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Memorandum

To: Town Meeting Members
From: Belmont Planning Board
Date: April 7, 2016

RE: **Planning Board's Report to the 2016 Annual Town Meeting**

Pursuant to the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 5, the Planning Board hereby provides the following recommendations on the zoning amendment that will appear before the 2016 Annual Town Meeting. Sitting for the Board were Liz Allison, Chair, Barbara Fiacco, Vice Chair, Charles Clark, Joseph DeStefano, Karl Haglund, and Raffi Manjikian, associate member. A brief overview of the zoning amendment, the reasons for it and the Board's recommendation to the Town Meeting are provided below.

Additionally, the Planning Board also deliberated and voted on the one-year extension amendment to the Demolition Delay General Bylaw. While this is an Historic District Commission article, the Board participated in drafting the existing bylaw. The Board's recommendation on this amendment to the Town Meeting is provided below as well.

Article 6 – Relating to the Construction of Oversized Dwelling Units in the Single Residence C Zoning Districts

Last year a Citizens Petition Moratorium limiting the height of new structures to thirty-two (32) feet to the highest point of the roof (ridge) in a portion of the Single Residence C Zoning District (known as the Shaw Gardens and Hittinger Farm Overlay District) was adopted by Town Meeting. This Moratorium, which expires on June 30, 2016, was the result of citizens' concerns about the construction of oversized dwelling units in their neighborhood without regard for the surrounding built environment. Last August, the Planning Board began examining the issues surrounding these new buildings and concluded that the buildings were out of scale, had greater mass and height, and were set further back from the street than abutting houses. It also observed that outdoor mechanical equipment was installed close to abutting homes. Upon further review, the Board discovered that these issues affected all of the Single Residence C Zoning Districts. As a result, the Board drafted a zoning amendment to reduce the mass and height and to insure

that any new structure (both large additions and new homes) blends with the built environment. To achieve this, the proposed amendment applies to all Single Residence C Zoning Districts and contains five (5) parts: It allows the grade to be lowered, limits nonconforming construction, reduces allowed height, requires front setbacks to align with adjacent homes and limits location of outdoor mechanical equipment.

More specifically, the amendment establishes criteria for new homes and large additions on nonconforming lots (less than 9,000 square feet and 75 feet of frontage). New homes and additions that increase the gross floor area by more than 30% will require a Special Permit from the Planning Board. Additionally, the height of new structures will be limited to 30 feet at the midpoint and 34 feet at the ridge, the front setback will align with adjacent homes. The installation of HVAC and other mechanical equipment will be prohibited in front yards (the area between a line obtained by extending the front elevation of the dwelling to each of the sidelines of the lot and the front line of the lot) and side and rear setbacks and will require appropriate screening.

The Board held a series of public hearings beginning on February 23, 2016 and continued to March 2, 15 and 22. The Citizen sponsors participated in the hearings and supported the proposed amendments. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the Board deliberated on the zoning amendment and voted unanimously **to recommend favorable action by Town Meeting on the amendment relating to the construction of oversized dwelling units in the Single Residence C Zoning Districts.**

Article 4 – Amend General Bylaws for "Demolition Delay" §60-320 One-Year Extension

The Historic District Commission (HDC) seeks to amend the Demolition Delay General Bylaw by extending it for one year. This Bylaw expires June 30, 2016. According to the HDC, the extension will allow HDC to complete an historic building inventory (funded by CPA) that will be used to revise the list of buildings subject to the Bylaw. The additional year allows the HDC to complete the inventory and for stakeholders, such as the Planning Board, time to review it. The Board deliberated on the amendment and voted unanimously **to recommend favorable action by Town Meeting on the One-Year Extension amendment to the Demolition Delay General Bylaw**.

If you have any questions regarding the zoning amendment, please do not hesitate to contact Jeffrey Wheeler, AICP, Senior Planner, at 617-993-2666 or at jwheeler@belmont-ma.gov.

Thank you.