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Michael Zehner, AICP
Planning Director

April 6, 2015

Town Meeting
Town of Wellesley
525 Washington Street
Wellesley, Massachusetts 02482

Re: 2015 Annual Town Meeting - Articles 27, 28, 29, 30 and 32

Dear Town Meeting Members:

The Planning Board wishes to provide context regarding the decision to table and seek no motion at the 2015 Annual Town Meeting with regard to Articles 27, 28, 29, 30, and 32. As you are aware, the Advisory Committee's recommendations were divided on several of the Articles, and unfavorable with respect to Article 32. While the Board ultimately supports all of the motions, it became clear that more work needs to be done.

For your consideration, some background regarding the Articles and the Board's intent moving forward:

Articles 27, 28, 29, and 30: As expressed in the Board's *Report to Town Meeting*, these Articles were intended as the first steps in the re-codification of the Zoning Bylaw. Since at least 2006, the Planning Board has agreed on the need to re-codify the Zoning Bylaw, as recommended in the Town's *2007-2017 Comprehensive Plan*:

- One approach recommended to the Board is to bring a full rewrite of the current 234-page Bylaw to Town Meeting under a single Article. The rewrite itself would be a multi-year project and require external consultants to accomplish. Rather than add further delay and considerable taxpayer consulting expense, the Board decided that re-codification was more manageable and allowed for more open debate if brought in separate Articles, addressing a few related sections at a time.
- The Board continues to believe this is the most viable method to pursue re-codification, presenting material to Town Meeting and the public in a more easily digestible form. To do that, the Board is initiating a collaborative approach to re-codification that will require input from other town boards and interested town resident.
- In the coming months the Board will be establishing a subcommittee of key members and staff from boards and departments involved in the administration of the Bylaw as well as representation from interested town residents.
- This 're-codification council' will be charged with recommending the course of action and changes to re-codify the Bylaw. Just as important, they will assist in the public's understanding of such changes.

The Board looks forward to Town Meeting's future consideration of these efforts.

Article 32: The Article was intended to establish a minimum 5' setback for driveways on residential properties. While the Board believes the proposed setback and Special Permit flexibility are reasonable, the Board heard comments that this provision might cause unintended consequences and should be reviewed in concert with other issues related to residential development that are becoming more apparent to the Board and others in our community. The Board decided several months ago to study aspects of residential development, such as Large House Review, lot coverage, and height regulations, to determine whether changes are necessary to account for the ever-changing nature of development and to assist in the protection of our neighborhoods. To that end, and based on input received, the Board will similarly study driveways, along with other provisions, to determine the best way to mitigate negative impacts on our neighborhoods.

The Board wishes to thank the Advisory Committee for their consideration and insight and looks forward to bringing Articles to Town Meeting in the future that have been developed through a collaborative and informed effort. Should Town Meeting members have an interest in subjects related to these Articles, or any matters pertaining to the Planning Board, we encourage you to reach out to the Board to continue the discussion.

Sincerely,



Sara Preston, Chair
Town of Wellesley Planning Board