

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, September 9, 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, Greg Sampson & Jack Welch

ABSENT: None

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 July 22, 2019

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to approve the regular meeting minutes from July 22, 2019. Mr. Sadowski noted that the Lovell Road case title says street instead of road. Mr. King SECONDED the MOTION, as amended. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED

1 Ireson Court, Mark & Patricia Beckford; 5 Ireson Court, Stephen Pivero

Attorney Lucas and Owner, Patricia Mathews, appeared to discuss the application. The lot lines have been long disputed and were settled in Land Court four to five years ago. The Applicant would like to sell the property and needs to take steps to document the agreement. An application will be before the Zoning Board of Appeals to seek variances for setback violations from the agreed upon lot line location. The street has sewer infrastructure and is an accepted private way.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward pointed out that the signature block on the plan incorrectly says community development board instead of the planning board. Attorney Lucas said that this error could be corrected by crossing out the title and writing in the correct one.

Mr. Sampson asked about the existing lot lines. The Assessor's map was provided but the lot lines on the map were under dispute.

Ms. Petrillo asked about how the Land Court case was resolved. There was a settlement agreement followed by a dismissal. The Applicant needs to take several steps to document the

outcome. The members discussed how if the lots have the required frontage and access they are required to sign the A.N.R.

Mr. Sampson MADE a MOTION to endorse the plan with the Planning Board's title corrected. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Application 1 & 5 Ireson Court

20 Maple Terrace, Lori Tobasco

Applicant Lori Tobasco appeared to discuss the application. The Planning Board endorsed an A.N.R. to split the lot into two in 2017 and the plan was recorded. Her house is on one of the lots and the other is for sale. She is going to reduce the price of the lot and before she does so she would like to reconfigure the side lot line. The change increases the amount of land that is part of the existing house lot by approximately 9,000 sf by including the land behind the house.

The members noted that the lots have the required frontage and the frontage is not changing. One lot has frontage in Malden. The lot line change does not affect the land in Malden. The lot line will go through an existing garage that is labeled as to be razed. If the garage is not raised there will be zoning violations; however, the Board cannot consider such issues in these types of applications.

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to endorse the plan. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Application 20 Maple Terrace

Ms. Morelli arrived at the meeting.

SITE PLAN REVIEW & AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPECIAL PERMIT

Case 19-004, 360 Main Street, Matthew Roman

Attorney Bob Bell, Applicant Mathew Roman, Peter Quinn of Peter Quinn Architects, Phil Cherry of WSP and John Barrows of Marchionda & Associates, L.P., appeared to explain the proposal.

Mr. Roman grew up in Melrose and has built other developments here and is currently completing a similar sized project in Reading, MA. Mr. Quinn has worked in Melrose on the 99 Essex Street development.

Attorney Bell explained how the current owner of the building, Paul Ahearn, invested in downtown Melrose by constructing the existing building at a time when no one else was investing in downtown. The proposed building is the size and scale that was constructed at the turn of the 19th century. Many of the buildings are currently shorter because fires removed upper stories. This project is like going back to the future. Attorney Bell referenced Ed Cassidy's, a former Planning Board member, expression that density is not the enemy, poor design is the enemy. We need housing and customers for downtown Melrose. Attorney Bell asked the City's

Assessor for an estimate of the property tax for the development. The conservative estimate is that the new income from the property will be 165,000 dollars. New growth does not fall under the proposition 2 ½ limit on tax increases. There will also be revenue from excise tax and potentially meal tax if there is a restaurant tenant for a total estimate of approximately 200,000 dollars. That money could pay for teachers, policemen or firefighters. The City's expenses raise more than 2 ½ percent each year and there needs to be either new growth or tax overrides to pay for it or services will be cut. The growth does not need to change the essence of Melrose.

Paul Ahearn spoke as the current owner. He is interested in selling the property but as a resident, also interested in what will be built. He gave a history of the site and said that he purchased the property in 1976 and built the building to house two businesses.

Architect Peter Quinn described the proposed building, site, urban design study and shadow study. The building has a generous cornice, the fifth floor will be a true mansard that steps in and the windows will be expressed as dormers. The base of the building has a traditional design but the windows in the building will have a contemporary style. The building is L-shaped to allow for more windows and open space on the site. The building will be pulled back from the property line along Main Street to create a wider sidewalk and have the potential for street trees. There is a change in grade along the front of the property and the two storefronts will be at different heights. The Urban Design Study showed the amenities, parking and transportation options nearby. The shadow study showed little effect on neighboring properties. There is no shadow impact on residential properties and only minimal impact on smaller commercial properties.

Civil Engineer John Barrows gave an overview of the utilities proposed. They will utilize a portion of the existing sewer service and connect with the new water service on Corey Street.

Traffic Engineer Phil Cherry explained the traffic analysis and the calculations that show the net additional trips in the morning and evening peak hours.

Attorney Bell said that we are in an affordability crisis. The demand outweighs the supply. The proposal will provide ADA accessible units and an upgraded space for MMTV.

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to open the public hearing. Mr. King SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Alderman Manisha Bewtra of 330 Grove Street, Finn McSweeney of 160 W Wyoming Street and Paul Ahearn, current owner of the property, appeared to speak in support of the proposal. Comments included the following:

- This is an exciting project.
- There is an opportunity to revitalize Corey Street with this redevelopment and not use it as an alley.
- The community is desirable because it is walkable and a car-free lifestyle is possible.
- The development will attract people that do not own cars if it is built as transit oriented housing. If a lot of parking is built there will be more cars and traffic.
- The health impact of vehicle emissions is not taken into account in the traffic study.

- The development will create more pedestrians on Main Street.
- Ideas for facilitating transit oriented behavior include installing a bus shelter, creating a walking path to Wyoming Hill, and making pedestrian and bicycle improvements on Main Street.
- The younger generation uses Uber and Lyft and many do not want to own cars.

John Wise, developer of 10 Corey Street, spoke in opposition to the proposed project. He is bothered by the density and height. He said that 10 Corey Street is only 44 feet tall with a two foot parapet. If a restaurant opens on the first floor of the proposed building the building will be short more parking spaces. He said that the 52 parking spaces at 10 Corey Street are always occupied and he feels that he underestimated the demand for parking. He wants the impact of the development to be lessened on Corey Street and does not want the dumpster across the street.

The Planning Board members had the following questions and comments. The development team's responses are noted below.

- The new curb cut off of Main Street will be a significant change. Some members had strong feelings against it. It will remove on street parking and the 12 foot width will make visibility difficult. A small driveway width can work with a short driveway but this driveway is approximately 60 feet long.
 - The curb cut allows for a handicap accessible van parking space and a service entrance with a loading area for MMTV which will allow for more opportunities for programing. There is currently no onsite parking for MMTV. If two street spaces are removed, there is still a gain of 2 spaces onsite.
 - There could be a right turn only exiting the driveway.
 - The trips to MMTV will mostly be in the evening.
- The function and layout of the parking lot needs work. As shown, vehicles will be backing out without adequate turning space. Will residents park here at night?
 - The handicapped van space could be moved to have a more convenient turning space.
 - Residents will not park in this lot.
 - The spaces could be dedicated specifically to MMTV with signage which will minimize the use and potential conflicts
- Where will deliveries take place? There may be another way to rework the site plan so that there is a better drop-off location.
 - A drop-off space on Main Street will be requested from the Traffic Commission. Corey Street is all a curb cut now. The curb will be filled in but parking is not allowed on this side of Corey Street.
 - The drop-off space will also provide a location for ridesharing vehicles so that they will not block the street.
- They would like to see provisions for cooking to allow for the possibility of a restaurant here.
- What will the building be constructed of?
 - Three floors of steel and concrete with wood frame above.
- How will the parking spaces be distributed?
 - Some units will be leased with a space and some without and rent will be less.

- Parking is controlled mainly by tenant selection. Mr. Roman is committed to transit oriented practices and marketing and is looking into a Net Zero building
 - By building sustainably, people that do not want to own cars by principle will be attracted to the development.
- There was some support for a parking variance because of the mix of uses in the area.
- Zipcar would be successful in this area.
- A recent MAPC study shows that the utilization rate of parking at multi-family buildings in the area is 0.7/0.8.
- Members discussed ways of improving the building along Corey Street so that it was not treated as an alley and the building does not create a canyon effect on the street. More attention is needed to soften the building along the sidewalk. The building otherwise has an appropriate orientation to the street.
 - The plans show stairs and outdoor space along Corey Street which will bring vibrancy there.
- A member requested that the architect make sure that the columns in the parking spaces will not interfere with maneuvering space.
 - The columns are planned to be 8 inches.
- A member requested more information on the trash room size and trash removal.
 - The 2 yard roll out dumpsters that hook up to trucks work in other similar developments. A detailed trash and recycling plan will be provided.
- The acoustical report will be important as there are apartments close to the site.
- The effect of the development on the level of service of nearby intersections was discussed.
 - Two nearby intersections have levels of service of C and D. At the 2026 horizon year the level of service will not change as a result of this development.
 - The periodic retiming of signals is important but not needed for this proposal because the thresholds required to do so are not crossed.
 - It was clarified that the Traffic Engineer's recommendation to restripe the intersection at Main Street and Wyoming Avenue to accommodate a short left-turn bay and change the signal phasing to introduce a protected advance left-turn phase was included in the report as an item that the City could take on. According to the traffic consultant, it was not included as an item that was needed for mitigation for the project.
- The test boring report shows oil. Is the site contaminated?
 - They did an environmental test and there is some petroleum which is not uncommon in an urban environment. Minimal cleanup will be required.
- When does the application plan to apply for variances?
 - The application to the Board of Appeals will be filed after the Planning Board's hearing. If changes are needed, a revision would have to come back to the Planning Board for approval.

The Board requested the following items for the next meeting:

- Consideration of the Corey Street façade and possibility of more landscaping along the Corey Street facade
- A better visual of the site from Corey Street

- Redesign of the driveway, MMTV parking lot and turning radius movement
- A plan for trash and recycling storage and removal
- The column width detail in the garage
- Acoustical report
- Section of the building

Mr. Roman asked if the civil and traffic engineers will be needed at the next meeting and the members said no.

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to continue the public hearing to October 28, 2019. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Site Plan Approval and Affordable Housing Special Permit Application, Case 19-004

NEXT MEETING

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 23, 2019, at 7:45pm.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 pm.