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**MELROSE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 12, 2026
7:00 PM
Milano Center
201 W Foster St, Melrose**

PRESENT: Chair Michael Coleman, Richard Curl, Kevin Erb, Lindsay Toghill, Ryan Murphy & Robert Tullis

Lori Massa, City Planner, and Adam Forrester, Assistant Planner, were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Coleman.

1. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Curl made a motion to approve the March 10, 2026 meeting minutes. Mr. Tullis seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

2. Public Hearing for Local Historic District Designation of 244 Main Street (Benjamin Lynde House) Assessor's Map C5 0 24

Rob Tullis presented key findings of the Benjamin Lynde House Local Historic District Preliminary Study Report. Mr. Tullis provided an overview of the study report, highlighting examples of historic properties in Melrose, the historical significance and architectural features of the Benjamin Lynde House, historic photographs of the property, historically significant architectural components of the structure, and the recommended priorities for preservation. Additional information is contained in the final study report, which is available on the City's website.

Approximately six Melrose residents provided public comment, all expressing support for the establishment of the Local Historic District. Speakers emphasized the historical significance of the Lynde family and the Benjamin Lynde House to Melrose's development, noting the building's high level of architectural integrity and its importance as a well-preserved example of Federal-style architecture. Comments also highlighted Benjamin Lynde's service during the American Revolution and the broader historical significance of the events surrounding the "shot heard 'round the world," emphasizing the enduring importance of American independence and its continued resonance both nationally and internationally.

The Commission received one written comment prior to the meeting. Lori Massa, City Planner, read the comment into the record. The members agreed with the sentiment of the comment and agreed to include the acknowledgement that members of the Lynde family held slaves and to recognize the role of enslaved people in the history of colonial settling of America and early Melrose. It appears that no slaves were held by Benjamin Lynde, nor was slavery associated with the construction of the 1820 house.

After public comment was closed, the Commission voted to amend the preliminary study report and send the final study to the City Council for consideration on the creation of the district.

Documents: Benjamin Lynde House Local Historic District Preliminary Study Report and Presentation

3. Applications for Certificate of Appropriateness

a. Veteran Services Department for the installation of signage at City Hall, 562 Main Street

Tammy Shovelton, Applicant and Director of Veteran Services, and Paul DeSantis, Metro Sign & Awning, appeared before the Commission to present an overview of the signage plans. They explained that the plans have been updated to incorporate feedback received at the HDC meeting on October 16, 2025 when the sign was preliminarily discussed. The plan is to replace the existing Welcome Home sign that is located in front corner of the City Hall lot facing the intersection of Main and Essex Street. The dimensions of the new sign are 76” by 96”. It will be installed on granite posts. The sign material is High-Density Urethane. The letters will be 7” and will be carved into the sign. The color will be a dark red with gold letters. There will be two panels, the top displaying the message ‘Melrose Honors Our veterans’ and the bottom displaying the seals of the six branches of the U.S. military.

The Commission had the following questions and comments. Answers are indicated underneath the question:

- How is the sign attached to the posts?
 - There is an aluminum angle frame between the granite posts. The frame is a shadow box and the temporary banners are secured with zip-ties.
- Is the existing sign 84” wide?
 - Yes, and the new sign will have the same width.
- Has the location changed?
 - No, the new sign is proposed to be in the same location as the existing sign.
- What is the banner material made out of?
 - Vinyl
- The sign and the kiosk are too close to each other. The kiosk or the sign should be moved to another location. It does not look appropriate to have both close to each other.

Members discussed that moving the kiosk, which is a physical structure with a concrete pad underneath, would be difficult compared to moving the sign.
- Members noted that they have no issue with the size, materials, and details of the sign.

Public Comment:

Robert Driscoll, Chair of the Veterans Services Advisory Board, appeared to speak at the meeting. He explained that the sign is a symbol of the community honoring veterans and it is more than just a physical sign. The Veterans' Board is seeking feedback and guidance for the new sign.

The Commissioners discussed supporting the design of the sign. They do not support the proposed location of the sign. Tammy Shevelton will reach out to the Mayor's office and the Veteran Services Advisory Board to explore a solution to the location of the new signage. The Commission requested that the sign and kiosk be at least 6' apart from each other in the updated proposal that will be presented at the next HDC meeting.

The Applicant requested that the case be continued to the meeting on June 9, 2026 to present updated plans. The Commission voted, 5-0, to continue the case.

Documents: Application for Certificate of Appropriateness dated April 27, 2026
Plans dated 3.12.26

b. First Baptist Church for a free-standing food pantry structure at 561 Main Street

Terron Tuckett, Applicant, and Jen Parziale, resident leading this project, appeared before the Commission to present an overview of the food pantry structure plans. They explained that proposal includes installing a new free-standing food pantry structure in the front yard of the First Baptist Church at 561 Main Street. The proposed pantry will replace the existing smaller food pantry. The structure will measure approximately 5' in width and 18" in depth and will be elevated 1.5' off the ground. It will have a height of approximately 4.5' at the front and 4' at the rear. The exterior siding materials include Hardi-plank clapboard siding with boral trim. The color will be white with black shingles on the roof. There will be doors on the front that can be latched closed to protect the contents from the elements. He added that the Church updated the design to be more accessible based on feedback from the HDC at a previous meeting when the conceptual plan was presented. He also noted that they checked with the Health Department and received clearance for the project.

The Commission did not receive any public comments, and no one appeared to speak during the hearing.

The Commissioners were supportive of the proposal. They supported the design and location of the pantry. They discussed attaching a condition of approval to the certificate specifying that the legs of the structure be a dark color.

Mr. Tullis made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for free-standing food pantry structure at 561 Main Street with the condition that the color of the legs of the structure shall be a dark color. Ms. Toghill seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Application for Certificate of Appropriateness dated April 28, 2026
Plans dated 3.3.26

c. Adam Principato for the installation of signage for Nirvana Brazilian Jiu Jitsu at 645 Main Street

Adam Principato, Applicant, appeared before the Commission to present the plans to install signage for the business, Nirvana Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, at 645 Main Street. He explained that the proposal includes installing a new free-standing, two-sided sign in the front yard of the property. The proposed standing sign is two-sided and will measure 41” by 20.5”. The color is a dark, blue-green with carved, white letters. There is an existing bush in the proposed location of the sign. The owner of the property is the First United Methodist Church, and they have given permission for the location of the sign and will remove the bush. He added that this location will be ideal for his business as it is visible from Main Street and at the driveway entrance. In addition, it is the preferred location for his landlord. He noted that the proposed location is set back 1’ into the front yard, which will require a Variance from the Board of Appeals.

The Commissioners were supportive of the proposal. They approved of the design and the location of the standing sign. They discussed attaching a condition of approval to the certificate specifying that the color of the posts shall be dark gray.

Mr. Curl made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of signage at 645 Main Street with the condition that the color of the posts shall be dark gray. Ms. Toghill seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Application for Certificate of Appropriateness dated April 9, 2026
Plans dated 2.3.26

The next meeting is set for June 9, 2026.

Mr. Erb made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.