

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

Regular Meeting

Monday, November 17, 2025

7:00 PM

Cassidy Conference Room, 562 Main Street, Melrose

PRESENT: Gregory Sampson, Beth Delahajj, Steven Barron, Michael Aveni, Paul King, Brian Gregory, Carla Morelli, Tim Bailey & Anne DeSouza Ward

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Lori Massa, Director & City Planner, Maya Noviski, Senior Planner, and Adam Forrester, Assistant Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mr. Sampson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, October 27, 2025

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. King seconded the motion. All voted in favor except Ms. DeSouza Ward who abstained. None were opposed.

REVIEW DEMOLITION REVIEW ORDINANCE

Lori Massa, Director & City Planner, provided an overview of the proposed demolition review ordinance. The Ordinance was initiated by City Councilors and Planning Staff worked with them on write the ordinance. Members had the following questions/comments about the ordinance. Answers are indicated underneath the question:

- Members discussed the benefits of balancing redevelopment while saving historic structures.
- Can a property owner receive a non-significant ruling without a public hearing?
 - No, there would be a public hearing but an applicant could skip this step and apply directly for a final determination on if the building is preferably preserved.
- When does the process being?
 - The Applicant needs to apply to the Historical Commission to start the process.
- Some members discussed certain aspects of the criteria for determination of significance for historic structures being too subjective.
- Members wanted to ensure that the criteria for review were standardized and it is made clearer that an applicant could apply directly to the Commission to start the review process at any time.
- How does this ordinance impact the MBTA Communities Act or ADUs?

- This doesn't apply to MBTA Communities Act since it is a regulation outside of zoning. Converting historic accessory structures into ADUs helps preserve them by allowing a use of them; and less should be proposed to be demolished.
- Members expressed support for documenting historic structures even if they are eventually demolished.
- Some Board Members were supportive of the ordinance, noting that it addresses the tension between altering or demolishing older structures and the rights of private property owners, and creates a public process for both determinations that the Historical Commission would make.
- Other Members were opposed to the 12 month review period, suggesting that it should be less, or to having this ordinance at all as it imposes additional requirements on property owners which slows down the process of redevelopment.
- Members had the following suggestions for edits to the ordinance draft:
 - Criteria for determination should be clearer and more objective. Standards should be very clear to property owners.
 - The appeal process should be clear.
 - It should be clearer that an applicant could apply directly to the Commission to start the review process at any time.

The Planning Board will send a letter with their comments to the City Council for their consideration before they vote on this ordinance.

OTHER

The next Planning Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 15, 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.