



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
TOWN OF BELMONT
19 Moore Street
Homer Municipal Building
Belmont, Massachusetts 02478-0900

Building Division
(617) 993-2664
Engineering Division
(617) 993-2665
Planning Division
(617) 993-2666

Telephone: (617) 993-2650 Fax: (617) 993-2651

MEMORANDUM

To: Town Meeting Members
From: Belmont Planning Board
Date: April 8, 2015

RE: Planning Board Report to the 2015 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 amendments that will appear before the 2015 Annual Town Meeting. Sitting for the Board were Michael Battista, Chair, Elizabeth Allison, Vice Chair, Joseph DeStefano, Karl Haglund, and Barbara Fiacco, associate member. The Board held duly posted public hearings on February 25, 2015, in the Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room in Town Hall and deliberated and voted on each of the proposed zoning amendments. A brief overview of the zoning amendments and the Board's recommendations to the Town Meeting are provided below.

Article 7 – Amend General Residence Zoning Districts Zoning By-Law for Single-Family Dwellings as an Alternative to a Two-Family Dwelling

Last year, Town Meeting adopted a set of zoning by-laws for the General Residence (GR) Zoning Districts. The Planning Board began implementing these by-laws this past fall. In the process of reviewing applications for new two-family dwellings, it became apparent to the Board that in several instances two single-family dwellings would have been preferable to the one two-family dwelling currently before them. Unfortunately, zoning would not allow this option since the lot sizes were less than 10,000 square feet (5,000 square feet is the current minimum for single-family dwellings in the GR Zoning Districts). As a result, this amendment was drafted to allow two single-family dwellings as an alternative to one two-family dwelling provided that certain thresholds and standards are met.

This amendment will help to control density (and therefore increase open space), provide homes that fit better in the neighborhood, and ensure that the GR Zoning Districts remain a mix of single and two-family homes. The single-family dwellings will require a Special Permit from the Planning Board and the eligible lot must have a minimum of 8,000 square feet and 90 feet of

frontage so that the 2 new lots will be at least 4,000 square feet and have at least 45' of frontage. In addition to these minimum eligibility thresholds, proposed standards will reduce the size of the dwellings since the allowed lot coverage and the building height will be less than currently allowed. The proportionality of the width and length of the single-family dwelling will also be limited in order to prevent 'box car' type housing. Finally, the proposed single-family dwellings will be subject to the same design standards that were adopted last year by Town Meeting for the GR Zoning Districts.

Several residents attended the hearing and voiced support for this amendment. At the conclusion of the hearing, **the Board** deliberated on the zoning amendment and voted unanimously (5-0) to **recommend favorable action by Town Meeting to allow two single-family dwellings as an alternative to one two-family dwelling in the General Residence Zoning Districts.**

Article 6 – Citizens' Petition: One Year Moratorium in a Portion of the Single Residence C Zoning District on the Construction of Oversized Single-Family Dwelling Units

The proposed Citizens Petition seeks to implement a one year moratorium on the construction, reconstruction, or modification of any detached single-family dwelling unit that will exceed a total height of thirty-two (32) feet, as measured from the average grade to the highest point of the roof (ridge). This moratorium will allow the Planning Board time to engage in planning studies to examine the effects of such construction and develop long-term solutions consistent with sound land use planning goals and objectives.

Given the development pressures on this neighborhood and the changes to the built environment experienced by the residents of this neighborhood, **the Planning Board voted unanimously (5-0) to recommend favorable action by Town Meeting on the proposed moratorium.**

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

Thank you.