

MELROSE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Meeting
Tuesday, April 11, 2023
7:00 PM
Cassidy Conference Room
City Hall, 562 Main Street

PRESENT: Michael Coleman, Richard Curl, Kevin Erb, & Lindsay Toghill

ABSENT: None

Denise Gaffey, Director & City Planner, & Lori Massa, Senior Planner, were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mr. Coleman, Acting Chair.

Brad Hutchinson, who is a long-standing member of the HDC from the Commission's inception, resigned from Commission prior to this meeting. Liz Ryan also resigned from the Commission. The Mayor has put out a call to recruit new members.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Curl made a motion to approve the December 13, 2022 and January 10, 2023 meeting minutes. Mr. Erb seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

II. APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

585 Main Street, Coolidge at Melrose Apartments, Nicholas Liucci (Public Hearing)

Nicolas Liucci, Applicant, submitted a written request to withdraw the case. He will reapply when he has a revised plan that responds to the Commission's comments that he heard on November 1, 2022.

Mr. Curl made a motion to approve the request to withdraw the case. Ms. Toghill seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Written request to withdraw, dated March 6, 2023

494 Main Street, ImageOne Industries, Darlene Fenstermacher for Santander (Public Hearing)

Lauren Toman of ImageOne appeared to present the case.

Members commented that the proposed signs look almost identical to the existing signs. There is just a subtle font change. A member asked if this sign was a typical Santander sign and Ms. Toman said that it is one that they propose for locations in historic districts. Mr. Curl pointed out that this is a contemporary building in the historic district. An old picture of the building shows that there was originally a modern sign for the business in the building. A wood sign does not match the style of the building. If a new sign was proposed they would consider this issue;

however, since this application is essentially a replacement of the existing signage they did not request a change.

A member asked if the new sign would use the same aluminum frame as the existing sign and Ms. Toman said that it would. Unrelated to the sign application, a member noted that the building owner should paint the fascia board, which has not been painted in many years and looks worn.

No one from the public appeared to speak about the case.

The Commission found that the proposal only changes the signage on the building slightly and that it is appropriate. Ms. Toghill made a motion to approve the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the signage at 494 Main Street as described in the application materials. Mr. Curl seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Application Materials for Certificate of Appropriateness

III. OTHER

12-16 Essex Street Art Display

Residents, Bo Tsang DiMatteo, Jim Bennett and Sam Hammar, who are part of the group Melrose Together, appeared to provide the Commission with information about a project that they are working on which involves a temporary art installation in the historic district. A formal approval of the art is not needed as it will be temporary and in a window and on scaffolding. Bo Tsang DiMatteo is a local Chinese American and the artist for this project. The project was inspired by the history of the building located at 12-16 Essex Street, which is planned for redevelopment. Jim Bennet researched the history of the building and explained how Charlie Sing, Chinese Immigrant to the U.S., opened the first minority owned business there, a Chinese laundry, in Melrose in the late 1890s. The art will be a mural on panels that will be attached to the scaffolding during construction of the 12-16 Essex Street project. Before construction begins it will be located at the neighboring property in the windows of Beacon Hill Wine & Spirits. It will later be auctioned off to receive money for a future art project. The initial phase is grant funded. The images will be of constellations to flip the script of the term celestial, which was used as a derogatory term for Chinese immigrants at the time. This project celebrates diversity in the community.

The Commission appreciated the presentation and the project.

Welcome Home Sign

Bob Driscoll and Mike Buggy, who are on the Veterans Advisory Board, appeared to discuss the welcome home sign that is in the front yard of City Hall. The item was not on the agenda, but the Commission let them speak. They thought that the Commission took action on the sign at their meeting on September 13, 2022 but they did not. The Commission discussed the sign at that meeting because the sign that had been there was replaced with a bigger sign and it did not get approval by the Commission. They explained that the original sign was installed after September

11. A Girl Scout Troop offered to replace the sign because it was in poor condition. Current city staff were not aware of the replacement project and since the sign company did not apply for a building permit, the need for the HDC approval was not relayed. An application for a Certificate of Appropriateness needs to be submitted for the sign.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.