MELROSE BOARD OF APPEALS
MEETING MINUTES
Public Hearing
Wednesday, May 28, 2025
7:30 p.m.
Remote Meeting

Present:
David Roache
Bryan Thorp
Benjamin Rosenberg
Chris Coughlin
Daniel Gelormini
Jeffery Ugino

Absent: Raj Singh

Staff Present: Lori Massa, Director and City Planner, Maya Noviski, Senior Planner, & 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

25 002 – 199-201 Essex Street- The application of Carroll Essex LLC for a Comprehensive Permit pursuant to M.G.L. c.40B, s. 21 for an approx. 44,060 sf, 5-story mixed-use building with approx. 1,400 sf of commercial space, 50 residential units, of which 13 will be affordable as is required and regulated under the law, and 22 parking spaces at 199-201 Essex Street, Melrose, MA, on a lot of land containing 16,136 sf and shown on Assessor's Map C8 0 12 & C8 0 14.

Robert Bell, Attorney, Mark Caroll, Applicant, John Connery, Financial Consultant, Tim Johnson, Architect, Bob Griffin, Engineer, Mike Paige, Engineer, Bob Michaud, Transportation

Engineer, & Mark O'Hagen, Consultant, appeared before the Board to present an overview of the proposed project.

Attorney Bell and Mr. Connery, Financial Consultant, provided an overview of the fiscal study and potential benefits of the project for the City. Mr. Connery provided details from the study including that this proposal is a low impact project on city services like the school department and emergency services. He added that the analysis of this proposed project shows that it will generate consistent revenue for the city over time. Also, he suggested that the City invest in better database software to enhance fiscal analysis for future studies.

Attorney Bell explained that they have an agreement in place with the abutting property owners of the Emerson Arms Apartments regarding easements.

Mr. Carroll, Applicant, and Mr. Johnson, Architect, gave an overview of the revisions that were requested by the Board at the April 30th meeting. The revisions included the following:

- New transformer location
- Updated Stormwater design that locates the system outside the structure along the perimeter of the property
- Parking Garage layout changed to address pinch point issue
- Two parking spots removed that were located next to the driveway easement to improve accessibility to the trash pickup/loading zone area
- Updated Construction Management Plan
- Updated Elevations with renderings showing the streetscape added

- Abutting structures were added to rendering.
- Trash pickup route was explained in more detail
- Horizontal datum line of 4th floor line up with abutting structures. The 5th floor is set back.
- Added horizontal reveals to the bays to add subtle shadow lines to provide depth to the façade design

Bob Griffin, Engineer, presented an overview of the updated civil plans. The updated plans included the following:

- Signage added to the driveway easement area to indicate Trash Truck parking area
- Stormwater management system was relocated from under parking garage to the perimeter of the property
- Stormwater calculations were updated for new location of the system
- Transformer and electrical system location updated on plans

Board Members had the following questions/comments for the Applicant and the rest of the development team:

- One Member still has concerns about the parking garage layout. They are unsure that the column grid layout will work and how vehicles will circulate smoothly in the garage. Mr. Carroll explained that the updated parking layout was done in a way to keep the same number of parking spaces and they find it to be functional.
- Board members overall supported the revised plans. They specifically mentioned the relocation of the stormwater system and transformer as being ideal.
- One Member appreciated the trash management plan and how it was designed to not have bins wheeled out into the street.
- One Member asked for the trash truck route and if it will go through the abutter's property. Ms. Massa, Director and City Planner, also asked for clarification on the trash truck route and removal of parking spaces in the driveway easement as well. Mr. Carroll explained that the truck will not go through the abutter's property and access the trash room by backing into the driveway off Essex Street. The trash truck will not be allowed to access property using any alternate route.
- One Member asked about the exterior building materials and how they will be installed. Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the exterior panels and how they are fastened. The panels will be medium density fiber cement board panels.
- Members suggested looking at an alternative material to use a variety of materials for the panels. One option would be to use a different material for the bays and balconies to distinguish them from the rest of the building's exterior. Mr. Johnson suggests that aluminum panels could be used instead of medium density cement board.
  Members were supportive of this change to the façade and understood the cost of changing the exterior materials of all sides of the building would likely be too expensive.

The Board received several public comments during the meeting.

- Greg Messina, 132 Country Club Rd., appeared before the Board to speak in support of the project as he thinks it is an improvement over the existing site and will positively contribute to the City in several ways.
- The Board received written comments as well. Doug Pippy, 354 Upham St., wrote that he resides in Greywood Estates, another development project of Mr. Carroll's, and supports this project as they believe it will be of high quality and contribute positively to Melrose. Bill and Terri Horan, 185 Essex St., wrote that they oppose the project for decreasing their quality of life, increasing traffic and parking issues. Catherine Cronin, 120 West Emerson St., wrote that she is a direct abutter who supports the project and confirms the validity of the contract between herself and Mark Carroll about improvements to her property. Laura Bergsten, 61 Orchard Lane, wrote that she supports the project as it is a

better use of the site. Bill Ahern, 88 Ellis Farm Lane, wrote that he supports the project as it will expand the tax base.

Members discussed how the Applicant addressed the issues that they asked for and support the updated plans. One Member noted that this project is ideal for this site as it provides much needed housing. Members discussed supporting the project as it is a better use of the site and a great example of transit-oriented development. The Board discussed traffic concerns that arose with the public comments. It is important to consider the impact of already approved projects; which are evaluated as part of the traffic study for the project. Additional most of the traffic is passthrough and the projects in this area are not generating trips that significantly impact traffic. Members discussed reviewing conditions for approval for this project at the next scheduled meeting.

By roll call the Board voted 5-0, to continue the case to June 18, 2025.

Documents:

ZBA Application 25-001

Architectural Plans 5.22.25

Civil Plans 5.19.25

Financial Analysis Memo 5.23.25

Traffic Study 1.3.24

Environmental Site Assessment 8.14.24

OTHER BUSINESS

Meeting Minutes
Mr. Thorp made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 30, 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 Chris Coughlin.

Next Meeting
The next meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2025.
The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm