

**TOWN OF BELMONT  
PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2013**

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**8:00 a.m. Meeting called to order.**

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

**8:10 a.m. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of October 23, 2012, December 11, 2013, January 14 and 22, February 5 and 26, April 19, 25 and 29, and May 1, 6, 7 and 14 were approved by the Board.

**8:10 a.m. Election of Officers**

Mr. Baghdady called for nominations for officers.

**Moved by Mr. Clark to elect Mr. Battista as Chair. Seconded by Mr. DeStefano and it passed unanimously.**

**Moved by Mr. DeStefano to elect Ms. Allison as Vice Chair. Seconded by Mr. Battista and it passed unanimously.**

Planning Board Members thanked Mr. Baghdady for his leadership both with respect to Cushing Village as well as Town Meeting. All agreed that the Board is only as good as its leader and Mr. Baghdady played a key role in the Board's accomplishments last year.

**8:15 a.m. Discussion of Projects for the Year**

Mr. Wheeler reviewed the projects list. Mr. Baghdady provided an update on the Demolition Delay By-Law that is projected to be on the Special Town Meeting for November 4, 2013.

Ms. Allison stated that she has 2 concerns for the By-Law. She expressed concern that the list will become open ended and suggested that a cap be placed on the number of buildings that can be on the list. Mr. Clark expressed concern about the definition of 'historic'. Ms. Allison agreed that the definition should include those buildings of historic significance since it would then not be subjective. Mr. Haglund agreed that standardization is a big issue. He stated that there are acceptable standards already established but he argued that need to get owners' approval to get on the list first, not just off the list. Mr. DeStefano suggested that a date determines Historic if a building is historic. Mr. Haglund stated that the National Park Service has 50 years so that developers can access tax credits and suggested that the Planning Board take the lead and describe a standard practice. Mr. Battista stated that these same issues were discussed 3

years ago. Mr. Clark noted that the Planning Board has developed lists for other By-Laws. Mr. DeStefano agreed with developing a list but then a date should be used to limit the number of buildings on the list. He agreed with Ms. Allison's concern that without a cap the list would be open ended.

Ms. Allison's second concern was how the By-Law works. She suggested contacting Arlington to see what happened once they adopted their By-Law and what the Town can expect if it adopts one. Mr. DeStefano stated that Arlington's By-Law is one year and that properties sell at a discounted rate. Mr. Clark commented that the By-Law effects economic drive. Mr. DeStefano stated that the demand for new houses is far greater than for reusing the existing stock. Mr. Wheeler added that 21<sup>st</sup> Century demands on housing dictate the need for a new house.

Mr. Baghdady commented that the "opt out" provision will probably come up again. Mr. Haglund added that historic preservation only works when people want it. Ms. Allison suggested asking Mr. Cornish, Co-Chair of the Historic District Commission, what standards are used by Historic New England.

### **Planning Board Calendar**

Mr. Haglund requested that the Planning Board meetings be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday.

All agreed that committee appointment will be discussed later. Ms. Allison provided a brief overview of the Long Range Financial Planning Group, a committee recently established by the Board of Selectmen to look at long range financial planning. Mr. DeStefano provided a brief review of the Community Preservation Applications and highlighted a few that raised concerns. Mr. Clark briefly mentioned the Housing Trust application, which would provide down payment assistance and closing costs.

**9:20 a.m. Adjournment**