

MELROSE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Meeting and Public Hearing
Tuesday, September 8, 2020
7:00 PM
Remote

PRESENT: Brad Hutchinson, Kevin Erb, Justine Sterling, Liz Ryan, Michael Coleman, and Robin Peevey

ABSENT: Judith Sullivan

Denise Gaffey, Director & City Planner, and Emma Schnur, Senior Planner, were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by Mr. Hutchinson.

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Melrose Historic District Commission was conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. 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 was found on the City of Melrose's website. 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. An audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings was posted on the mmtv3.org website as soon as possible after the meeting. Meeting access information was found at the following link and the plans could be requested by emailing the Senior Planner: www.cityofmelrose.org/remote-meetings.

I. MINUTES

Ms. Sterling MADE a MOTION to approve the minutes from July 14, 2020. Mr. Coleman SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

II. APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

Tenoch Mexican, 517 Main Street (public hearing)

Alvaro Sandoval was present to describe the signage proposed for Tenoch Mexican at 517 Main Street. The sign will consist of a 33-inch by 118-inch piece of wood that has been sealed and mounted to the existing brackets in the sign band. Raised letters on the sign will be plastic that has been painted silver to look metal. The sign will look just like the one at their other location in the North End and will use the same materials. Existing gooseneck lights will provide illumination.

Mr. Coleman commented that the size of the sign is quite big and inquired about the size of the previous sign. The Applicant explained that they selected the size based on the other sign that was there before, which was 33 inches by 120 inches. The height of the sign band appears to be 42 inches.

Mr. Coleman MADE a MOTION to issue the Certificate of Appropriateness for the signage proposed for 517 Main Street as described in the application. Mr. Erb SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Melrose City Hall, 562 Main Street (public hearing)

Jay McNeil, Facilities Director for the City of Melrose, was present to describe the new ADA-accessible entry door proposed City Hall. The door in question is located on the lower level of City Hall on the side facing the parking lot. The Applicant explained that the current doors are dated beyond their life expectancy. The solid wood expands and contracts with the temperature changes which is preventing the door from operating properly. Instead of just replacing the hardware that controls the ADA access and key fob, they are electing to replace the door and all the hardware in order to achieve the best results.

The Applicant presented a series of different options for the new door, which will consist of a hybrid fiberglass-reinforced plastic/aluminum and will be more durable overtime. He mentioned that his preference is for the mahogany color with the single panel since that is closest to the look of the existing door. Bright brass hardware will be utilized on the inside, a dull bronze finish will be used for the handle parts, and the door closer will be a dark bronze. The Applicant suspects that the existing hardware is likely an antique brass that may have been brighter years ago.

Mr. Coleman expressed his disappointment that the solid wood door would be replaced with a faux wood material. He thinks it is debatable that the new product will last as long as the wood has. Mr. Hutchinson mentioned that he does not think the average person would pick up on the fact that the proposed door is not solid wood. Ms. Sterling questioned if this would set a precedent for the replacement of other doors at City Hall. The Applicant responded that the materials would be selected on a case by case basis. Other doors likely do not have the same set of problems as this door because they are not used as frequently. He is not aware of any other ongoing problems.

Ms. Ryan stated that, based on the unique purpose of the doors, she thinks an exception could be okay. The usability of the door is important and the door is hard to see from the public way. Mr. Coleman said that he could not believe how good the doors look and he thinks that they were probably maintenance free for a while. The Applicant explained that he has had experience in prior employment with door installations and that mahogany wood doors started causing problems about 8 or 9 months in. He was doing work for an Ivy League institution with a reputable contractor.

Mr. Coleman explained that it is about the experience of using the doors, which Ms. Sterling agreed with. Mr. Hutchinson suggested that the meeting be continued so that the Applicant can look at specs for an alternative that is solid wood. The Applicant said that it will be a few weeks until he can get additional options and prices. He would not want to install a wood door in the winter so it would have to wait until the spring. The decision was made that the Applicant would withdraw their application and submit a new one when they have the necessary information.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.