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**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES
June 2, 2016**

Present: Elisabeth Allison, Chair; Charles Clark; Barbara Fiacco, Vice Chair; Joseph DeStefano; Raffi Manjikian

Absent: Karl Haglund

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development Liaison

7:05 p.m. Meeting called to order

1. Request to Modify Design and Site Plan Approval – 13 Birch Street

Michael DeMartino, owner and builder of the property, sought to eliminate the shutters that were approved by the Board on the original plans. The Board members saw no issue of neighborhood consistency or aesthetics in doing so.

MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to approve the landscape plan and to eliminate the shutters. Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion is approved.

2. Discuss and Deliberate on Potential Amendments to SR-C Zoning Article

Ms. Allison stated that several amendments have been received and explained how the Board will proceed with its review of them.

Amendment 6: Mr. Wheeler reviewed the amendment and data from a brief study that he conducted. There was a consensus that the amendment reduced protections for neighbors without a compelling reason.

MOTION made by Ms. Fiacco to recommend unfavorable action on Amendment 6. Seconded by Mr. Manjikian. The motion passed.

Amendment 7: Mr. Wheeler reviewed the amendment and data from a brief study that he conducted. Board members noted that design was a major neighborhood concern; that it had been a subject of much public discussion, and that the Board cannot get a scale without looking at design and as such it is essential that design remain.

MOTION made by Mr. Clark to recommend unfavorable action on Amendment 7. Seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.

Amendment 8: Mr. Wheeler reviewed the amendment. Board members noted that it eliminated the residents' right to provide input. Mr. DeStefano stated that this amendment guts the proposed by-law.

**MOTION made by Mr. Clark to recommend unfavorable action on Amendment 8.
Seconded by Ms. Fiacco. Motion passed.**

Amendment 9: Mr. Wheeler reviewed the amendment and data from a brief study that he conducted. The Board took no action on this amendment since the Moderator has indicated he will rule it out of scope.

Amendment 2: Board members agreed that this amendment would weaken protections for the neighborhood and make enforcement difficult.

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to recommend unfavorable action on Amendment 2.
Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed.**

Amendment 4: Ms. Allison stated that it is important to keep the language in the by-law consistent and this amendment does just the opposite. Ms. Fiacco agreed and spoke to the importance of consistent language.

**MOTION made by Ms. Fiacco to recommend unfavorable action on Amendment 4.
Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed.**

Amendment 5: Ms. Allison reviewed the proposed amendment. Board members noted that it was beyond the scope of the amendment. Ms. Fiacco added that this amendment was not vetted with any of the Citizen Petitioners.

**MOTION made by Ms. Fiacco to recommend unfavorable action on Amendment 5.
Seconded by Mr. Motion passed.**

3. Prepare for SR-C Presentation to Town Meeting

Ms. Allison and Mr. DeStefano reviewed a PowerPoint presentation for Town Meeting. Ms. Allison provided a brief history of how the amendments came to be. Mr. DeStefano gave an overview of the technical aspects of the proposed amendments.

4. Review and Approval of Minutes

MOTION made by Mr. DeStefano to recommend approval of the March 22 and May 3 minutes as corrected. Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed.

5. Discussion of Pending State Legislation Restricting Local Zoning Authority

Ms. Allison provided an overview of the proposed legislation and added that this was a startling piece of legislation. She introduced Senator Brownsberger who provided information about the legislation. He stated that the bill had been in the making for more than a decade and that the goal of it is to create a more streamlined process to build housing. He noted that some land use procedures will become standardized, such as Site Plan Review. He mentioned that the existing GR districts would probably be considered a reasonable size area for accessory units and multi-family housing. He shared his view that the state needs to build housing since economic development is dependent on an adequate supply of housing.

Ms. Fiacco asked whether other states have implemented similar legislation and what the result has been. Senator Brownsberger responded that it was hard to tell since the state is different from the rest of the country because land use is regulated by so many small local entities in Massachusetts.

Mr. DeStefano noted that zoning is complicated and so important to communities. Senator Brownsberger stated that there will be a continuing opportunity to shape the legislation. Ms. Allison stated that would have a major impact on Belmont.

6. Discuss and Deliberate on Citizens Petition Zoning Amendment Regarding Interior Wireless Telecommunications Facilities

Ms. Allison asked that the Town Meeting transcript for the previous consideration of this issue be forwarded to the Board for its review. She stated that this agenda item will be discussed and voted on Monday, June 6.

7. New Public Hearing for 55 Concord Avenue – Design and Site Plan Review – single family

Mr. DeStefano noted that although he was not an abutter, he owned property within the neighborhood.

Ms. Fiacco read the public hearing notice.

Michael Lohan, Applicant, reviewed his application and explained the last minute revision to add a bathroom in the basement.

Ms. Allison reported that in terms of the quartile analysis, this property fit in very well with the neighborhood. Mr. Manjikian stated that he appreciated that the builder applied for a house that fit into the neighborhood and used a previously approved home as the basis for his application. Ms. Fiacco questioned the need for the skylight in the attic and suggested that this would be an easy way to install a stairway to the attic. Mr. DeStefano stated that he would feel more comfortable if the skylight was removed and a more conventional ceiling over the stairway was installed. He was concerned that a stairway could be installed easily and convert the attic to bedrooms.

Comments from Audience

1. Dr. Nager, 57 Concord Avenue, spoke in support of the project since this will enhance the neighborhood and remove a house that is in terrible shape.
2. Steve Tomczyk, 47 Hamilton Road, asked for clarification on the landscape plan. The Board will review the landscape plan prior to installation.
3. Kasper Torosian, 49-51 Concord Avenue, inquired about the grade and the stone wall between the 2 properties. Mr. Lohan stated that the grade will not be affected.

The Board reviewed that landscape plan and requested changes including more plantings around

the HVAC units.

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Clark.
Motion passed.**

**MOTION made by Mr. DeStefano to approve the Design and Site Plan Review for 55
Concord Avenue subject to the conditions discussed by the Board as well as the standard
ones. Seconded by Mr. Manjikian. Motion passed.**

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

No updates were reported.

5. Preview Agenda for June 21

There were no items to preview.

Adjourn: 9:15 p.m.