

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, June 18, 2018
7:45 PM
Cassidy Conference Room, City Hall, 562 Main Street**

PRESENT: Mike Cassavoy, Anne DeSouza-Ward, Paul King, Robert Mercado, Carla Morelli, Sharon Petrillo, John Sadowski, Greg Sampson & Jack Welch

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Denise Gaffey, Director

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 PM by Ms. DeSouza-Ward.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, May 21, 2018

Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to approve the Planning Board regular meeting minutes from May 21, 2018. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Case 18-015, 50 Mystic Avenue, Valerie Mulvihill (ZBA Hearing July 11, 2018)

Valerie and Anne Mulvihill appeared to present the proposal. Mrs. Mulvihill has lived at this property for 36 years and would like to stay in Melrose. She and her husband would like to make the house a two-family so that their daughter Anne, who has a health issue, can live with them but have her own space. Mr. Mulvihill also has a health issue. The proposed addition would only be for an egress stair. They could enlarge the existing driveway but would need to remove and replace the existing fence. There are two-family houses in the neighborhood.

The Planning Board did not have an issue with the nonconforming dimensions and the conversion to a two-family dwelling. The house currently has three bedrooms and is proposed to have two bedrooms after the conversion.

Board members discussed if they should allow tandem parking and they had varying opinions on the topic. Members suggested that the Zoning Subcommittee should look at amending the zoning ordinance to allow for tandem parking for two-families. They all agreed that the applicants should lengthen and widen the driveway so that four cars can fit without overhanging the sidewalk. The applicant should provide a site plan with the proposed driveway dimensions that can fit four cars.

Mr. Sadowski made a MADE a MOTION to send the Board of Appeals a supportive letter for the proposal with a recommendation that the driveway is enlarged to fit four cars parked in tandem. The ordinance discourages tandem parking for a two-family but it is acceptable in this case and the Board would discourage adding excessive pavement. Mr. Cassavoy SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Application, Case 18-015

SITE PLAN REVIEW & AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPECIAL PERMIT

Case 18-003, 171 Tremont Street, Theodore Lantzakis (public hearing)

Attorney, Bob Bell, Owners, Theodore and Magdalina Lantzakis, Architect, Will Chalfant, appeared to present the proposal. Attorney Bell stated that the application is aligned with the City's goals and zoning efforts. He claimed that the multifamily use with one- and two-bedrooms has the highest financial benefit and least impact. A commercial use in this location would produce more adverse impacts related to traffic, noise, parking, etc. The building commissioner's letter underscores how the project is compliant with zoning and only requires site plan review and an affordable housing special permit. No waivers from the application materials are requested. They expect approval from the Engineering Department and DPW for utility tie-ins to the municipal systems. The proposal includes more parking than is required for cars and bicycles. The property is close to public transit.

The development team held two well attended neighborhood meetings. They made many changes to the design as a result of the feedback that they received. The fourth floor was setback significantly to reduce the appearance of it and shadow impact for the abutters. At the neighborhood meetings there was a lot of discussion about the driveway location and the neighbors wanted it on the north side. They wanted all of the resident parking below the building and to the rear. They requested a substantial planting buffer and no parking along the northern boundary line. The parking for the prior uses of the site has been a nuisance. The proposed parking is a better design solution.

Attorney Bell mentioned the studies that were submitted and development details. He stated that the construction management plan was a sensitive response to neighbors' concerns. They are hoping to use modular construction if it proves to be viable which will accelerate the construction time. The project will be ADA compliant. The noise analysis and photometric study show minimal impacts to the surrounding area. Trash and recycling will be picked up by a private hauler. There is room for snow storage on-site. The green building practices are the use of LED lights and energy star appliances. The affordable units are proposed to be unit number 207 and 304.

Attorney Bell said that the project is in full harmony with the City's goals. It will redevelop the site that has an obsolete building on it and increase tax yields from the property. The development will provide empty nesters or young residents with a viable housing option in this current housing crisis. It embodies smart growth and transit oriented development principles.

Will Chalfant, Architect, described the site and building. The existing building has a zero lot line and the new building is proposed to be shifted eight feet to comply with zoning setbacks. The plans show a small retail space that will not be food service. The garage will have cedar slats for natural ventilation so it will not be fully closed. The ventilation percentage meets code. The building is setback 27 feet from the Union Street abutters, 15 feet from the front property line and 72 feet from the rear property line. There will be 17 bike racks onsite. The landscape plan was designed with Steve Cefalo. Neighbors do not want a new fence along the property line. They prefer robust plantings. The plants along the front soften the building and there are heavy plantings proposed in the rear. The open space will improve from 0 to 30 percent. The residential units range in size from 890 to 1191 square feet. The building height was a concern of the neighbors and so they reduced the height to be 35 feet on the Union Street side and 43 feet on the southern side. The style of the building is contemporary in nature. Some neighbors wanted more traditional materials but the planning staff encouraged the more contemporary design. The materials are a mix of gray brick, cementitious panels with an aluminum reveal, composite cedar clapboards and PVC trimwork.

The outdoor balconies will be 12 by 5 feet, which is a relatively large size, but they are set in and do not protrude beyond the building. They will be lit but with low LED bulbs with a shade to minimize light pollution. Cavanaugh Tocci did the noise study for the development. There are 29 rooftop condensing units that will be tucked close to the building and will be on sound pads. The proposal meets the City's noise ordinance.

The amenities in the building are a fitness studio, community room, and community deck. There is an elevator in the building.

The Board had the following comments.

- The truck noise to empty the dumpster might be loud. Stipulations should be put on truck use. There is a proximity based backup alarm that is safer for pedestrians.
- A transformer will likely be required and the Board prefers that it be located in the rear.
- The snow storage location will require a bobcat to move the snow.
- The landscape plan should specify the existing versus proposed trees along the northern border.

The Board opened the hearing up for public testimony. Andrew Aspetti of 3 Union Street, spoke on behalf of the neighbors. Angela Moore of 23 Union Street, Richard and Ellen Connolly of 7 Union Street, Chris Merullo of 39 Union Street, Paige Sherlock of 12 Union Street, Roman Szloch of 25 Union Street, Jessica Marotta of 19 Union Street, and Beth Savage of 199 Tremont Street, also provided public testimony. They voiced the following points and questions. Items that were mentioned more than once have the number of times mentioned in parenthesis. The Applicants' responses are below.

- The dumpster location is too close to the residential neighbor.
- The retail parking should be on the street so that the dumpster can be moved to the other side of the lot (3).
 - One additional parking space will be created on Tremont Street by closing the curb cut.
- Visitors may park on Union Street.
- The parking does not seem adequate.
- They prefer a 3-story building (2). The height is driven by the number of units, which is not appropriate.
- They prefer for the units to be owner occupied (2).
 - Zoning laws do not regulate ownership. The Applicant is not certain that it will be rental but that is their preference. Having a single owner can have a better outcome.
- The trees should be mature. The developer said that they will be 12 feet tall and taller trees are welcome.
- They are concerned about their foundations during excavation.
- They prefer a design like 130 Tremont Street.
- The design should be Victorian.
- The design looks good and sets the tone for future development.
- The shadow study should be expanded to show more times of the year.
- Were the trees removed as a condition of the sale? The trees along the northern property line were removed in March of 2016.
- Ms. Moore provided pictures of the starkness when the trees were removed and maintenance of the site because rodents are a concern (2).
- The lighting will have impacts.
- How loud will the A/C units be and will they be visible? Does the noise study consider all the units being on at once?
 - The sound study is based on the overall effect of 29 condenser units.
- Will the transformer make noise? Where will it be located?

- Rethink the commercial space because it may not succeed.
 - The commercial space is required and a variance would be required to remove it¹.
 - The vision for the commercial space is for a small office.

The Board members further discussed the following points. The Applicants' responses are below.

- Design aesthetics and modular construction - The design is attractive. It is modern but has connections to the surrounding neighborhood. It has proportions that fit the area. It is up to the Board to work on the palate.
 - They are willing to discuss the Board's preference for design. They are trying not to mimic a Victorian style and they have heard negative comments about the design of 130 Tremont Street.
- The RTUs are setback and Cavanaugh Tocci is a well-respected firm and took the worst case scenario into consideration. The Board will want to see the specifications for the units.
- Sloped granite curing will be used throughout.
- Moving the dumpster location seems possible. Could there be an easement with the property to the south?
- The drainage calculations are needed.
- The turning counts that were taken during school vacation should be adjusted.
- More transportation demand management ideas are needed to encourage alternative forms of transportation.
- One member said that he would like more parking and fewer units because of the fiscal impact of potentially having school aged kids living here.
 - Ms. Gaffey noted that approximately 8 percent of the units in multi-family properties developed in the last 15 years have school aged children. That would translate to only 2 to 3 school age children at 171 Tremont Street.
 - Attorney Bell stated that the development will be fiscally exponentially positive. Millennials want to avoid cars and they are the emerging market. They made an educated decision in the zoning process and could cut down on the landscaping for more parking.
- Another member said that she is not troubled by the parking ratio. Tenants self-select based on things like parking and they have the amount of parking required in the zoning ordinance.
- There is concern about the success of the commercial space.
- The foundation will likely be on helical piles.

The Board asked the development team to provide the following information for their next meeting:

1. Upgraded landscape plan to include existing plantings on the subject site that are intended to remain and existing trees on neighbors' properties along the property line.
2. Label building materials more clearly on the plan.
3. Re-designate the affordable units not including unit 207.
4. Provide specs for mechanical units plus cut sheets.
5. Provide alternative dumpster location or trash storage area within the building; evaluate benefit of trash compactors within units
6. Provide transformer location, preferably in the rear.
7. Add transportation demand management techniques.

¹ Mixed-use development is not required but encouraged in RCOD projects. The Planning Board generally prefers mixed use projects in the overlay districts.

8. Address concerns with the traffic analysis identified by the City Engineer: turning counts for cars, cyclists and pedestrians taken during school vacation week and need to be adjusted and sight line concern when cars are parked in the spaces on Tremont immediately adjacent to the driveway.
(and as detailed in the DPW memo:)
9. Add the gas and electric service to the plans. Should existing services be inadequate to serve the proposed new building, indicate the locations and sizes of any proposed new infrastructure.
10. Provide calculations that the proposed sewer service size is adequate for the estimated proposed peak flows.
11. Ensure that the grades of the garage are designed such that no stormwater will run off to the garage drains (this appears to be the case but needs to be documented).
12. The Site Plan Review requirements with respect to stormwater management must be reviewed by the applicant, and an evaluation of the project's ability to meet those requirements submitted to the Engineering Division.
13. Document that the design of the stormwater system includes treatment of runoff from the parking lot and access driveway areas for oils and grease.
14. Provide calculations confirming the appropriateness of the proposed size of the 2 ½ inch domestic water service.

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to continue the case to the July 23, 2018 meeting. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Site Plan Review, Case 18-003
 Planning Staff Report, dated June 15, 2018
 DPW Memo, dated June 18, 2018

OTHER

Review Signage Modification proposed for 2 Washington and 37/47 Washington (aka The Washingtons)

A representative from Fast Sign in Woburn appeared to explain the proposal. The apartments at 2 Washington Street and 37/47 Washington Street are being rebranded as The Washingtons. The monument sign at 2 Washington Street is proposed to change. The base would stay the same and the sign would be an aluminum cabinet with ¾ inch acrylic letters. There is no longer a monument sign at 37/47 Washington Street.

Mr. Sampson MADE a MOTION to amend the Site Plan Approval to reflect the revised monument sign. Mr. King SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Monument Sign Elevation and Renderings dated February 28, 2018
 Proposal Description from FastSigns dated June 11, 2018

NEXT MEETING

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 23, 2018 at 7:45pm.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM.