M.G. L. Chapter 40c. Ms. Meier said she had spoken with the Office of Community Development and Town Counsel regarding how to proceed. It was the recommendation of Town Counsel that the Commission meet within that 14 day period and determine whether or not to vote on the certificate. Depending upon the outcome of the discussion and vote, it will be determined whether or not a Public Hearing is required.
- Mr. Giamo, attorney for Verizon, confirmed the Application for a Certificate of Non-Applicability pertaining to the installation of a wireless communication facility at the church, stating that all alterations and installations will be inside the church except for a GPS antenna, which will be hidden from public view. He stated that in accordance with Massachusetts State Law Chapter 40C, the Historic District Commission has no jurisdiction over interior arrangements, nor for architectural items not exposed to public view. Accordingly, Mr. Giamo maintained that the project is entitled to a Certificate of Non-Applicability. He briefly showed design plans with an 18 inch tall GPS antenna to be mounted inside a solid corner guardrail to be not visible to public view. Mr. Giamo said the new design has been made in response to concerns about previously proposed changes to the design and materials of the steeple and the placement of equipment on an exterior balcony. He asked if the Commission had any questions.

- Ms. Meier opened the discussion to the Commissioners.
- Mr. Smith, asked if the pairs of vertical panel antennae, shown in the design plan, behind each of the open louvers on the four sides of the church steeple would be visible. Mr. Smith showed a photograph of one of the louver panels in the steeple, and stated that it appears as though the louvers are open.
- Ms. Meier asked if there are drawings showing the antennae/louver. Mr. Giamo showed drawing Z-7, PROPOSED STEEPLE PLAN, dated 03-09-16 by Dewberry Engineers, Inc. (not part of the Certificate submission) and, in particular Detail 2, PROPOSED ANTENNA MOUNTING ELEVATION (TYPICAL) and Detail 1, PROPOSED STEEPLE PLAN. Mr. Smith said there appears to be only approximately 4 inches from the backside of the louvers to the front of the antennae.

(Mr. Cohen entered the meeting)

- Mr. Giamo stated that he did not believe the antennae would be viewable; however, they can be painted black if necessary to assure they won't be visible. Mr. Smith said he believed that would help.
- Mr. Shmalz said that Detail 2, drawn to scale, shows that the antennae would be 3-4 inches from the inside face of the louvers.
- Mr. Messer said there are speakers directly behind the louvers and they are not seen.
- Ms. Harrington asked if birds can get into the steeple and Mr. Messer said that wire screens cover the inside face of the louver and no birds can get in. Ms. Harrington stated there is some opacity to the screens.
- Mr. Giamo said that, since this is an interior arrangement and there is nothing subject to public view, a Public Hearing is not required.
- Ms. Harrington pointed out that the HDC has no jurisdiction over interior curtain colors behind windows as an example of the limits of HDC jurisdiction. She stated she believes the HDC has no purview over the proposed installation.
- In response to a question by Mr. Cohen, Ms. Meier restated the design changes made by Verizon and being proposed with the Application for a Certificate of Non-Applicability.
- Ms. Meier opened the discussion to the audience.
- Mr. Herosian said he and other neighbors were hoping for an opportunity for a Public Hearing. He said he believes the Commission has jurisdiction over the use being placed in the building and the potential detrimental effects to the building from the generation of heat from the installation within the steeple. He said he has done a study of the heat potential and is concerned about expansion and contraction of the steeple elements. He explained he works in radar and thermal imaging installations.
- Ms. Meier asked if the Verizon team could comment; however, she reminded everyone that Town Counsel has advised the HDC to keep the discussion focused on that which is within its jurisdiction.

- Mr. Cohen said he is concerned about the affect from heat on the structure over time.
- Ms. Harrington said that, as an Architectural Conservator, she understands the issue being raised about heat as a potential problem; however, the HDC does not have jurisdiction over “use.”
- Mr. Herosian said he respects and admires what the church does for the community; however, he said he also respects this historic building, directly across from his house, and the potential for its damage due to the proposed use. He believes the integrity of the structure falls within the HDC’s purview. He faulted Verizon for inconsistencies and incomplete information in design, citing patterns of radiation and heat.
- Verizon said they are required to comply with building and fire codes and the HDC has limited jurisdiction as Mr. Hall had advised the HDC. He said Verizon has hundreds of installations in steeples and they are not hearing of any problems.
- Ms. McCarthy said she believes the church has been good stewards of the property.
- Ms. Meier said that if there are changes to the design based upon the reviews of other departments or boards, Verizon would be required to return to the HDC for approval.
- Mr. Herosian asked why the HDC will not require a Public Hearing. Ms. Meier replied that this is an Historic District Commission review and while she understands the concerns raised by Mr. Herosian, those concerns pertain to “use”. She said the HDC has told Verizon that previous designs using fiberglass materials and placement of equipment within public view did not meet the HDC Guidelines and Verizon responded accordingly.
- Mr. Smith said that he believes the proposed installation is not within the purview of the HDC and a Certificate of Non-Applicability should be issued. Ms. McCarthy and Ms. Harrington agreed. Mr. Cohen said he did not agree because he believes there has been a good argument made about the heat generated in the steeple and he’d like to learn more about it. Ms. Meier said she understands the concerns raised by the neighborhood; however, those concerns are outside of the Commission’s jurisdiction.
- Mr. Smith moved and Ms. McCarthy seconded a motion to approve and issue a Certificate of Non-Applicability. The motion passed 4-1.
- Mr. Herosian asked if the HDC would make a recommendation to the Planning Board to investigate the questions he raised. Ms. Meier said she would send a memo to the Office of Community Development.

Mr. Smith moved and Ms. Harrington seconded a motion to adjourn. Approved 5-0.

Adjourn: 8:00 pm.

The next meeting of the Historic District Commission will be June 14.