MELROSE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Meeting and Public Hearing
Tuesday, October 13, 2020
7:00 PM
Remote

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

ABSENT: Robin Peevey

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 September 8, 2020. Mr. Coleman SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

II. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Nick & Don Stead, 543-547 Main Street (public hearing)

Nick and Don Stead were present to describe the façade changes proposed for the building at 543-547 Main Street. They would like to remove the existing clapboard and replace it with cementitious materials in order to keep the same look but with more long-lasting materials. The building will essentially look the same. The corner boards around the windows will be Azek. All the windows will be replaced with new Black 2 over 1 windows.

Mr. Coleman inquired if it would be possible to have the architect show on a plan exactly what has been proposed. He would like to be able to compare what has been submitted with this application to what has been previously approved by the Historic District Commission. Mr. Coleman added that he has no problem with the composite materials. Though he likes to see original materials reused as much as possible, he understands that there are maintenance issues.

A member inquired about what would be happening to the existing awnings. The Applicants explained that the awnings are not currently used because they are not operational. They will be removing them as a

part of this project. Ms. Sterling asked about the plan for the signboard and the Applicants responded that the existing material would be replaced with a composite.

Mr. Coleman reiterated that he would like to see an elevation with what has been proposed with notes regarding materials. He likes this building a lot and likes that it has been added to over time. He would hate to see some of the detail lost even if it is not original to the building. Mr. Hutchinson inquired if the Commission should appoint somebody to review the plan with the proposed conditions. Mr. Coleman volunteered to review the proposed plan and Ms. Sterling volunteered to work with him. Ms. Gaffey explained that she thinks it would be preferable for the Applicants to come back so everyone can review. The Applicants said that it should not take long for the architect to update the plan. The group agreed to meet again two weeks later on October 27, 2020.

Mr. Coleman MADE a MOTION to continue the public hearing to October 27, 2020. Ms. Sterling SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

III. OTHER

Rear Signage and Façade Changes for 530 Main Street

David Rudloff was present to describe the rear signage and façade changes proposed for 530 Main Street. He explained that Wakefield Co-Operative Bank got through the permitting process with their proposed signage and there was a mistake regarding their rear signage. Since they do not actually have an entrance at the rear, the developer said that the signage proposed would not work because it would confuse people. In addition, the location of the cafe sign in the approved plans does not exist.

As such, Mr. Rudloff would like to request permission to instead put both signage for Café Nero and Wakefield Co-Operative Bank within the fascia of the overhang over the first story. While the bank does not have an entrance at the back, they still want people to know it is there. In addition, Café Nero wants people walking through the café to access the bank and other establishments on Main Street because it is good for their business. The sign for the Residences at 530 will look the same as what has been approved.

Mr. Coleman explained that he is seeing a lot of variations between what has been built and what was approved by the Historic District Commission. He questioned why the structure was not built as it was originally designed an approved. He explained that he is not happy with what he is seeing and does understand how they could deviate so much. He feels like all the discussions with the Commission were a waste. He added that he has been telling people all about this project and now feels like he cannot. Mr. Rudloff responded that some things in real life have turned out much better than the rendering.

Mr. Coleman inquired if the original architect is still involved and Mr. Rudloff responded yes. Ms. Gaffey explained that all these changes will also need to be approved by the Planning Board's Design Review Subcommittee. Commission members could either join that meeting or Mr. Rudloff could come back to the Historic District Commission for their meeting in two weeks. Mr. Rudloff elected the latter option.

Mr. Rudloff explained that the contractors built what was on the plans, but the plans did not perfectly match the rendering. Mr. Hutchinson explained that people do not like to waste time. He would have appreciated a heads up in advance about the variations needed.

Upcoming Public Art Installations

Ms. Gaffey explained the public art projects that will be going up throughout Melrose over the next few weeks, including within the downtown. There will be a utility box mural in front of the YMCA and in the spring there will be mural within the Central Terrace alleyway and a Tiny Art Gallery constructed in front of Follow Your Art Community Studios.

Ms. Ryan disclosed that Café Nero is one of her clients in case that poses any conflicts of interest. Ms. Gaffey said that she did not think it would be an issue in this case.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.