

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, June 17, 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, Greg Sampson & Jack Welch

ABSENT: John Sadowski

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 Minutes May 20, 2019

Mr. Sampson MADE a MOTION to approve the regular meeting minutes from May 20, 2019. Mr. Cassavoy SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor, except for Mr. Mercado who was not present at the meeting and abstained. None were opposed.

Design Review Subcommittee Meeting Minutes, June 3, 2019

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to approve the Design Review Subcommittee meeting minutes from June 3, 2019. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

ASSENT CALENDAR

Board of Appeals Public Hearing, July 10, 2019

Case 19-017, 492 Lebanon Street, Michael Fahy

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to send the Board of Appeals a letter stating that the Planning Board does not object to the application and believes the case involves judgments that can best be determined by the Board of Appeals based on the application materials and the information provided by the applicant and abutters at the public hearing. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Application, Case 19-017

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Board of Appeals Public Hearing, July 10, 2019

Case 19-018, 26 Prospect Street, Joshua & Ngoc Anh Goldstein

Owner, Ngoc Anh Goldstein, appeared to explain the proposal. She said that she needs to install a retaining wall on her property as part of a project that included building a new house on the lot. If the retaining wall was 4 feet from the property line, there would be a 20 foot back out distance for the cars parked in the garage. She would prefer to have 24 feet, especially when it snows, to have a safer swing out of the garage.

Ms. Gaffey explained that the need for a retaining wall to be setback 4 feet from the property line was triggered by an interpretation of the zoning ordinance that was brought to the Building Commissioner's attention. Retaining walls and fences are in the definition of structure and therefore the accessory building dimensions apply to them. The Commissioner would like for the Planning Board to propose amending the definition to remove these requirements and/or any conflicts with other sections that relate to fences and walls.

The Board members discussed the details of the wall to determine the actual distance the wall would be from the property line since the application materials do not include a request for a specific distance. The retaining wall footing will be on the subject property and not encroach on the neighbor's land. The footing will be four feet wide and will start at the property line. The wall will be in the middle of the footing and will therefore be two feet from the property line.

The material will be concrete and Ms. Goldstein said that there will be an opportunity to improve its appearance in the future. There will be a cedar fence and a guard rail along the wall for safety.

A member asked if Ms. Goldstein had a plan that was stamped by an engineer. She said that she does and it was already filed with the Building Commissioner.

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to send the Board of Appeals a letter stating that the Planning Board does not object to the application. The letter should include that members expressed that retaining walls and fences should not be required to have the same dimensional regulations as accessory structures and the zoning ordinance should be amended to address this item. Mr. King SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Application, Case 19-018

Ms. Petrillo arrived at the meeting.

SITE PLAN REVIEW & AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPECIAL PERMIT

Case 19-001, 8 Greenleaf Place, Boghos Properties

This case was continued from the May 20, 2019 public hearing.

Attorney Patrick McAvoy, Roy Tiano of Engineering Alliance, and Mr. LaFreniere of LaFreniere Architects, appeared to explain the proposal. Raymond Boghos was not available to be at the meeting.

Mr. McAvoy explained that the Zoning Board of Appeals granted the variance for driveway width and denied the variance for lot area for six market rate units. They are moving forward with a six-unit project with one affordable unit.

Mr. LeFreniere tried to address concerns voiced by the neighbors at the last hearing. He showed a map of the area and pointed out all of the land uses that were multi-family or commercial to show that there are not just single-family homes nearby. The existing building is setback 9 feet from the street and the proposed building will be setback 20 feet which will allow for more visibility from the street. There was a concern about the number of parking spaces onsite and traffic on the street. There will be an easily accessible bike room for residents. The porch will be for circulation only and not for hanging out. The mansard roof creates the look of a two story building with a roof so it better fits within the context of the neighborhood. The existing building sits at a higher elevation than the new building will sit. The neighbors were concerned about their views of the park. Mr. LeFreniere showed an image of the existing building with the proposed building superimposed over it. The image showed that the neighbors across the street will have the same views of the park. The massing of the proposed building goes back into the lot, not to the left, which would block views. Four cars are tucked under the building so that there is not a huge parking lot on the site.

Mr. Tiano showed an image from Franklin Street with the massing of the proposed building that would be showing from this view. The building on Franklin Street will block most of the view of the proposed building.

The HVAC condenser units will be in the middle of the roof and will not be visible from the surrounding area. Trash will be stored in a trash room on the ground floor and will be brought to the street in totes. The city picks up trash for six unit buildings.

Mr. Tiano said that there will be 24 Cultec units to capture the stormwater. The low point is in the back yard. They will keep the existing vegetation along the back property line. He said that Mr. Boghos reached out the neighbor to the south to see what type of screening he would like to see. They could install a fence or landscaping. The neighbor has not yet responded. A member asked about the break in the screening along this property line. Mr. Tiano said that it is too narrow to continue screening in that location. The retaining wall is 2 to 4 feet tall. A member asked if the wall is in good shape because it will have a larger load on it with this development.

The Board felt that the amount of landscaping onsite was lacking with only rhododendrons proposed along the front porch. They need to see a landscape plan with the existing trees that will remain in the rear and with a proposal for screening the parking that blocks the headlights from shining onto the abutter's property. If the neighbor does not respond, the Applicant should propose something and bring it to the next meeting

The Board would also like to see elevation contours outside of the property boundary lines because neighbors' properties may need to be altered to make the grading work.

A member asked if there will be enough snow storage. Mr. Tiano felt that there is plenty of land on the site on which to store snow.

A member asked how tall the building will be compared to the existing building. Mr. LeFreniere did not have spot elevations of the existing building. He said that the new building will start at a lower elevation and will have taller floor to ceiling heights.

A member asked how the Applicant will manage traffic since this is a busy street with no sidewalks. Mr. Tiano said that they were considering putting no parking signs on either side of the driveway. The parking spaces in the lot will be designated to the units. They will offer a one month commuter rail pass to residents.

A member said that he was still struggling with the density at this property. It is a crowded area with the playing fields and the school and the view from the fields will be very different. He appreciated that there will be an affordable unit provided and the design of the development.

Mr. McAvoy said that there is a ten unit residential building next to his office and it is always quite. The zoning here allows for 5 units and a bonus unit and 10 parking spaces. They looked at a five unit building and a redraw of it would be very expensive. Also, the layout does not work well to have two units per floor with one unit on the third floor.

Tim Daye of 9 Greenleaf Place appeared to speak and read a letter that his wife Pam wrote. It included many concerns including but not limited to the large size of the building, small size and condition of the street, and the poor maintenance of the property.

The affordable unit would be the second floor unit in the back of the building. A member pointed out that 1 affordable unit of 6 is a much higher percentage than the required 10%.

The first floor units would be accessible even though they are not required to be. A member said that the accessible access is on the opposite side of the property from the parking lot. Mr. LeFreniere said that this is the only spot that the grades would work for a ramp. The Board asked that a curb to the street is not installed in front of the ramp.

The Board decided to bifurcate the votes on the applications for the Special Permit and Site Plan Approval. They requested additional information on the landscaping, grading, and transportation management plan and were not ready to vote on the Site Plan Approval. However, since they will not have all of the members present tonight at the July 22 meeting they took a vote on the Special Permit, which requires more affirmative votes to pass.

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to GRANT the Affordable Housing Special Permit for a six-unit development with an affordable unit on the second floor in the rear of the building and a reduction in the parking requirement to supply nine parking spaces including all of the standard conditions related to affordable units. Ms. Morelli SECONDED the MOTION. Mr. Welch stated that he considers each project as if he lived close to it. In practical terms the developer could build four units by-right and he does not believe there will be a noticeable impact between four and six units with all of the activity on this street. Seven members voted in favor, one, Ms. Petrillo, was opposed, and Mr. Mercado abstained because he was not at the first public hearing for the case.

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to continue the Site Plan Approval Application to the July 22, 2019 meeting at 7:45 PM. Mr. King SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor, except for Mr. Mercado who abstained. None were opposed.

Documents: Site Plan Approval and Affordable Housing Special Permit Application, Case 19-001
Renderings of the existing and proposed buildings from Greenleaf Place and Franklin Street
Map of surrounding land uses

NEXT MEETINGS

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 22, 2019, at 7:45pm.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.