MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, April 28, 2014
7:45 PM
Mayor's Conference Room, Second Floor, City Hall, 562 Main Street

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

ABSENT: Michael Cassavoy

Denise Gaffey, Director and City Planner, Adam Duchesneau, Assistant Planning Director, and James Bradley, Board of Appeals member, were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:52 PM by Ms. Morelli.

MINUTES
Zoning Subcommittee Meetings, March 3, 2014 and March 19, 2014
Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of March 3, 2014 and March 19, 2014. Ms. DeSouza-Ward SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed. Mr. Sadowski abstained from the vote and Ms. Petrillo was absent from the vote.

Joint Public Hearing, April 7, 2014
Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of April 7, 2014. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed. Mr. Cassidy abstained from the vote and Ms. Petrillo was absent from the vote.

BOARD OF APPEALS
Case # 14-004, 340 Main Street, Sprint Spectrum L.P.
Michael Walsh was present on behalf of the Applicant Sprint Spectrum L.P. to discuss the application with the Planning Board. Mr. Walsh noted that there are currently three antennas and six Remote Radio Heads (RRHs) at this existing wireless communications facility. He stated that the proposed project would add three additional flush mounted antennas and three additional RRHs for LTE service upgrade purposes.

Ms. Morelli asked if anything was going to be removed from the existing facility and Mr. Walsh indicated that all the proposed work to be performed would be additive. Mr. Cassidy asked if all of the existing equipment was currently active and would remain that way after the work was performed. Mr. Walsh indicated that was correct. Mr. Sadowski asked if the cable tray would be at roof level and Mr. Walsh indicated that it would be just 4 inches above the roof. Mr. Mercado asked how far off the penthouse the antenna would be located and Mr. Walsh stated that he was not exactly sure but he could find out.

At this time Ms. Petrillo arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Sadowski noted that the antenna cannot be located more than 12 inches off the side of the penthouse per the regulations in the zoning ordinance. Mr. Mercado confirmed that there would one new antenna on three different sides of the building and Mr. Walsh indicated that was correct. Mr. Cassidy asked if the top of the actual antenna was even with the top of the penthouse roof because on the photo simulations they appear to project up over the parapet a bit. He continued on to note that the Planning Board would prefer see the antenna set a few inches below the top of the penthouse roof so that it does not created a projection onto the sky when viewed from ground level. Mr. Walsh indicated that that he would have to speak with the project engineer to confirm this could be done as there are some shadowing concerns. Mr. Cassidy reiterated that he did not want any equipment projecting against the sky.

Mr. Cassidy also noted that sometimes antennas are angled downward slightly but the Planning Board would prefer that they are completely parallel with the façade of the building. Mr. Walsh asked if the antenna could be placed any higher and Mr. Cassidy indicated that this was not an option. Mr. Sadowski pointed out that having the antenna flush with the façade will help to keep them camoflagoued better and asked the other Planning Board members if there was a specific requirement for this in the zoning ordinance. Ms. DeSouza-Ward pointed out that there are particular requirements for wireless communications facilities in Section 235-73 of the zoning ordinance.

Mr. Mercado asked what the size of the RRH boxes was and Mr. Walsh indicated they were 2.5 gigahertz. Mr. Sadowski noted that there is no indication on the plans that the equipment will be painted to match the façade of the building to which it is attached but Mr. Walsh sated that he could have that added to the plans. Ms. DeSouza-Ward stated that there is not any reference to the amount of noise the new equipment would produce. Mr. Sadowski stated that he would like to have the project meet all of the requirements that are discussed in Section 235-73 of zoning ordinance, have the antenna be parallel to the façade, ensure the antenna do not project more than 12 inches off the façade of the building, have the equipment painted to match the façade of the building, slightly lower the antenna on the building so they do not create a projection onto the sky, and demonstrate that the new equipment will meet the noise requirements.

Ms. Morelli pointed out that given the size of the antennas and the RRHs and seeing the side view of each piece of equipment, it would seem difficult to have these items 12 inches or less off of the façade of the building. Mr. Walsh stated that he would talk to the architectural engineering firm for the project to confirm none of the equipment would be more than 12 inches off the façade. Mr. Sadowksi noted that this has happened in the past where wireless Applicants need to follow up on a number of items and it breaks the confidence of the Planning Board a bit. He noted that the Board needs to be very careful in considering the appearance of each of these facilities.

Ms. Morelli asked if the Planning Board wanted to have the Applicant redesign the project and return back before the Board at their next meeting or trust that they will be able to make the necessary adjustments. Ms. DeSouza-Ward noted that the Board could make a recommendation or the Applicant could also ask for a continuance. Mr. Mercado pointed out that the Planning Board could indicate in their Recommendation Letter that the drawings were lacking so they could not comment on the application. Mr. Cassidy stated that the Board could delegate the follow up on their requested items of compliance to Planning Staff. Mr. Sadowski suggested that the Board should itemize what was discussed and reference the zoning ordinance in their Recommendation Letter. It would be a good idea to have some sort of management plan for all of these facilities moving forward he noted.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward then MADE a MOTION to send a letter to the Board of Appeals which references Section 235-73 of the Melrose Zoning Ordinance which identifies 19 items that each Wireless Communications Service Facility needs to fulfill. The letter should also note that the Planning Board requests that the antennas and RRHs be affixed parallel to the façade to which they are attached, that the outside face of this equipment not extend more than 12 inches beyond the face of the façade to which they are attached, and that the equipment be painted out so as to be camouflaged with the façade to which they are attached. The letter should further request that the uppermost point of the antennas be slightly lower than the roofline of the penthouse to eliminate any projections of the antennas onto the skyline and that the Applicant demonstrate that the project will meet the City's Noise Ordinance requirements. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Document: ZBA Application Case # 14-004

Case # 14-005, 92 Franklin Street, Sig-O Properties, LLC
Attorney Russell Bodnar was present on behalf of the Applicants, Brian and Amalia McCaffrey, to discuss the project with the Planning Board. Mr. McCaffrey was also present at the meeting as well. Mr. Bodnar noted that the property was most recently used as a multi-bed nursing facility and that the existing structure predates the zoning ordinance. The nursing facility used to have several full time staff, visiting staff, and family members traveling to and from the property, but he is not sure if parking ever used to be an issue there. Mr. Bodnar stated that Mr. and Mrs. McCaffrey are looking to convert the property into a four unit condominium building. This is a change of use and therefore the McCaffreys need to conform with the zoning ordinance.

Mr. Bodnar noted that the property is a corner lot which means that it has two front yards which require two front yard setbacks. He noted that the Applicants are only removing portions of the building but, nonetheless, they need to seek relief from the Board of Appeals for the existing 5.5 foot and 19.1 foot front yard setbacks which do not meeting the 20 foot front yard setback requirement in the zoning district. Mr. Bodnar also indicated that the project will meet the required off street parking, but two of the spaces will be located in the front yard and this is not permitted in the zoning ordinance. Therefore, the Applicants are also seeking a Variance from the Board of Appeals to allow front yard parking for two of the off street spaces. Mr. Bodnar stated that the proposed project would not really change anything in terms of integrity in the neighborhood, but this project would provide a number of benefits to the surrounding area. He also noted that the Applicants are not the standard developers doing the bare minimum to get the project through and that they have done great work at the other properties they have purchased. Ultimately, the Applicants will want to sell this property, but it seems like a good project. Mr. Duchesneau also indicated that the Applicants will be coming back before the Planning Board to seek Site Plan Review approval to establish the new use at the property.

Mr. Sadowski stated that with regard to the front yard parking, the Planning board has been somewhat sympathetic to corner lots in the past, but because the project would create a multi-family dwelling, it raises a little bit of concern. Mr. Welch stated that he was familiar with the property and he did not know of any other appropriate use for the site besides what the Applicants are proposing. He also noted that only one of the parking spaces in question would be readily visible from Franklin Street, but this could easily be screened. Mr. Sadowski stated that the track record about the Applicants that was provided was helpful information.

Mr. Mercado asked why parking spaces # 7 and # 8 were not created as tandem parking spaces as parking spaces # 5 and # 6 were. Mr. McCaffrey indicated that they wanted to create more tandem parking spaces but there were dimensional constraints at the site. Mr. Bodnar indicated that the parking was laid out in an attempt to make this the easiest for the residents at the property while still conforming with the zoning requirements. Ms. DeSouza-Ward indicated that she was sympathetic to front yard parking requests on corner lots but she was a little uncomfortable with parking space closest to Franklin Street. Mr. McCaffrey indicated that they are looking into screening this parking space to help shield it from view of the public way. Mr. Cassidy indicated that it seemed that parking space # 4 was not functional. Mr. King noted that moving parking spaces # 5 and # 6 slightly to the east would make parking space # 4 more functional.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward indicated that she had no objection to the Variance requests, especially since they will be coming back before the Planning Board for Site Plan Review approval. She also noted that the one of the spaces is only ½ way into the front yard setback. Mr. Cassidy stated that because the proposed project calls for a multi-family dwelling, the Planning Board has typically discouraged front yard parking for that particular use. Ms. Morelli stated that she thought the Recommendation Letter should indicate that some of the parking spaces are difficult to get into. Mr. Cassidy stated that he felt this should be mentioned but it should also be noted that it will be addressed during the Site Plan Review process.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward then MADE a MOTION to send a letter to the Board of Appeals which indicated the Planning Board has no objection to this application as the property is a corner lot with two fronts which makes it difficult to locate required parking in the rear yard area. The letter should also note that only half of one of the parking spaces in violation is located in the front yard. Furthermore, the letter should also indicate that the Applicant will be coming back before the Planning Board as part of the Site Plan Review approval process that is also required for this project. At that time the Planning Board will work with the Applicant to resolve the issues noted above and ensure the parking spaces are appropriately screened and that the parking space layout adheres to best practices. Mr. Cassidy SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Document: ZBA Application Case # 14-005

At this time Ms. Gaffey arrived at the meeting.

PROSPECTIVE PROJECTS

146-152 Green Street – Informal discussion with Mark Carroll

Mark Carroll and Attorney Robert Bell were present to discuss the potential project with the Planning Board. Mr. Bell indicated that the building was most recently used as a CPA office but prior to that is was used as a convenient store. At one time the structure did have a second story on it but now it is just a one story building. Mr. Bell noted that Mr. Carroll is looking to construct a more contemporary style, 6 unit residential structure is this commercial use area and he is looking for some guidance from the Planning Board on the proposal.

Mr. Carroll noted that the property has been sitting vacant for a while and he felt there is an opportunity for this site. He indicated that the market has a new demographic who is looking for 1-bedroom units and he hoped that the Planning Board would look at this property and view it as an appropriate location for this type of project. Mr. Carroll stated that he is excited about the property and he felt the project would be a good fit for the area. Ms. Gaffey reminded the Planning Board that this is just a preliminary discussion about this property and noted that a number of Variance from the Board of Appeals and Site Plan Review approval from the Planning Board would be required for this project. She continued on to note that Mr. Carroll is interested in getting some feedback from the Planning Board on the architecture and the building layout itself.

Mr. Sadowski indicated that he was excited that something was going into this vacant property. He noted that while the proposed building architecture is different, a contemporary façade is something that could work here. Mr. Carroll stated that he would argue that the front façade has a good amount of detail in it and noted that some good thought went into the design of the building. However, he also indicated that he is open to different opinions on the design of the building, but hoped that his reputation on past projects in the community spoke for itself.

Mr. Bell noted that right (northern) façade of the of the building could have no windows because of the proposed driveway for the project at 160 Green Street, which is why they chose to locate the stairwells on this side of the structure. Mr. Carroll stated that the proposed project at 160 Green Street will look very similar to the project that is almost complete at 42 Sylvan Street. Mr. Mercado asked how tall Mr. Carroll's proposed building would be compared to the proposed project at 160 Green Street. Mr. Carroll was unsure but thought it could be higher but not much lower than the proposed adjacent building. Ms. Gaffey clarified that the proposed 160 Green Street project would be taller than this proposed building at 146-152 Green Street.

Mr. Carroll indicated that the proposed units would be around 550 square feet per unit, which is a bit larger than the units in the building he constructed at the corner of Main Street and Essex Street. He continued on to note that he will need off-street parking relief for the project. Mr. Carroll stated that he tries to discourage vehicle use at his projects and noted that about 40% of the people at The Essex do not have cars. For the proposed project at 146-152 Green Street they are showing 9 off-street parking spaces including 2 tandem spaces.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward confirmed that the proposed project would have 5 one-bedroom units, 1 studio unit, and a management office. Mr. Carroll indicated that was correct. Ms. Petrillo asked if these units would be rentals or condominiums and Mr. Carroll stated that he was unsure at this time. He did note that they are going to build them out so that they could go either way depending upon the market at their time of completion. Mr. Mercado asked why the windows were asymmetrical on the front façade and Mr. Carroll stated that this was due to the interior programming of the building. Ms. Petrillo then asked what type of zoning relief would be required for the project. Mr. Bell indicated that they are not 100% certain of the relief they will need, but they believe they are going to need Variances for lot size, lot depth, front and rear setbacks, open space, Floor Area Ratio, parking, and perhaps for the use. Ms. Petrillo then asked what the current use of the property was and Mr. Bell indicated that it is currently vacant but it was most recently used as professional office space. Ms. Gaffey pointed out that this project would require much of the same relief that the 160 Green Street project needed.

Mr. Cassidy stated that he understood the direction Mr. Carroll was going with on this project, but he also noted that it is very small and he was unsure if, at this scale, the project would have credibility. He continued on to note that the paired windows on the front façade are odd and that there may be another window pattern that could improve this. Mr. Cassidy also stated that he thought the tower element was a bit weak as it seemed somewhat puny and pedestrian, noting it could be taller. He also indicated that he felt the Green Street elevation was a bit odd because there is emphasis at each end which somewhat weakens the overall design. Mr. Cassidy went on to state that he felt the right hand tower needs more emphasis and the left one should be toned down. He also stated that the asymmetrical windows in the front should be adjusted to coordinate better.

Ms. Petrillo asked if the new design was due to any structural limitations and Mr. Carroll indicated that they have to comply with the Building Code but he mainly preferred this particular design style. Mr. Carroll continued on to note that he has no problem adding windows and adjusting the design. Ms. Morelli stated that she felt the left and right towers seemed to compete with one another and that perhaps reducing the width of the left tower would be helpful. She also stated that she felt Mr. Carroll should really push the envelope on the material palette. Mr. Carroll stated that he did not disagree with what she was saying, but that type of aggressive build out may be better suited for a larger building. Ms. Morelli stated that she did not find the proposed batten system to be that cutting edge. Mr. Carroll indicated that getting into steel materials requires a different type of assembly, which could be difficult to work with. Ms. Morelli also commented that if he wanted the windows to be asymmetrical, then make them more asymmetrical and perhaps even use nontraditional window shapes.

Conor McGuire of 4 Cherry Street indicated that a reveal panel system creates a shadow line in the channel which may address the balance and faux window issues that are being discussed. Mr. Bradley stated that a copper panel system might work well for the façade. Mr. Cassidy noted that a way to distinguish the left front façade from the right may be to use some horizontal language on the façade. This would help to make the building look wider. He stated that he felt the left tower looks like the back of someone's house right now. Ms. Morelli noted that using windows that are less traditional in style may help the overall design as well. Mr. Cassidy indicated that going beyond the board and batten system would be a step in the right direction. He suggested using a siding similar to what was used at Maxwell's Green in Somerville, Massachusetts could work well.

Mr. Bell noted that he and his client would probably double track the permitting system of the project, moving forward with the Board of Appeals and Site Plan Review approval processes at the same time. Mr. Cassidy indicated that the Applicant may want to start with an image board to pin down the concept for this project. Ms. Morelli noted that in doing something contemporary, you can still reference the existing architecture of the buildings in the area. She then asked if Mr. Carroll had spoken to any of the neighbors yet and Mr. Carroll indicated he had done some initial outreach.

At this time Ms. Morelli departed from the meeting.

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Proposed Renaming of BB Zoning District on Tremont Street to a BB-1 Zoning District – Planning Board Report

Ms. Gaffey informed the Planning Board members about the new draft report that was distributed to them at the beginning of the meeting which had a few small changes from the report that was sent to them in their packets. The Planning Board members then reviewed the new draft report. Ms. DeSouza-Ward thought the report was well written. Mr. Cassidy asked where things stood with regard to the questions about the maximum allowable height in the BB-1 district. Ms. DeSouza-Ward noted that the multi-family Special Permit that can be applied for in the BB-1 zone gives discretion to the Planning Board to allow structures up to potentially as high as 80 feet. However, Planning Staff noted at the Joint Public Hearing that the Planning Board typically only approves projects that are consistent with the regulations of the UR-C zoning district dimensional requirements and which fit into the context of the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Mercado then MADE a MOTION to send the Tremont Street BB Zone to BB-1 Zone Report to the Board of Aldermen for a vote on the proposed amendment. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed and Ms. Morelli was absent from the vote.

Document: Tremont St BB Zone to BB-1 Report to the BOA 4-28-14

Proposed Zoning Amendment creating the Rail Corridor Overlay District (RCOD)

Ms. DeSouza-Ward noted that the Zoning Subcommittee had been working on a larger zoning initiative which included not only proposed zoning changes along Tremont and Essex Streets, but also zoning changes for the areas around each of the Commuter Rail stations. However, in the interest of trying to break it down and facilitate the review of the proposed overlay regulations, the Zoning Subcommittee was going to postpone the proposed zoning changes around the Commuter Rail stations to sometime in the fall. Ms. DeSouza-Ward also noted that there are still a few outstanding pieces in the proposed Rail Corridor Overlay District (RCOD) regulations that need to be addressed and the Subcommittee was hoping to discuss those items with the full Planning Board.

Ms. Gaffey noted that a lot of work has gone into this initiative since the second community meeting that was held for the Commuter Rail Corridor Plan. She indicated that another community meeting was held on Wednesday, April 16, 2014 which was well attended with around 50 people. At this meeting Planning Staff and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Staff presented the proposed RCOD regulations and a lot of positive feedback was received. Ms. Gaffey continued on to note that at the last Zoning Subcommittee meeting comments from the April 16th community meeting were discussed and some adjustments were made to the proposed regulations. She noted that the RCOD regulations are very close to being finalized at this point.

Ms. Gaffey stated that the text of the proposed RCOD regulations may look familiar to the Planning Board members because the zoning language from the Smart Growth District (SGD) was used as the basis to create these proposed RCOD regulations. She noted that a lot of time was spent on determining the dimensional regulations for the overlay district but there were only minimal changes made to the design standards portion of the regulations. Mr. Sadowski asked if this was just an interim review. Ms. Gaffey indicated that it was not as Planning Staff was suggesting that the initiative now be moved to a vote before the full Planning Board to send the proposed amendments to the Board of Aldermen.

Mr. Sadowski indicated that when he went through the regulations he noted there were remarks that had been made in the margins, which he assumed were the items that still needed to be ironed out. Additionally, he had a few questions about how certain items were arrived at and he thought it would be a good idea to discuss these as some of them may come up as questions when the item goes before the Board of Aldermen.

Mr. Sadowski first noted that concern about potential new traffic for the area was raised at the April 16th community meeting. Ms. DeSouza-Ward indicated that the Zoning Subcommittee agreed that it would be a good idea to have a traffic study completed for the entire corridor area. Mr. Sadowski noted that traffic studies can become very complex and Mr. King agreed. Mr. King went on to note that they can get especially complex when they encompass a larger sized area.

Mr. King then asked if the Infiltration/Inflow (I/I) Fund money that projects contribute goes specifically to handling the I/I issues at those projects. Ms. Gaffey indicated this was correct. Mr. King then asked if this potential new development for the area would increase the pressure on the existing infrastructure for the area. Can the area handle this he asked? Mr. King felt that some sort of infrastructure study would be appropriate to figure out if the area can handle the potential new development. Mr. Mercado stated that if he was a developer he would look at what the existing infrastructure for the area could support very early on in the development analysis process. Ms. DeSouza-Ward noted that there are mechanism in place to protect against the existing infrastructure from being overloaded by a project. Mr. King stated that he just felt someone should be looking at this item. Ms. Gaffey stated that she felt the Public Works Department already had a good sense of this issue for the area. Mr. Mercado stated that he was not too concerned about this because a developer will look into this item ahead of time. Mr. Bradley noted that if the infrastructure is not there, a developer will not bring a project forward.

Mr. King noted that this infrastructure item would not change what the Zoning Subcommittee has been working but noted that someone should look into this just to make sure that the Public Works Department is aware. Mr. Sadowski asked if there had been any Public Works Department input on this topic as they could give the Board a good sense of where things stand for this particular area. Mr. Cassidy indicated that it would be good to know proactively where things stand with regard to the infrastructure for the area. Ms. Gaffey stated that she felt the Public Works Department was aware of this initiative but she would follow up with them.

The conversation then turned to whether or not the two BB parcels east of Tremont Street should be included in the RCOD. Mr. Bradley stated that leaving the parcels out of the RCOD would potentially prevent them from being redeveloped. He noted that leaving them out would eliminate many of the redevelopment options that the RCOD will provide. Mr. Sadowski asked Mr. Bradley to clarify his stance on inclusion or exclusion of the parcels and Mr. Bradley stated that he would like to have them included. Mr. Sadowski then stated that if the parcels were left out of the RCOD this area could become the "missing tooth" in the corridor. Ms. DeSouza-Ward noted that if it was determined that the parcels should be left in, there is some added dimensional language for the parcels that would provide some additional setbacks from properties in the UR-B district. Mr. Welch asked if the parcels were not included, what would happen. Ms. Gaffey indicated that the parcels would just be part of the BB-1 zoning district. Ms. DeSouza-Ward added that mixed used and Assisted Living Facilities would not be allowed uses and multi-family uses would only be allowed by Special Permit.

Mr. Mercado asked what the concern was about including these parcels in the RCOD. Ms. Gaffey noted that there are some single- and two-family dwellings on Union Street which wraps two sides of these parcels. Mr. Sadowski stated that he did not want to exclude the parcels from the RCOD. Mr. Welch indicated that it seemed simpler to not include the parcels in the RCOD. Ms. Gaffey stated that she did not think they had received direct feedback from the residents in the Union Street neighborhood on this topic. Mr. King noted that he was leaning towards excluding the parcels from the RCOD. Mr. Duchesneau pointed out that a structure approximately the size the Station Crossing building (16 Willow Street) could be constructed on the two parcels if they were combined. Ms. DeSouza-Ward suggested that they move on from this topic and come back to it later in the meeting.

Mr. Sadowski asked about the retail food establishments in conjunction with an off-premises liquor license use and if this would then allow for more than 3 permits in the City for this particular use. Ms. Gaffey indicated that it would not allow for more permits for this use, but it would simply allow the use to locate in the proposed RCOD area. Mr. Sadowski clarified that the Zoning Subcommittee was suggestion to not allow Live-Work uses in the proposed RCOD and Ms. DeSouza-Ward indicated that was correct. She added that a Live-Work use is not defined in the zoning ordinance and this type of a use would still be regulated by the Home Occupation accessory use category. Mr. Sadowski then asked why a developer would want to take advantage of the maximum front setback provision if they have to provide additional open space. Ms. Gaffey stated that they would not be required to use the provision but if they want to set their building back further than most other structures in the corridor, the Subcommittee felt they should fill this area with some type of amenity.

Ms. Gaffey then went over the propose removal of the Open Space Fund payment requirement and the addition of the Streetscape Improvement payment requirement. She noted that for this area, there is less of a need for Open Space funding but the streetscape in the neighborhood needs substantial assistance in some areas. Ms. Gaffey pointed out that the exact payment amounts and what developments would be required to make the payments are details that both still need to be ironed out a bit more.

Mr. Bradley asked if there had been a master plan development study for the corridor area and Ms. Gaffey pointed out that the Corridor Plan outlines some of this. Mr. Bradley indicated that it is good to be prepared for areas that might become redeveloped quickly and Ms. Gaffey noted that the vision study provides a good basis for this. Mr. McGuire stated that the whole corridor has an excess of curb cuts and he felt that limiting curb cuts in the area would be hugely beneficial. Mr. Duchesneau noted that this topic is covered in the existing zoning ordinance. Ms. DeSouza-Ward added that the Planning Board likes the discretion that the existing zoning provides through the Site Plan Review process and also pointed out some additional regulations in the RCOD design standards section.

Mr. McGuire then asked if there was a way to encourage reduced water flow fixtures to help reduce wastewater from projects. Mr. Sadowski noted that since Melrose has adopted the stretch code, a development project almost has to reach a LEED silver project standard. Mr. Bradley stated that this will really only cover the energy efficiency items of the building. Mr. Mercado asked where the $1,100 per unit payment figure came from and Ms. Gaffey indicated it was simply pulled from the SGD regulations, which was determined based on research while creating the SGD regulations. Ms. DeSouza-Ward indicated that she felt everyone benefitted from an improved streetscape in the area. Mr. Sadowski asked at what point would the regulations begin to discourage development and Ms. Gaffey noted that is something that they have kept in mind and they are trying to keep things reasonable.

Mr. Sadowski confirmed that the proposed RCOD regulations were proposing to have one parking space per unit regardless of the number of bedrooms in each unit. Ms. Gaffey indicated that was correct and also noted that the general comments at the April 16th community meeting were calling for less parking. Ms. DeSouza-Ward pointed out the shared and reduced parking requirements section, which was slightly reworked. Ms. Cassidy indicated that he thought it read well and Mr. Sadowski stated that he was comfortable with the language. Ms. DeSouza-Ward asked the other members of the Planning Board how they felt about the required 20 foot setback from the public way for parking areas. Mr. Mercado stated that it seemed like it would take away from the buildable area on the lot. Mr. Bradley noted that the incentive is to keep the building closer to the street.

Mr. Sadowski stated that he had a question about the “LEED rating” language. Mr. McGuire indicated that the rating is a type of certification. Mr. Bradley stated that he would advocate for something above basic certification. Mr. McGuire pointed out that there are items that are not addressed in the Building Code, but to go to a silver, gold, or even a platinum level certification would add cost to a project. It was determined that the Planning Board wanted discretion to determine if projects needed to be certifiable or not.

Mr. Sadowski noted that the Affordable Housing requirement for Assisted Living Facilities was proposed to be removed from the proposed RCOD. Mr. Mercado asked if there was a difference between a nursing home and an Assisted Living Facility. Ms. Gaffey indicated that there is a big difference and only Assisted Living Facilities would be permitted under the RCOD and not nursing homes.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward then asked what the Planning Board wanted to do with regard to the parcels to the east of Tremont Street. Mr. Cassidy suggested including them in the RCOD along with the additional setback provisions and Mr. Welch agreed. Mr. Duchesneau then pointed out the other items that the Zoning Subcommittee wanted to amend in the SGD as a result of conversations that occurred during the creation of the proposed RCOD. He referenced the Zoning Amendments for RCOD Initiative document. Mr. Cassidy confirmed that memory care did not need to be included in the definition of Assisted Living Facility and Ms. Gaffey indicated that was correct because it is assumed to be included.

Mr. Cassidy then MADE a MOTION to send the proposed RCOD regulations and associated zoning amendments to the Board of Aldermen. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed and Ms. Morelli was absent from the vote.

Documents: Rail Corridor Overlay District Regulations DRAFT 4-28-14
Zoning Amendments for RCOD Initiative 4-28-14

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 PM.