

**TOWN OF BELMONT
PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
June 8, 2016**

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

2016 JUL -6 PH 2: 25

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

Absent: Barbara Fiacco

Staff: Jeffrey Wheeler, Office of Community Development

6:35 p.m. Called to order

1. Discuss and Deliberate on Potential Amendments

Ms. Allison reviewed the history that led to the Citizens Petition. Mr. Haglund stated that the ability to regulate interior wireless communications facilities was an important issue within the residential districts. Mr. DeStefano agreed since these facilities generate income, they would be turning homes into businesses. Mr. Manjikian countered stating that he could not see a scenario where someone could install an interior antenna within a home because it would be below the tree line. He mentioned that the Board previously heard loud and clear that this was a balance between property rights and codifying and that this amendment would not prohibit such facilities in residential areas. He added that he did not see the current process as broken. Mr. DeStefano stated that he does not see the Special Permit process as burdensome. He added that this will allow neighbors to know what's going on in the neighborhood and give them more comfort. He argued that the Special Permit process gives continuity amongst the various types of facilities since they would all require a Special Permit. Ms. Allison raised a concern that this may lead to no cell service in Belmont. She emphasized that all studies regarding decreased property values were regarding the impact of a cellular tower, not a facility located within a steeple. She stated that she was torn since the Special Permit is a process that gives the neighborhood the ability to provide input on an application, however, given the limitations imposed by the federal law she was having trouble finding that it would provide anything further than the current zoning regulations, which do require Design and Site Plan Review. Mr. Haglund stated that if the antennae are not visible then he did not have an issue with the current zoning by-law. Mr. DeStefano countered that there was no such thing as invisible since the louvers in the installation within the steeple at 582 Pleasant Street are not a solid wall. Mr. Clark stated that he had a problem with all of this and that he was generally in favor of a neighborhood having a voice. However, he noted, that the issue seemed to be about health which is beyond the scope allowed by federal law.

Moved by Mr. Manjikian to recommend favorable action to Town Meeting on the Citizens Petition regarding interior wireless telecommunications facilities. Seconded by Mr. DeStefano. The Board's decision was split – 2 yes, 2 no, 1 abstain.

Adjourned – 7:05 p.m.