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**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

MEETING MINUTES

July 5, 2016

2016 AUG -3 PM 2:18

Present: Elisabeth Allison, Chair; Charles Clark; Barbara Fiacco, Vice Chair;

Absent: Joseph DeStefano; Karl Haglund; Raffi Manjikian

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development Liaison

7:00 p.m. Meeting called to order

1. Implementing the SR-C Zoning By-Law Amendments

Ms. Allison initiated a discussion of how the Board should use the criteria to review applications. She questioned whether every ranch should become two stories and what a reasonable size is that is commercially viable and meets the criteria. She reviewed a matrix with several criteria that the Board could use to guide its review. She explained that the most points would be given to criteria that are the easiest to meet. For example, she noted conversion risk and stated if it is easy to convert to a two-family than it would get the most points. She also showed how this might work with "in harmony with the neighborhood" standard. Mr. Clark questioned how much was related to the uniqueness of the neighborhood versus the zoning district. Ms. Fiacco stated that the Board must be careful since the mandate of Town Meeting was not to push limits. She suggested that it was useful to have neighborhood input but could not solely rely on it. She stated that the Board cannot assume that those that don't show up don't object. She stated that she struggles with what's "in harmony with the neighborhood" and with inflicting design upon a neighborhood. Ms. Allison stated design plays a key role and noted that good design can substitute for size to some extent.

Comments from Audience:

1. Steve Pinkerton, Precinct 7, stated that there will be a shift in empty nester housing to condos or assisted living housing. He noted that some communities are looking at cluster homes as a way to sustain people in their own homes. He added that oversized homes can be difficult to sell and suggested that economics will work out if design is well done.
2. Mr. Kherlop, stated that whatever the Board does the market will adjust accordingly. He stated that the Board needs to establish standards since the process was very subjective.
3. Arlene Taylor, Brighton Street, expressed concern about fire safety since the houses are close together. She stated that when homeowners purchase a house they should figure out what's allowed and act accordingly.
4. Esmail Mahdavi, stated that the process is too subjective and lacks clarity.

5. Continued Public Hearings

a. 9 Westlund Road

Ms. Allison reviewed a revised summary of the proposed home. Mr. Wheeler distributed an outline and annotated plan depicting Mr. Haglund's suggested revisions to the landscape plan. He reviewed the revisions. Ms. Fiacco requested that the species for the trees in the front corners be specified. Ms. Allison clarified the status bath and exterior exit in the basement.

MOTION made by Mr. Clark to close the public hearing on 9 Westlund Road. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.

The Board agreed to vote on the Special Permit at its July 11 meeting since a sufficient number of members were not present to vote on the application.

b. 48 Middlecot Street

Ms. Allison reviewed a revised summary of the proposed home. She noted that Mr. Haglund has to review the landscape plan. Ms. Fiacco stated that she struggled with the increased size of the home since it is substantially larger than the neighboring properties and that gave her pause. Arthur Hartunian, co-Applicant, explained why the increase was large and the need for the additions.

Comments from Audience:

1. Steve Pinkerton, Precinct 7, stated that this was a marked improvement and a better fit than another house recently built in the neighborhood.

Nune Khachatryan, co-Applicant, stated that the original submission was within the limits of the By-Law and thus could be built by right. Mr. Clark explained that the lot was non-conforming and thus subject to the new By-Law.

MOTION made by Mr. Clark to continue the public hearing to July 11, 2016. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.

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

Mr. Wheeler reported that he had a meeting with Caldwell Banker's real estate brokers from the Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, and Watertown offices to explain the GR and SR-C zoning amendments.

7. Review of the Planning Board letter re proposed revisions of the zoning code

Ms. Fiacco suggested some grammatical but not substantive changes to the letter.

8. Review and approval of the Minutes

MOTION made by Ms. Fiacco to approve the minutes of May 2 and 23; and June 6 and 8. Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed.

Adjourn: 8:30 p.m.