

**MELROSE BOARD OF APPEALS
MEETING MINUTES
Public Meeting
Monday, November 13, 2023
7:30 p.m.
Remote Meeting**

Present:

Rita Mercado
Bryan Thorp
Katie Moore
Benjamin Rosenberg
Megan Carriere

Absent:

Curtis B. Dooling, II
Daniel Gelormini

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

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

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.

Board Members continued their deliberations on the proposal and their discussion on the outstanding points of concern from the meeting on November 1, 2023. Members reiterated that the amount of parking and the location of the spaces is impractical and poses a threat to the health and safety of the community. Members also commented on the amount of proposed pervious material, positing that it contributes to the site's stormwater challenges and contradicts the City's environmental goals. Members emphasized that most of the parking in the front yard should not be constructed based on these factors.

On the construction plan, Members agreed that construction vehicles must avoid residential roadways, including Clifton Park and Woodland Avenue, and construction workers should be prohibited from parking in public parking areas. Members continued to express concern around the blasting plan and emphasized that the plan must include adequate safety measures to protect abutters' security.

Ms. Mercado read a portion of MassHousing's Project Eligibility letter, which states that the Applicant must address the City's concerns related to pedestrian circulation, open space, and the massing, height and density of the project. It also noted that the Applicant must demonstrate the ability to manage the onsite blasting required to construct the project and work to mitigate the project's negative visual impacts to abutters. Members discussed how their decision must balance the local need for housing with the complexity of this project and its impacts, which challenge the benefits of gaining a modest number of additional units. Members cautioned that there are still many unknown site conditions that could impact the viability of the project and agreed that it is difficult to approve the project without reviewing finalized plans. The Board noted that if they approve the project, the conditions must provide as many safeguards as possible to protect the interests of the neighborhood.

The Board reviewed the set of draft conditions revised by Planning Staff based on the Board's comments at the prior meeting and provided minor edits and suggestions to incorporate into the final conditions of approval. Members discussed the suggested condition that requires the elimination, rather than the reduction, of the fifth floor and imposes control over the height of the building rather than limiting the project's number of units. Denise Gaffey, City Planner, explained that this condition provides more flexibility by defining the amount of space the Applicant can utilize rather than the number of units that can be built. Members agreed that although this would not change the blasting footprint, it will mitigate the negative impacts on abutters by helping to further reduce the building's massing and height. Members discussed the suggestion to limit the building's height to 44 ft. and posited that it should be measured from the grade at the front of the building.

By roll call the Board voted, 5-0, to grant certain waivers from local regulations and not grant others as recommended by Planning Staff in the document dated November 13, 2023.

By roll call the Board voted, 5-0, to conditionally approve the application for a Comprehensive Permit with 61 conditions as documented by Planning Staff and discussed and modified at the meeting on November 13, 2023.

Documents: Comprehensive Permit Application and Supplemental Application
Materials dated February 23, 2023
HVAC Specifications dated May 2, 2023
Site Cross Section dated May 2, 2023
Traffic Report dated June 21, 2023
Landscape Plan dated July 27, 2023
Architectural Plans dated July 31, 2023
Sound Study Report dated July 31, 2023
Water Flow Test Report dated August 29, 2023
Stormwater Report dated September 13, 2023
Civil Plans dated September 13, 2023
Operations and Management Manual dated September 15, 2023
Transportation Management Plan dated September 20, 2023
Sewer Impact Analysis dated September 26, 2023
Construction Management Plan dated September 28, 2023

OTHER BUSINESS

Meeting Minutes

Mr. Thorp made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 1, 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 December 13, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm.