

MELROSE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Meeting and Public Hearing
Tuesday, April 20, 2021
7:00 PM
Remote

PRESENT: Brad Hutchinson, Justine Sterling, Liz Ryan, Michael Coleman, Richard Curl

ABSENT: Kevin Erb

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 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

Mr. Coleman MADE a MOTION to approve the minutes from March 30, 2021. Ms. Sterling SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

II. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Follow Your Art Community Studios, 647 Main Street (Public Hearing)

Kristina Rodolico from Follow Your Art Community Studios appeared to discuss the proposed landscape sitting area at 647 Main Street. She explained that the idea for the parklet was inspired by the City's decision to fund a "Tiny Art Gallery" for artist Catie Nasser at 647 Main Street through the grant funded Wayfinding & Creative Placemaking Initiative. Ms. Rodolico thought that it would be nice to give the piece more status and also to bring people in and give them space to enjoy the art. The same pavers and flagstone will be used to match the previous project on the site.

Mr. Curl asked why this spot was chosen for the sitting area. Ms. Rodolico responded that when Dig Safe came out, it did not seem that the other side of the staircase was free from utility lines and acceptable for such a project. Mr. Curl said that he felt that parklet makes the area look busy and that he was unsure about doing a curved wall in this location. Mr. Hutchinson said that he likes the sitting area and that it is just dead space otherwise. Ms. Sterling stated that it would be better to have a solid stone on top to make the wall feel more in place. She asked if any other shapes were explored and Ms. Rodolico said that she did not consider another shape but she would be open to considering it. Her goal is to invite the public to stop by and have a place to admire the art.

Ms. Ryan stated that the circle feels very communal to her which she likes. It feels natural and creates a sense of comfort for people sitting around it. Mr. Coleman agreed with Ms. Ryan and said that the design is doing exactly what Follow Your Art is intending to do, which is to invite people in for a moment to see what is on display. It does not take away from the architecture of the house and their previous work has been very sympathetic to the site. This work would be continued in that vein.

Mr. Curl continued to press his concerns about the location and the wall being crammed into a tight spot. The group agreed that it made sense for Mr. Curl to meet on site with Ms. Rodolico and Planning staff to review the proposed shape of the wall, its location on site, and the material on the top of the wall for sitting on.

Mr. Coleman MADE a MOTION to approve the landscaped sitting area proposed for 647 Main Street as described in the application, pending final review in the field by Mr. Curl. Ms. Sterling SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

III. OTHER

City Hall Door

Ms. Gaffey explained the current status of the ADA-accessible door at City Hall. Jay McNeil, Facilities Manager, appeared before the HDC in September 2020 to present a proposal for replacing the original hardwood door with an aluminum-type product that the Commission was disappointed with. He has since indicated that there is a Mahogany door option that is fully hardwood like the original. Mr. Curl pointed out that the other doors on City Hall are Red Oak and this door may not match. The Mahogany could be stained but it would still have a very different grain. The group looked at the spec sheet and saw that White Oak was an option, so they thought the Facilities Manager should look into that option over the Mahogany and to stain it to match the other doors. The hardware should also match.

Mr. Coleman MADE a MOTION to approve the ADA-accessible door at 562 Main Street as described in the application, with the conditions that the wood, stain, and hardware match the other doors at City Hall. Mr. Curl SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

First Baptist Church Little Free Food Pantry

Ms. Schnur explained that the First Baptist Church is interested in installing a Little Free Food Pantry in front of their building next to the clothing collection bins. The Building Commissioner does not require a building permit for this work so there is no denial letter referring the case to the HDC. She showed a link sent to her by the Pastor showing different options for the pantry and asked the Commission if this is something they want to review. Since there are many options for what it could look like, members agreed that it would be best for the Pastor to come in for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The meeting adjourned at 7:54 PM.