

**MELROSE BOARD OF APPEALS
MEETING MINUTES
Public Hearing
Wednesday, April 12, 2023
7:30 p.m.
Remote Meeting**

Present:

Bryan Thorp
Benjamin Rosenberg
Megan Carriere
Katherine Moore
Curtis Dooling, II

Absent:

Rita Mercado

Staff Present: Lori Massa, Senior Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, this meeting will be 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

23 004 – 77 School Street

The appeal of Meredith Wolfrom for Variances from §235-18 and -19 of the Zoning Ordinance for side yard setback to demolish the existing sunroom and construct a single-story rear addition and deck in the left side yard on the nonconforming single-family home at 77 School Street, Melrose, MA on a lot of land containing 8,230 sf and shown on Assessor's Map F9 0 18.

Meredith Wolfrom appeared before the Board to present the case. Information regarding the hearing and the Board's discussion regarding the proposal and findings are documented in the decision for the case.

By roll call the Board voted, 5-0, to grant the requested variances.

Documents: ZBA Application 23-004

23 005 – 12-14 Sylvan Street

The appeal of Treetop Investments, LLC for a Special Permit under §235-17 of the Zoning Ordinance to establish the townhouse use to demolish the existing, single family structure and construct four townhouses with attached two-car garages at 12-14 Sylvan Street, Melrose, MA on a lot of land containing 17,593 sf and shown on Assessor's Map C3 0 16 & C3 0 16A.

Robert Bell, Attorney, requested that the case be continued to a future meeting. By roll call the Board voted, 5-0, to grant the requested continuance to June 14, 2023.

Documents: Request for continuance for ZBA Case 23-005

23 006 – 1 Washington Street

The appeal of 1 Washington Group, LLC for Variances from §235-14, -15, and -17 to establish a self-storage facility and §235 -18 and -19 for lot area, and side and rear yard setbacks, to construct four one-story buildings at 1 Washington Street, Melrose, MA on a lot of land containing 65,933 sf and shown on Assessor's Map B2 0 21.

Robert Bell, Attorney, and Barry Greenwood, Applicant, appeared before the Board to present the case. Attorney Bell explained that the proposed commercial use would increase the tax yield. He posited that the neighborhood has development fatigue and the owners do not want to sell or develop at this time. There is an existing office onsite that employs 40 workers. The rest of the site has been used by Greenwood Construction, which is changing their business model, and does not need the land for parking construction equipment anymore. He noted that the Applicant is not requesting a variance for parking; if the Board approves the requested variances, the project will require a Site Plan Review and the Applicant will apply for a Reduced Parking Special Permit to the Planning Board at that time. Attorney Bell stated that there is sufficient parking for the proposed use and the project will have a minimal impact on traffic.

The project will not have any water or sewer connections. The buildings will have exterior lights that will be shut off after business hours which are expected to be from 7 AM-9 PM. There will be no interior lights. Cameras will be installed on the exterior of the structures. The Applicant will also install and maintain permeable paving and will not regrade any existing pavement. The Applicant explained that no gutters are being proposed and water will shed off the roofs of the structures directly onto the ground. The structures will be mounted on thick slabs rather than a frost wall foundation. Customers will enter and exit electronically using an authorized card and there will be no staff onsite. The Applicant will use and maintain a garage for his vehicles behind the building.

Members asked if there is a market for this type of business. The Applicant responded that there are over 800 residential units on Washington Street with limited on-site storage. Members also wondered about the anticipated date of redevelopment of the site that the Applicant mentioned that he would pursue in the future. The Applicant explained that there are currently 40 employees who have been working in the existing office for over 20 years and he is unsure about the project's timeline. Members asked about the cost of development and the structures'

permanency. They also asked if the existing fence would stay, and the Applicant explained that they are proposing a 7.5 ft. wrought iron fence.

The Board received 4 letters in support and 1 letter opposed to the project. Kelly Tomas of 38 Brazil Street appeared before the Board commenting that the proposed use will not benefit the neighborhood and urged Members to encourage a better and different use. She noted that this business model creates long-term profit with little input which will dissuade any future owner from converting the site into something more advantageous.

Attorney Bell responded that the underlying zoning is for industrial uses and the Applicant could sell the property and it could be redeveloped into something worse.

Board Members voiced varying views on the proposed use including that it may be a reasonable interim use with a low impact on traffic. On the other hand if the site is generating income the use may be there long term and the site is not going to be redeveloped into its highest and best use. They discussed if they could make the finding that there is a hardship in order to grant the variance and they were struggling to come up with one. Self-storage is not a required use to have in the neighborhood. Some felt that the Applicant may be facing a hardship with the slowing down of the Greenwood & Sons construction business whereas other Members disagreed. Maximizing the use of the land is not a hardship and there is an office building on the property that is occupied.

Attorney Bell requested a continuance to June 14, 2023.

By roll call the Board voted, 5-0, to grant the requested continuance to June 14, 2023.

Documents: ZBA Application 23-006

OTHER BUSINESS

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Thorp made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from March 8, 2023. Ms. Carriere seconded the motion. By roll call members voted, 5-0, to approve the minutes.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.