

RECEIVED

By City Clerks Office at 10:06 am, May 26, 2026

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

Regular Meeting

Monday, April 27, 2026

7:00 PM

Cassidy Conference Room, 562 Main Street, Melrose

PRESENT: Gregory Sampson, Beth Delahaij, Steven Barron, Paul King, Brian Gregory, Anne DeSouza Ward, and Carla Morelli

ABSENT: Tim Bailey, Michael Aveni

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Mr. Sampson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, March 9, 2026

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

Design Review Subcommittee Meeting, March 9, 2026

Mr. Barron made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Case 26-001, 174 Green Street, Nick & Samantha Riccio (request to withdraw)

The Applicants submitted a written request to have the case withdrawn without prejudice. The Board voted to accept the withdrawal of the application without prejudice, 5-0.

Case 22-003-R, 14 Chipman Avenue, Robert Johnson

Robert Johnson, Applicant, Robert Bell, Attorney, Giovanni Fodera, Engineer, and Eric Zachrison, Architect, appeared before the Board to present the case.

The project team presented an overview of the updated plans that included the following:

- A revised building design that include siding material that is made from recycled rice husks and is wood-like in appearance
- Panels installed similar to shingles
- Proposed window design was dictated in part by the new energy codes
- Balconies are inset and have lighter color wood panels
- Patio/outdoor dining area between proposed building and 453 Franklin St. building.
- The garage level including parking at grade and retail on the first level

- Stormwater system is located at the low point of the site. Everything drains towards southern part of site. Existing conditions have no stormwater mitigation in place.
- One of the existing curb cuts will be closed

The Board had the following questions and comments; answers are listed underneath the question:

- What is the plan for the retaining wall? Demo and build new wall close to the property line? Is an easement required for the demo?
 - Plan for sheet piles and with materials that will not require access onto the abutting property
- Where is the new impervious area on site?
 - Landscaping/pocket park, snow storage area, landscaping in front of Chipman Ave
- Is there any drainage area for the upper parking lot?
 - Yes, it is graded towards the snow storage area. It will lead into the stormwater management system
- Where will trash pickup happen and what is the process?
 - Bins will be rolled out. Private trash pickup will occur on site in the upper parking lot.
- Board requests trash pickup, deliveries, truck routes and turning radius, etc. be detailed in the Operations and Management plan.
- Is the commercial trash room separate from the residential?
 - Yes, one room for commercial and one for residential
- Where is the transformer located?
 - Coordinating with National Grid on location in the northwestern portion of the site.
- Will trees be removed?
 - Yes, some mature trees will be removed when the retaining wall is demolished. There are new plantings listed on the landscaping plan.
- Can some of the mature trees be saved?
 - Will check and update if they can be
- Board requests that signage be installed to make access to the site for delivery drivers, ride shares, and other services clear. Access to residential and commercial part of site should be made clearer.
- Any vents for commercial/restaurant space?
 - Yes, grease traps and vents. Restaurant use is being encouraged.
- What is the parking plan?
 - There are more parking spaces proposed for the residential units than on the approved plans due to the VFW not having space in the current plan.

- Members suggested project team explore options for the building to reflect the street it is facing. Chipman Ave is more residential and the design should reflect that.
- The space between buildings should be welcoming so that the space is used.
- The top floor should not be larger than the floors below to reduce its scale.
 - Project team will explore alternative design options.
- The building design should be more mindful of architectural context of the neighborhood. This design is too modern and experimental for the area.
- Where are the affordable units located?
 - Not determined yet. Will share unit mix and location of affordable units on later plans
- Where will guests park?
 - On area streets, municipal lots in area

The Board heard several public comments during the meeting. Steve Turoson, President of VFW, Helen Cargill, 110 West Highland Ave, Kathy Churchill, 43 Marvin Road, Bob Driscoll, 33 Thurston Road, Corey Mendoza, 102 Richardson Road, Michael Nachshen, 28 Chipman Ave, Phillip Morgan, 11 Sargent Road, Nancy Clover, 185 Essex Street, and Shelly Finley, 39 Chipman Ave, had the following comments:

- Existing conditions on site have never been addressed. This proposal will improve site conditions and benefit neighborhood.
- Negative impact on abutters due to construction and traffic
- It does not fit in with neighborhood context
- Potential pedestrian safety issue. There is a school close by
- This is a good project for the neighborhood. Alternative proposals could be much worse
- Green space should be added and designed in a meaningful way that benefits the public
- Street trees should be added
- The building should have a colorful design
- Additional green space and bike parking should be added
- Worried about the entrance on Chipman Ave as it is a quiet street
- Chipman Ave is currently a private way and that could cause issues with maintenance and access to site

The Board discussed their concerns with the current proposal and requested the following items to be updated and presented at the next meeting:

- Pre and post pervious areas shown on plans
- Investigate if mature trees are worth saving
- Detailed roof plan
- Construction routes added to construction management plan

- Submit operation and management plan that details trash pickup, deliveries logistics, signage, etc.
- Show location of affordable units
- Submit photometric plan

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to continue the case to the meeting on Monday, May 18, 2026. Mr. King seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents:

Site Plan Review application materials, case 22-003-R

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Sampson was reelected Chair of the Planning Board by unanimous vote. Mr. Sampson reappointed Ms. Morelli as Chair of Design Review Subcommittee, Ms. DeSouza Ward as Chair of Zoning Subcommittee, and Mr. King as Clerk of the Planning Board.

OTHER

The next Planning Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 18, 2026.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.