

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, April 22, 2019
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 & Jack Welch

ABSENT: Greg Sampson

STAFF PRESENT: Denise Gaffey, Director, Emma Schnur, Senior Planner & Lori Massa, Planning Coordinator

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting March 25, 2019

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to approve the regular meeting minutes from March 25, 2019. Mr. King SECONDED the MOTION. All members, except for Mr. Welch and Ms. Petrillo who abstained, voted in favor. None were opposed.

ASSENT CALENDAR

Board of Appeals Public Hearing, May 8, 2019:

Case 19-008, 17 Pine Street, Rebecca Dempster & Matthew Beck

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to send the Board of Appeals a letter stating that the Planning Board does not object to the application and that the Board should take the input of the abutters at the public hearing into account. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Application, Case 19-008

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Board of Appeals Public Hearing, May 8, 2019:

Case 19-007, 86-88 Lake Avenue, Xunming Chen

Judith Clark, Attorney, and Xunming Chen, Owner, appeared to explain the proposal. The structure was probably built as a 2-family house. In 1943 there was an application to convert it to a 4-family house and in 2002 an application for a certificate of occupancy for a 3-family. Both were denied. The Assessor's records list the property as a 4-family and the Inspection Services' records list it as a 2-family. The third floor kitchen was removed before the current owner bought the house in order to get the Fire and Inspection Services Departments sign-off. The property was purchased under a short sale. The Applicant would have applied for the Special Permit prior to purchasing the building but the heating system was broken, winter was coming and he did not want to put money into the building until he owned it. The only proposed exterior change is the installation of a fire escape for a second means of egress for the third floor unit.

A neighboring property, 80-82 Lake Avenue, received approval in 2003 to legalize a three-family. These properties have proximity to the commuter rail station.

The previous owner of the property was at the meeting and said that the Board of Appeals denied the 4-family use in the past for political reasons. His brother, who was part owner of the property, appeared at the hearing and was not in support of the application. He said that the parking spaces work in the back yard.

The Board asked what the recommendation letter contained for the 2002 case and Attorney Clark read it. The letter left the case to the judgement of the ZBA and said that the Applicant should submit a parking plan and improve landscaping and screening on the site.

The Board discussed the proposed fire escape, which would be a ladder permanently affixed to the building. The Applicant did not have the exact location of the ladder planned out and therefore the members had a lot of questions about how it would function from a third floor window.

Then they discussed the proposed parking plan and found it to be unacceptable. The paved area was not indicated on the site plan and the lot coverage dimension was not known. Even with the information that the entire backyard is paved, the Board found that the maneuvering space for parking spaces labeled four and five is inadequate. These spaces are unusable if there is a car in the space labeled three. Furthermore, the members discussed how five cars backing out onto the street is problematic because of safety concerns in the driveway and the street. Members thought that this number of parking spaces in the backyard should have some screening but none was proposed. Finally, they found that parking space six was not desirable as it is located in the front yard and blocks the front door to a unit.

A member said that the building is large enough to house three units; however, the Board did not recommend approval of the proposal as presented. There is a lack of information on the fire escape location and lot coverage dimension, and a lack of support for the proposed parking plan, backing out of vehicles, and parking in the front yard. The Board acknowledged that the Fire Department and Inspection Services Department will be the code enforcement entities for the second means of egress.

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to send the Board of Appeals a letter not supporting the proposal because of the issues discussed. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Application, Case 19-007

Case 19-009, 139 Green Street, Richard Cocci

Richard Cocci, Owner, appeared to explain the proposal. He purchased the property in November of 2014. It was originally built in 1880 as a carriage house and the one-story portion was added on at one point. The existing garage is not strong enough to support a second floor so they will demolish the one-story portion of the house and construct a two-story addition with a smaller footprint. The garage will be on a slab and there will be a crawl space under the family room.

Board members asked how far the house is from the neighbor's shed. It is about 4 to 5 feet away.

Members were supportive of the proposed project. They had no issues with the proposed footprint of the rebuilt structure that would have a greater side yard setback than the existing structure. They found that the proposed design was attractive. Some members suggested that the siding on the addition should be wood or fiber cement siding to match the existing house. The owner was considering installing vinyl siding but was open to other suggestions.

Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to send the Board of Appeals a supportive letter. Mr. Cassavoy SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Application, Case 19-009

Case 19-010, 40 Vine Street, 39 Tappan Street Realty, LLC

Attorney Patrick McAvoy appeared to explain the proposal for the driveway and aisle width variance. He said that this is a small development in the RCOD and other similar projects have been approved with these variances.

Members discussed how the required driveway width and aisle width for parking spaces is conservative for residential projects. One member said that widening the spaces by a foot or two eases the turn out of the parking space but the landscaping should be a higher priority than creating more pavement.

The Board was supportive of the application. They will review the parking layout and landscaping as part of the Site Plan Review for the case but found that the 18.5 foot driveway width and 19 foot aisle width was sufficient for this eight unit residential development. They have approved prior cases with similar relief and have seen that these distances are functional and minimize the amount of impervious surface on the site.

Mr. King MADE a MOTION to send the Board of Appeals a supportive letter. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Application, Case 19-010

NEXT MEETINGS

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 20, 2019, at 7:45pm, which is the third Monday of the month. The December meeting was changed to December 16, 2019, which is the third Monday of the month.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.