

**MELROSE BOARD OF APPEALS
MEETING MINUTES
Public Hearing
Wednesday, June 11, 2025
7:30 p.m.
Remote Meeting**

Present:

David Roache
Bryan Thorp
Benjamin Rosenberg
Daniel Gelormini
Jeffery Ugino

Absent: Chris Coughlin and Raj Singh

Staff Present: Adam Forrester, Assistant Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, this meeting was conducted via remote participation. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting were found on the City of Melrose's website, at www.cityofmelrose.org/remote-meetings. No in-person attendance of members of the public was permitted, but every effort was made to ensure that the public could adequately access the proceedings in real time, or in the event that we are unable to do so, on the mmtv3.org website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings was posted as soon as possible after the meeting. A link was also available on www.cityofmelrose.org.

Application materials were posted to the City's website: www.cityofmelrose.org/board-appeals.

CASES BEFORE THE BOARD

21 003 – 12-16 Essex Street- review of exterior building materials and colors related to condition of Comprehensive Permit approval.

Dana Lopez, Wakefield Associates Inc., and Tim Johnson, Architect, appeared before the Board to present an update on the 12-16 Essex Street project. Mr. Johnson presented an update on the proposed exterior building material and color options for this project as shown on the plans. The updated elevations incorporated the feedback from the Board at the previous meeting. The Board asked for a mockup of the updated materials and colors to be prepared for review at the next meeting.

Documents: Elevations 6.10.25

25 001 – 538-540 Lynn Fells Parkway- The appeal of Dr. Moira K. Casey for a Variance from §235-5.3 of the Zoning Ordinance for a change in use from accessory professional office to a medical office and a Special Permit under §235-12.4 for nonconforming number of parking spaces and dimensions at 538-540 Lynn Fells Parkway in Melrose on a lot consisting of 9,895 sf and shown on Assessor's Map D13 0 122.

Dr. Moira K. Casey, Applicant, and Keith Loranger, Architect, appeared before the Board to present the case. Dr. Casey provided an overview of the project explaining that the request includes expanding her orthodontic practice to encompass the entire building while maintaining the look of a residential home on the exterior. She explained that the change in use will allow the practice to make necessary upgrades to improve patient experience, allow for the business to grow, and improve accessibility. She noted that no exterior changes are proposed for the exterior of the structure except for the installation of an ADA compliant ramp.

The Board received several letters both in support and opposition to this project prior to the hearing.

At the hearing, the Board heard several public comments. Heather Dolan & Jeff Lawlor, 537 Lynn Fells Parkway, and Maureen Van Neste, 533 Lynn Fells Parkway, had the following comments and questions:

- Concerns about the increase in traffic and parking on neighboring streets.
- Concerns about the change in use to a medical office and how the residential neighborhood would be impacted. Also, they are concerned about the impact on the property value of abutting homes if this use is allowed.
- Will this medical office remain a practice with only one practitioner at a time? Can there be conditions attached to approval to guarantee that in the future?
- Is the reason for the request to improve the practice for one orthodontist or will the staff expand to multiple practitioners in the future?

Board Members were mostly supportive of the request. Members asked for more clarification of the request for the Special Permit for nonconforming number of parking spaces and dimensions. Planning Staff explained that with the change in use to a medical office the required parking spaces for a medical office of this size is twenty-two parking spaces. One Member noted that denying the request for a change in use would create a hardship due to the limited space for the business in the existing condition and the difficulty of relocating the business to a larger site.

One Member did not support the request for a change in use. They thought that this change would add traffic and parking issues to an already challenging highly congested roadway. Also, they commented that a medical office use is not the right fit for this neighborhood and shared

some of the abutters' concerns over what future owners would use this approval for potential expansion of the medical office.

Members discussed granting the request with conditions attached that address the concerns they heard from the abutters while also allowing for Dr. Casey to expand her practice.

The Board, by the votes of Chair Bryan Thorp and Members Benjamin Rosenberg, Jeffery Ugino, and Daniel Gelormini, in favor, and David Roache, in opposition, granted the request, 4-1, with the following conditions:

- No exterior changes will be made to the structure, except for the installation of the ADA compliant ramp or other accessibility improvements. Any exterior changes to the building as it exists at the time of this approval, beyond the ADA compliant ramp in the plans, and any expansion of the square footage of the existing structure or use will require approval from the ZBA.
- The practice shall be confined to one sole practitioner for orthodontic use.
- Any changes to the driveway and parking spaces as indicated on the site plan will require ZBA approval.
- The Applicant shall contact the city's Engineering Department to apply to change the address of the property to the business address.

Documents: ZBA Application materials, case 25-001

25 006 – 109 Marvin Road- The appeal of Ivan Stano for a Special Permit under §235-12.5.4.b.i of the Zoning Ordinance for the front yard setback requirement to convert an existing nonconforming enclosed front porch into a larger living space on the single-family dwelling at 109 Marvin Road in Melrose owned by Ivan Stano & Frances Fairhead on a lot consisting of 7,754 sf and shown on Assessor's Map C13 0 25.

Ivan Stano and Frances Fairhead, Applicants, and David Lucas, Attorney, appeared before the Board to present the case. Attorney Lucas provided an overview of the project, which involves expanding the footprint of the existing front porch and converting the porch into livable space in the nonconforming front yard setback. The project also includes altering the roof over the porch and adding a canopy with a pitched roof over a new stairway. The front yard setback will remain the same.

The Board received four public comments in support of the proposal. No one from the public appeared to speak during the hearing.

Board Members were supportive of the request. Members appreciated the design of the proposal and agreed that the project fits within the neighborhood context and will not negatively impact

the neighborhood or abutters. The requested relief is de minimis and the proposal will not increase the nonconforming setback.

The Board, by the unanimous votes of Chair Bryan Thorp and Members David Roache, Benjamin Rosenberg, Jeffery Ugino and Daniel Gelormini in favor, granted the request, 5-0.

Documents: ZBA Application materials, case 25-006

25 008 – 186 Tremont Street- The appeal of Ronen and Nir Drory for a Variance from §235-7.2.5.e.i of the Zoning Ordinance for maximum residential unit density to construct a mixed-use development with 52 residential units at 186 Tremont Street in Melrose owned by New York Capitol Investment Group, LLC on a lot consisting of 35,338 sf and shown on Assessor's Map B11 0 76.

Ronen Drory, Applicant, David Lucas, Attorney, and Eric Bradanese, Engineer, appeared before the Board to present the case. Attorney Lucas provided an overview of the project, which includes demolishing the existing car wash and constructing a 5-story mixed-use building, with 2,750 square feet of commercial space on the first floor, 52 residential units above, and 59 surface level parking spaces. The project received Site Plan Approval, an Affordable Housing Incentive Program Special Permit and a Reduced Parking Special Permit from the Planning Board. Attorney Lucas explained that the project is utilizing the Rail Corridor Overlay District and requires a variance from the maximum density requirements. With the Affordable Housing Incentive Program Special Permit, the allowable number of residential units is 36, however, 52 residential units are proposed.

Members asked how the affordable units are indicated on the plans. Attorney Lucas noted that the affordable units are labeled 1A (affordable one-bedroom) or 2A (affordable two-bedroom). Members asked about parking for the site. Mr. Bradanese explained that there will be 59 parking spaces with spaces designated for the residential units including visitor spaces, and the commercial use. One Member asked about waste management. Attorney Lucas and Mr. Bradanese explained that there are dumpsters located in the back left corner of the site for the commercial and residential tenants. Tenants are expected to bring their trash to the dumpsters and there will be a property management staff person onsite that can provide support if needed.

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

Board Members were supportive of the project and felt that the proposed density is appropriate for this location. One Member commented that the RCOD density requirements should be updated. Members did not have any other comments or suggestions for the project.

The Board, by the unanimous votes of Chair Bryan Thorp and Members David Roache, Benjamin Rosenberg, Jeffery Ugino and Daniel Gelormini in favor, granted the request, 5-0.

Documents: ZBA Application materials, case 25-008

25 009 – 9 Ledge Street- The appeal of Dionysios Kaskarelis for a Variance from §235-6.2 of the Zoning Ordinance for maximum number of stories and a Special Permit under §235-12.5.4.b.i for constructing an additional story in the nonconforming setbacks on the single-family dwelling at 9 Ledge Street in Melrose owned by Access Properties, LLC on a lot consisting of 4,012 sf and shown on Assessor's Map E14 0 45.

Dionysios Kaskarelis, Applicant, and Jason Choi, Project Manager appeared before the Board to present the case. Mr. Kaskarelis provided an overview of the proposed project, which includes constructing a second story and enclosing the attached three season porch. The addition will not encroach farther into the nonconforming side yard setbacks.

Members asked for clarification on the proposed number of stories. Planning Staff explained that according to the zoning regulations, the basement is not considered a story therefore the addition does not violate the maximum number of stories. Members asked if the Applicant had discussed the project with direct abutters. Mr. Kaskarelis stated that he spoke with the owner of 5 Ledge Street who was in support of the project. Members discussed the design of the windows on the left side of the structure and suggested adding more windows so that there is more symmetry. Mr. Kaskarelis explained that the building code prohibits openings in walls less than 3 feet from the property line.

One member of the public, Bahia Shortlidge of 144 Bay State Road, appeared to speak during the hearing and voiced support for the project noting that it will add value to the neighborhood and make better use of that site, but also voiced concern about the increase in the height and whether it will impact their privacy.

Board Members were supportive of the request. Members noted that this site's topography and width, and the proximity of the existing structure to the property line create unique design challenges. Members also noted that the proposal is not encroaching farther into the nonconforming setbacks. Members agreed that the proposed addition is logical and will not negatively impact abutters.

The Board, by the unanimous votes of Chair Bryan Thorp and Members David Roache, Benjamin Rosenberg, Jeffery Ugino and Daniel Gelormini, approved the Applicant's withdrawal of the request for a Variance, 5-0, and granted the Applicant's request for a Special Permit, 5-0.

Documents: ZBA Application materials, case 25-009

OTHER BUSINESS

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Ugino made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from May 14, 2025. Mr. Rosenberg seconded the motion. By roll call the Board voted, 5-0, to approve the minutes. Voting Members

included Benjamin Rosenberg, Jeff Ugino, Bryan Thorp, Daniel Gelormini, and Daniel Gelormini.

Next Meeting

The next meetings are scheduled for June 18, 2025, and July 9, 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.