MELROSE BOARD OF APPEALS
MEETING MINUTES
Public Hearing
Wednesday, June 28, 2023
7:30 p.m.
Remote Meeting

Present:
Megan Carriere, *Associate*
Rita Mercado, *Chair*
Katherine Moore
Benjamin Rosenberg
Bryan Thorp

Absent:
Curtis Dooling, II
Daniel Gelormini

Staff Present: Denise Gaffey, City Planner, Lori Massa, Senior Planner & Maya Noviski, Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 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

23 003 – 28 Greenwood Street (continued public hearing)

The application of Greenwood Development LLC for a Comprehensive Permit pursuant to M.G.L. c.40B, s. 21 to construct an approximately 11,923 sq. ft., 5-story building with 38 residential units and convert the existing 2.5 story building into two residential units with a 1,500 sq. ft. addition and additional half-story, and 40 parking spaces on three adjacent parcels of land at 0, 28, and 54 Greenwood Street, Melrose, MA with a lot area containing 39,780 sf and shown on Assessor's Maps B13 0 81, B13 0 82, and B13 0 83. Ten of the project's units will be affordable as is required and regulated under the law. See application for exemptions claimed.

Jesse Schomer, Attorney, appeared before the Board to present the case along with the development team including Laura & Sean Szekely, Owners & Developers; Rich Williams, Civil

Engineer; Dan Mills, Traffic Engineer; Michael Smith, Geotechnical Engineer; Marc Wallace, Acoustical Engineer; and David O'Sullivan, Architect. Attorney Schomer reviewed the updated materials provided to the Board since the last hearing. A traffic study with additional traffic generation analysis, and a sound study analyzing the anticipated volume levels of the proposed HVAC equipment, were both conducted. Attorney Schumer noted that an Operations Management Plan will be submitted once the project's plans are finalized. He also commented that the development team received the initial civil and geotechnical peer review comments and will respond before the next hearing.

Mr. Wallace elaborated on the acoustical study explaining that the sound impacts from the proposed HVAC units were assessed using a 3D model that processed topographical data supplied by the development team and MassGIS. Receptors were analyzed at 5 ft. and 15 ft. above ground level and receptor points were located at the second story of the six houses closest to the project. He noted that to comply with the Melrose Noise Ordinance, any consistent manufactured sound projected for more than two hours must be 40 decibels or less. Results from the analysis showed that the anticipated sound levels will be between 31-34 decibels at the abutting houses and 40 decibels at the property line during the quietest point of the night.

One Board Member asked if the study evaluated the sound based on the expected final site characteristics including the exposed rock face. Mr. Wallace explained that the analysis accounted for sound dissipation considering distance and atmospheric conditions, and the reflection of the sound off the site's topography and abutting structures.

Mr. Mills reviewed the updated traffic study. Data was collected at the Greenwood St. intersections on Franklin St. and Woodland Ave. and traffic forecasts from nearby, recently permitted projects including 14 Chipman Ave. and 453-463 Franklin St. were incorporated. Based on standard industry data, the project is expected to generate 15 extra trips during the morning and 16 extra trips during the evening, peak hours, which is comparable to other redevelopments nearby. The intersection capacity analysis and level of service for weekday morning and evening peak hours were analyzed using four different scenarios including a 2023 baseline, 2023 design year, 2030 no build, and 2030 build. No change is expected under the 2023 scenarios but under the 2030 no build and 2030 build scenarios, the Greenwood St. and Franklin St. intersection is expected to be worse during the morning peak hours with about a 2-3 second extra delay per vehicle.

The site lines from the driveways were also analyzed. The site distance for street approaches to the site's driveways and the intersection sight distance from the driveways to the south of the site are adequate. However, vegetation obstructs sight distance to the north of the site. Mr. Mills explained that each of the three driveways for the 38-unit building were analyzed for visibility and results show that five trees would need to be removed to achieve the minimum required site distance for the driveways on the right and in the middle. These trees are in the right of away abutting the conservation commission land.

Mr. Mills explained that visitor parking and rideshare and delivery services, are expected to occur offsite since on-street parking is allowed on parts of Greenwood St. However, some of the

parking spaces onsite could be dedicated to short-term parking or a pullout could be incorporated into the design, which would result in either a reduction of resident parking or landscaping. Board Members were concerned with the utilization of on-street parking for deliveries, rideshare, and visitor parking. One Member commented that a review of the crash history in the report showed several collisions with parked cars and asked how this reconciles with the proposed plan. Mr. Mills responded that details related to the specific accidents were not reviewed but the crashes occurred elsewhere on the street. He noted that the on-street parking issues should be analyzed holistically rather than just around the project site. One Member speculated that there may be less available on-street parking as a result of the project and wondered how deliveries will operate if there are no spaces available. Mr. Mills noted that a pull off area in the front of the site could be created or there could be onsite short-term parking spaces, which the Applicant is willing to consider.

One Member asked if the project was proposing EV chargers and for more details around the bicycle accommodations, including dedicated cargo and electric bicycle spaces. It was clarified that the indoor garage will be EV ready so any parking space could have a charger depending on the demand, however, none are proposed for initial construction. There are 26 indoor bike spaces and some spaces on the front of the building for guests. There are no proposed spaces for cargo bicycles, but the indoor rack can be rearranged and there are no specific accommodations for electric bicycles, but chargers could be installed in the garage.

Dominic Rinaldi, Engineer, presented the results from the Civil Engineering Peer Review. He highlighted several findings including that the proposed light poles on the plans appear to be in the right of way and the property line is not consistently shown throughout the site plans. The report requests swale sizing calculations and information regarding infiltration since the underground catch basin is shown to be lined with an impervious barrier. He emphasized that plans for snow storage and removal are critical to further understand the impacts of stormwater and runoff. The review also recommends including a condition of approval that requires the Applicant to notify the Board if the proposed stormwater system changes.

Members agreed that understanding how snow storage will operate is important. One Board Member asked if the stormwater system has the capacity to handle onsite snow storage. Mr. Rinaldi responded that snow should not be piled above the system, but it is hard to predict the exact consequences. Mr. Williams responded that there is limited pavement onsite so there will not be an extensive amount of snow removal but it could also be trucked offsite.

One Member asked if the report analyzed runoff from the ledge face. Mr. Rinaldi explained that there is a proposed swale meant to capture runoff, but no specifications were included. The swale runs in both directions and clarification is needed on how it and the overall stormwater management will function including the impermeable barriers. Mr. Williams responded that the infiltration system at the back of the project is entirely for roof runoff and there is an impervious barrier proposed along the side of the system closest to the building. The system will be on crushed stone and will provide more infiltration than is shown in the report because the design underestimates the infiltration that will occur onsite.

Mark Balfe, Engineer, presented the results from the Geotechnical Peer Review. He noted that this is a complex geotechnical site that is proposing significant rock cut. Shallow test pits were conducted but the report recommends collecting deeper test borings to understand the ledge's geological characteristics and plan the blasting accordingly. The report also requests more information about the stormwater system's impermeable barrier and perimeter drain to confirm that the infiltration system is acting as intended. He also noted that providing a long-term management plan is important to monitor erosion control.

Board Members asked about the recommended length of time for erosion management and monitoring. Mr. Balfe explained that as long as the rock face is exposed, it should be monitored but more details will emerge during construction. Members asked about the different types of rock exploration recommended in the report and Mr. Balfe explained that either test pits or test borings can be collected but test borings are recommended which entails mobilizing a drill rig to collect a rock sample. It was clarified that the report requests using alternate data sources for ground vibrations.

Mr. Smith responded that geologic mapping of exposed rock and reconnaissance were conducted. There is exposed bedrock to the south of the site, which is consistent with what was mapped at the site. They were planning to do confirmatory rock cores and an acoustic televiewer during the construction phase.

Board Members requested information about the number of predicted trips required to truck the blasted rock offsite. Attorney Schomer explained that it will be addressed in the Construction Management Plan. One Board Member requested that the Construction Management Plan also include a cut fill analysis, and blasting plan and schedule.

The Board received seven letters in opposition and the following community members appeared to speak:

- Attorney Dan Hill representing the neighbors of Clifton Park was concerned about infiltration and the storage capacity of the stormwater system. He also raised concerns about the acoustical report and asked for a peer review of the traffic and acoustical studies.
- Councilor Manjula Karamcheti of 24 Botolph Street raised concerns about the size and scope of the project, and the risks associated with construction. She also questioned how trash will be managed and if emergency services will be able to adequately access the site.
- Erin Kirby of 39 Clifton Park asked which peak hours were analyzed for the traffic trip generation.
- Ken Drive of 41 Greenwood Street raised concerns over traffic during construction and on-street parking.
- Paula Byrne of 88 Woodland Avenue explained that her house is outside of the 250 ft. boundary for the pre-blasting survey, but she has had two geotechnical reviews conducted showing that any rock vibrations could cause casualty and damage to her and her property.

Mr. Mills responded that the peak hours were 7:30 AM- 8:30 AM and 4:45 PM- 5:45 PM.

By roll call the Board voted, 5-0, to continue the case to August 16, 2023.

Documents: ZBA Application 23-003

OTHER BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes
Board of Appeals Regular Meeting, April 26, 2023

Board Members had no comments or adjustments to the minutes. Mr. Thorp made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Ms. Carriere seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Next Meeting
The next meeting is scheduled for July 12, 2023.
The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.