

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

Regular Meeting

Monday, February 24, 2014

7:45 PM

Mayor's Conference Room, Second Floor, City Hall, 562 Main Street

PRESENT: Carla Morelli, Michael Cassavoy, Ed Cassidy, Anne DeSouza-Ward, Paul King, Sharon Petrillo, John Sadowski, and Jack Welch

ABSENT: Robert Mercado

Adam Duchesneau, Assistant Planning Director, and Zoning Board of Appeals member James Bradley were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 PM by Ms. Morelli.

MINUTES

Zoning Subcommittee Meeting, January 9, 2014

Mr. King MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of January 9, 2014. Mr. Cassidy SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Zoning Subcommittee Meeting, January 23, 2014

Mr. King MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of January 23, 2014. Ms. DeSouza-Ward SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Regular Meeting, January 27, 2014

Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of January 27, 2014. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed and Ms. DeSouza-Ward and Mr. Cassavoy abstained from the vote.

Zoning Subcommittee Meeting, February 4, 2014

Mr. King MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of February 4, 2014. Ms. DeSouza-Ward SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Tremont Street BB Zone Change to BB-1 Zone

Mr. Duchesneau provided an overview of the proposed zoning amendment which would change the BB zone along Tremont Street to a BB-1 zone. He explained that the only difference in the Melrose Zoning Ordinance between the BB and BB-1 zones is that the BB zone is not included in Sections 235-65 and 235-66 which allows for an Applicant to seek the establishment of a multifamily residential use in a nonresidentially zoned area. All other use and dimensional regulations in the BB and BB-1 zones are the same. In thinking about revitalizing the Tremont and Essex Street area, the Zoning Subcommittee and Planning Staff thought it would make sense to allow for multifamily residential uses by Special Permit in this area. Simply changing the BB zone along Tremont Street to a BB-1 zone would achieve this goal. This would also not impact the other BB zone in the City which is located to the southeast along the Saugus and Malden municipal boundary.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward indicated she thought this proposed zoning amendment made sense because this area of Tremont Street could absorb the potential for additional height due to the elevated railroad tracks which border the existing BB zone along Tremont Street to the west. She also noted that multifamily uses

in the BB-1 zone are subject to Design Review Permits from the Planning Board in which dimensional specifics of a development are regulated. Ms. Petrillo also thought this proposed zoning amendment made sense and noted that Melrose has a lot to offer for residential development.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward stated that there was also some Zoning Subcommittee conversation about reducing the maximum building height the Planning Board could permit under a Design Review Permit in Section 235-66. Mr. Sadowski pointed out that reducing the existing allowable height would be an additional restriction on property owner's rights and cautioned against this. He then asked if it made sense to mention the other zoning changes that are being discussed for the Tremont and Essex Street area at this time. Mr. Duchesneau informed him that this was actually the next item on the Planning Board's agenda for the meeting.

Mr. Cassavoy noted that most of the lots south of the Lynn Fells Parkway require pile foundations to construct buildings which adds to the cost of a proposed project. Ms. DeSouza-Ward noted that Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and other dimensional requirements will limit the height of structures in this zoning district. Mr. Cassidy stated that he felt lot depth should be considered as a limiting factor to development as opposed to lot area. Ms. Morelli then asked if the Planning Board felt comfortable moving this proposed zoning amendment forward to the Board of Aldermen when additional zoning changes to the area will be proposed in the next few months.

Mr. DeSouza-Ward then MADE a MOTION to have Planning Staff move forward with the next steps to seek approval of the proposed amendment to the Melrose Zoning Ordinance from the Board of Aldermen to change the BB zoning district along Tremont Street to a BB-1 zone. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

OTHER

Zoning Subcommittee Report on Tremont Street / Essex Street Rezoning Initiative

Mr. Duchesneau provided an overview of the zoning changes that the Zoning Subcommittee is proposing for the Tremont/Essex Street area. First, he described the proposed changes to the dimensional requirements for the BC zoning districts in the area which would include increasing building height, FAR, and reducing minimum setbacks, among other items. Mr. Duchesneau also pointed out the proposed changes to the permitted uses in these BC districts and noted that the Subcommittee is proposing to create a new BC zoning district around the Wyoming Commuter Rail station area. Mr. Cassavoy stated that he thought this made sense as many of the buildings around each of the Commuter Rail stations are currently fairly small.

Conor McGuire of 4 Cherry Street asked why Corey Street was not proposed to be included in the new BC zoning district around the Wyoming Commuter Rail station. Mr. Duchesneau explained that there were a few reasons why the Subcommittee chose not to include this area in the new proposed BC district. One reason was that the BA-1 district that Corey Street is currently located in already allows for significant development density. Additionally, the Subcommittee felt that it was appropriate to make the zoning districts around each of the Commuter Rail stations consistent. Furthermore, the Subcommittee was considering reducing the minimum parking requirements in the BC districts which would further distinguish it from the surrounding zoning districts.

Attorney Robert Bell commented that in a recent meeting he had with Mayor Dolan, the Mayor indicated he was considering reducing the minimum number of seats required for an establishment to apply for an alcohol sale permit from 50 seats down to 25. Mr. DeSouza-Ward noted that the Zoning Subcommittee is trying to be creative with the parking requirements and is exploring having shared parking in the Commuter Rail lots. She also noted that the Subcommittee is considering proposing having on-street

parking on only one side of streets in certain areas to allow for bike lanes. Mr. Cassavoy noted that he hardly ever drives downtown anymore because the traffic is so bad in that area. Mr. Duchesneau also noted that the Subcommittee is still undecided about how to handle the existing BC zoning districts by the Melrose-Wakefield municipal boundary and by Oak Grove. He also indicated that the Zoning Subcommittee has also just begun looking at implementing an Overlay District over the BB and BB-1 zones in the Tremont/Essex Street area which would allow for increased development and residential uses in these areas. Mr. Duchesneau pointed out that the Zoning Subcommittee is aiming to bring all of the proposed zoning amendments for the Tremont/Essex Street area to the full Planning Board at their April 28, 2014 meeting.

Documents: - BC Zoning District – Table of Uses
 - BC Zoning District – Table of Dimensional and Density Regulations
 - Map of Proposed BC Zoning District around Wyoming Commuter Rail Station

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.