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**TOWN OF BELMONT  
PLANNING BOARD**

**MEETING MINUTES  
January 5, 2016**

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

Staff: Mr. Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development

**7:00 p.m. Meeting called to order.**

Ms. Allison welcomed Charles Clark, newly appointed member of the Planning Board.

**1. Update on Closing for Cushing Village**

(Mr. DeStefano has recused himself from this discussion.)

Ms. Allison read a letter submitted by the attorney representing the Applicant updating the Board on the status of the closing and noted that it would be posted on the Town website. She summarized key points of the letter, including the rationale for missing the scheduled closing and that key lending agreements have been signed and placed in escrow. The team would like to meet with the Board on February 2.

Mr. Wheeler reported that the definitive plans for the Winslow Building were submitted though he was not prepared to discuss them since the closing had not yet occurred and the plans are not due until February.

Mr. Manjikian commented that he was encouraged by the weekly update. Ms. Fiacco expressed frustration that the Board received the update at the last minute, and stated the need for more transparency. Mr. Clark stated that he was encouraged and hoped that the team would move expeditiously forward with the project. Ms. Allison stated that communication was critical and would talk with the Applicant about providing weekly updates. She added that she was encouraged since the letter reads like a punch list. Ms. Fiacco encouraged the Applicant to begin demolition by the next time they meet with the Board on February 2.

**2. Discussion of Airbnb**

Ms. Allison reminded that Board that the issue of zoning for Airbnb came from the Zoning Board of Appeals. She noted that Eric Smith, Chair of the ZBA, submitted a memo outlining his view of key issues and thanked him for doing so. Mr. Wheeler reported that the Town looks at this issue as a Bed & Breakfast, as short term rentals. He noted that a stay longer than a week is allowed by-right and that the ZBA recently denied a Special Permit for an Airbnb.

Ms. Allison stated that similar communities do not regulate Airbnb and added that the Town will look at other towns to see how they handled it and to see if they have anything in their Zoning By-Laws to address this issue.

All the Board members felt that this would not be the appropriate time to address this issue, but that it will come up again and should be handled in the future. Ms. Fiacco stated that the Board needs to think this through more and to do anything now would seem premature. All agreed that this issue might be a summer project.

### **3. Public Hearing**

#### **15-15, 582 Pleasant Street – Design and Site Plan Review**

Ms. Fiacco read the public hearing notice. She then recused herself, as Verizon is a client of her law firm. Mr. DeStefano recused himself from this case as well.

Michael Giaimo, representing Verizon Wireless, reviewed the application materials. He clarified that the proposal was not to replace the steeple but to replace just the louvers with a fiberglass product similar in appearance to the current wood louvers. He provided the Board with a sample of the proposed material. He stated that the wireless facility will be in the interior of the church cupola and that the antennas will not be visible from outside the church. He added that two small rectangular HVAC condensers will be installed on the roof and that they will not be visible from outside the church. He noted that all Department of Health standards will be met and that the Noise By-Law will be adhered to as well.

Robert Josaro, Pastor of the church, spoke on behalf of it. He reported that the church formed a committee to look into the cell tower use and were very thorough in its investigation. The committee was in favor of this proposal and the congregation of the church felt it was a reasonable plan. He noted that the revenue from this project will help to maintain the church. He added that he did not expect the tax status of the church to be affected by this proposal.

Mr. Haglund suggested that the wood louvres should be preserved so that if this facility is not needed in the future the wood louvers could be restored. Mr. Giaimo stated that there will not be a generator and all cables will be run through the attic of the church. Ms. Allison requested the specifications for the condensers.

Lauren Meier, Co-Chair of the Historic Commission, stated that two aspects of this proposal would need to be reviewed by the Commission: (1) replacement of the louvres, and (2) the air condensers on the roof. She asked about the type of material used in the replacement of the louvers and was told that they would be a type of fiberglass specifically manufactured for this project. She added that the project will need a Certificate of Appropriateness. Mr. Giaimo stated that will be applying for a Certificate and was hopeful that an accommodation could be reached.

#### **Comments from the Audience:**

1. Sharon Vanderslice, 593 Pleasant Street, questioned why the Town needs more cell antennae in Belmont Center.
2. Eric Anderson, 540 Pleasant Street, was concerned about the long term health risks from a cell tower and did not want to live near one until they are known.
3. Ms. Anderson, 540 Pleasant Street, argued that this facility is not necessary since

reception was good in Town. She added that she was strongly opposed to this project for health reasons.

4. Holly Stratford, Alexander Road, stated that another tower was needed, as she had terrible reception in her neighborhood.
5. Daniel Morris, 14 Alexander Avenue, stated that he objected to the cell antennae and noted that he submitted a petition signed by 106 neighbors opposing this application. He raised two objections: (1) the noise levels of the rooftop condensers: and, (2) the setback requirements of the equipment appear to be in violation with the Zoning By-Law. He asked for more information about the condensers and generator and noted that this affects the quality of life.
6. Evelyn Harlampo, 100 Leonard Street, questioned whether these facilities are fire hazards.

Mr. Giaimo stated that these types of installations exist throughout the country.

Ms. Allison stated that some of the audience issues were beyond the scope of the Design and Site Plan Review, such as the effects on health and asked Mr. Wheeler to comment on the setback issue. Mr. Wheeler stated that the setbacks on the plans as provided conformed to the Town By-Laws.

The Board discussed imposing the following conditions:

- Confirm that the equipment meets the dimensional regulations to submit as As-Built plan to verify.
- Document where and how the wood louvres will be preserved.
- Submit specifications for the HVAC units and a post operational noise study of them.
- Submit an application to the Historic District Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

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

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to approve the application with the conditions as discussed. Seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passed.**

#### **4. Continued Public Hearing**

##### **15-14, 24 Uplands Road – Design and Site Plan Review**

(Mr. DeStefano recused himself from this case.)

Mr. Wheeler reviewed the changes that had been made on the revised plans. Mr. Kenyon, Applicant, stated that he spoke to an arborist who said that the key to survival was the species of the tree, not necessarily the caliper of it. Mr. Haglund requested that the trees be 3-1/2" – 4"

caliper. Trevor Meyer, the Applicant's builder, noted that all suggestions were carefully considered. He stated that the designers were looking at this from the inside out, while the Board was looking at this from the outside in. As a result, not all of the suggestions were included. Mr. Manjikian stated that he appreciated the changes that were made and noted that this was a good step forward. He stated that he conducted a field trip to Cambridge to get a better sense of this design. Mr. Meyer explained the passive solar design and noted that the home was functionally designed and not aesthetically. He added that the front porch will help to break up the front façade. Mr. Kenyon added that the proposed footprint will be smaller than the existing house.

#### Comments from the audience

1. John O'Connor, 35 Upland Road, spoke in support of the project and stated that the changes looked good.

Ms. Allison stated that the major issue will be landscaping since this will help soften the house. Ms. Fiacco wondered if there was a way to improve the symmetry and asked if there could be a better balance between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors. The Board discussed this with the Applicant. Mr. Manjikian stated that he was comfortable with the front elevation and noted that he came to this conclusion on his field trip.

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

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to approve to application with the condition that the revised landscaping plan be submitted prior to installation. Seconded by Mr. Haglund. Motion passed. (3 in favor and 1 abstain – Mr. Clark could not vote.)**

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

There was nothing to report.

#### 6. Review of items for agenda for January 19, 2016

Ms. Allison quickly reviewed the items for the Board's next meeting and noted the following:

- Finalize the SRC Zoning amendments;
- Review the decision making process for the GR cases; and
- Begin to review the Demolition Delay By-law and the Historic Inventory.

#### 7. Review and approval of Minutes of December 15, 2015

**MOTION made by Mr. Manjikian to approve the minutes of December 15, 2015. Seconded by Mr. Haglund. Motion passed. (Mr. Clark abstained.)**

**Adjourn: 9:30 p.m.**