

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
ZONING SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

7:30 PM

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

PRESENT: Anne DeSouza-Ward, Paul King, and Sharon Petrillo

ABSENT: Carla Morelli

Denise Gaffey, Director and City Planner, Erin Zwirko, Assistant Planning Director, and Manisha Bewtra from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Ms. DeSouza-Ward.

BC District Zoning and Map Changes

Ms. Gaffey provided an overview of where the Zoning Subcommittee left off and the tasks to accomplish in order to rezone the BC District and associated map changes. Ms. Gaffey reintroduced Ms. Bewtra and indicated that the City and MAPC have a contract through the end of the year. Ms. Gaffey believes that three meetings of the Zoning Subcommittee will be necessary prior to presenting the rezoning and map changes to the Planning Board. It is likely that the Planning Board will hold a joint public hearing with the Board of Alderman in January 2015.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward indicated that in early 2014 the Zoning Subcommittee had many ideas and had made progress in identifying changes. Ms. Gaffey agreed, and noted that the Subcommittee will have to revisit the Wyoming Hill commuter rail station area, the dimensional controls, and uses. Ms. Gaffey noted that the Subcommittee abruptly turned their attention to the Rail Corridor Overlay Zoning in Spring 2014 as it was the more pressing rezoning issue.

Ms. Bewtra noted that there are four BC Districts within Melrose: at the Wakefield line, around the Highlands commuter rail station, around the Cedar Park commuter rail station, and near Oak Grove Station on Main Street. Ms. Bewtra noted that the Zoning Subcommittee has considered rezoning the area around the Wyoming Hill commuter rail station to BC. The other early suggestions were to rezone the BC District at the Wakefield line to BB-1 and to consider what the most effective zoning would be for the area near Oak Grove Station.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward noted that the existing BC District at the Wakefield line is different than the rest. She asked if BB-1 is present in the area. Ms. Bewtra explained that there are two businesses, a funeral home and a florist, within the district, and applying the UR-A zone to this location that surrounds the area may not be appropriate. The BB-1 District allows multifamily uses.

Ms. Gaffey noted that the Oak Grove BC District is also an outlier, but the BB-1 District may not be appropriate for that location. Ms. DeSouza-Ward thought multifamily in that location would not be a bad thing. Ms. Petrillo asked if the BC District included the businesses on the north side of the intersection of Main Street and Sylvan Street. It does not. Ms. Gaffey noted that the BB-1 District allows for a variety of commercial uses as well as multifamily use. Ms. Petrillo was not sure if Melrose needs anymore multifamily housing. She thought that over time it may negatively impact Melrose. Ms. Gaffey indicated that a fiscal impact is considered when evaluating the larger projects. Ms. Gaffey indicated that she can check with the School Department for better information, but for example, Oak Grove Village has 400 units and a very small number of school age children. Many of the multifamily complexes in Melrose

attract younger professionals with infants or toddlers who are looking to purchase a home in or around Melrose. Ms. Gaffey also noted that the Melrose population peaked in the 1970s and has declined since. In recent decades, elementary schools have been closed and there has been no need to reopen these schools.

Ms. Bewtra suggested that the Zoning Subcommittee set a schedule. She thought the goal to get to the Planning Board before the end of the year is a good one. Ms. Gaffey thought it may be too ambitious to present to the Planning Board for the November meeting, and December is likely more reasonable. Ms. Gaffey noted that no discussion on parking has occurred in relation to these zoning changes. Ms. DeSouza-Ward thought three meetings would be ideal with the goal of presenting to the Planning Board at their December meeting. Ms. Bewtra thought that the meeting could go as following: recap and analysis; discussion on uses, dimensional controls, and parking; and, finalize the map changes and zoning.

The Zoning Subcommittee set three meetings on October 15 at 7pm, October 27 at 8:45 pm, and November 12 at 7:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.