MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, October 28, 2019
7:45 PM
Cassidy Conference Room, City Hall, 562 Main Street

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

ABSENT: Sharon Petrillo

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 September 9, 2019

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to approve the regular meeting minutes from September 9, 2019 with the following amendment: strike the mention of post tension concrete in the bulleted statement regarding column size. Mr. King SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Planning Board Regular Meeting Minutes September 23, 2019

Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to approve the regular meeting minutes from September 23, 2019. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

ASSENT CALENDAR

Board of Appeals Public Hearing on November 13, 2019

Case 19-031, 430 Swains Pond Avenue, Kristin & Tim Zubak

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to send the Board of Appeals a letter stating that the Planning Board did not object to the applications and believed the cases involve 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 present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Applications, Case 19-031

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Board of Appeals Public Hearing on November 13, 2019

Case 19-029, 73 Sheffield Road, Jason Deeble

Mr. Deeble, Applicant and Owner, and Mr. Maguire, Contractor appeared to present the case. Mr. Deeble has a family of five and his mother-in-law is moving north to spend time with them. The addition would provide more bedrooms and living space in the house for the family.

The Board members discussed minor changes that would reduce the length and width of the addition to achieve a greater setback from the property line. The abutter's house is at a higher elevation and there are woods at the property line but this neighbor could put up a fence or built a structure in the future that would squeeze access around the proposed addition. The Board members were sympathetic to the alignment of the house and property line; however, they would be more supportive of the proposal if it involved a more modest variance.

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to recommend that the Applicant redesign the proposal to have a minimum of a four foot setback, the requirement for an accessory structure, to be able to pass by and maintain the addition without the need to use the neighbor's property. Mr. Sadowski SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Applications, Case 19-029

Case 19-030, 24 Boardman Avenue, Ryan Fuller

Mr. Fuller, Applicant and Owner, and Mr. Bradley, Architect, appeared to present the case. They discussed the difficultly in accessing the existing garage and the condition with the shared driveway. Members discussed how they appreciate the owner's desire to keep the backyard open and the fact that the front yard along Ells Avenue functions as a rear yard because the property is a through lot. Despite these conditions, they were not supportive of a front yard variance as proposed. The proposed garage is large and long and could have a different footprint. A side-by-side configuration is more typical and would be able to comply with the setback regulation. A redesign would still meet the project's goals of constructing a two-car garage that is more easily accessible than the existing one and reducing the amount of pavement on the lot. A side-by-side configuration would also allow space to park a car in front of the garage off of Ells Avenue. Members were concerned that a car parked in front of the garage would stick out into the road.

Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to send the Board of Appeals a letter explaining the discussion and lack of support for the variance as proposed. Mr. King SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Applications, Case 19-030

Case 19-025, 138 Main Street & Sylvan Street, Jay Dunham of Metro Credit Union

Christopher Tolley, Representative, John Cavanaro, Engineer, and other members of the applicant team appeared to explain the proposal. The Board gave the recommendation to the Board of Appeals after hearing the presentation for the Site Plan Review application as noted below.

The members reviewed the variance requests and noted that the driveway width variance is no longer needed.

Most members were not convinced with the information provided that there is a need for 17 parking spaces where 5 is the amount required in the zoning ordinance and approved by the prior Board of Appeals decision that allowed the business use in a residential district. Typically parking utilization data is supplied to support the need for more parking and it was not provided for this case. If more parking is in fact needed, there is street parking and the potential to make an arrangement with one of the nearby properties that have extensive parking lots to utilize existing paved areas. A few members were not opposed to the expansion of the parking lot because the Sylvan Street lot is currently underutilized and could support a viable business and also the bank's parking lot has a haphazard layout that could improve with the additional land.

Notwithstanding the need to gather parking utilization data and explore other options for parking, none of the members were supportive of the requests for variances from the parking standard, including parking in the front yard setback and for curb cuts being close to one another and close to the intersection.

Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to send the Board of Appeals a letter stating that the Planning Board was not in support of the application because of the reasons discussed. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Applications, Case 19-025

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Case 19-005, 138 Main Street & Sylvan Street, Jay Dunham of Metro Credit Union

Christopher Tolley, Representative, John Cavanaro, Engineer, and other members of the applicant team appeared to explain the proposal. Metro Credit Union has the Sylvan Street lot under agreement. They will expand the parking lot and construct 9 new spaces for a total of 17. In 2011 Metro Credit Union merged with another bank and had more employees and patrons than they did before. They are not aware of how the existing parking lot expanded from the five approved parking spaces in 1990 to the nine that are there today.

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

- There was concern that selling the Sylvan Street lot would make the abutting residential property nonconforming.
    - Mr. Tolley said that there is not an issue of merger. The condominium documents do not include the land that would be sold.
    - Planning staff researched the permitting history and cannot find the building permit for 2-4 Sylvan Street. There is a plan in the file at the Inspectional Services Department showing the site and the proposed building and the subject parcel is not included.
- Would the residential parking be able to be on its own lot?

  - Mr. Tolley said that it appears that it would. The easement on the subject property would give the residential parking more space.
- What are the time restrictions for parking on Sylvan and Main Streets?
  - Sylvan Street is restricted before 10am and then there is no time limit. Main Street has two-hour parking.
- Has the Bank explored renting parking spaces for employees from Hunt's or the daycare who have unused parking?
  - No.
- The need for additional parking should be demonstrated.
- Customers should park on the street as they do for most businesses in the City. It would be easier for customers if there was a walkway from the front door to Main Street. The parking spaces at the back of the proposed lot are likely farther away than the on-street parking spaces.
- The Bank hasn't tried hard enough to use the parking that is already there.
- This is a residential district and will require many variances. Is there another layout that would reduce the number of variances?
  - The Bank is looking to maximize the number of parking spaces to have a viable level of service for their customers.
- They are currently in violation of the 1990 approval and will have to remedy the lot.
- The building used to be a doctor's office with five staff. Everyone drove and patients found a place to park. The bank customers have shorter visits than patients would have but the activity hasn't changed much from that use.

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

Two residents appeared to speak at the hearing. Janet Higgins of 4 Sylvan Street, who is selling the parcel that would become the parking lot, was in support of the application. She said that the traffic and parking was terrible when the building was a doctor's office. People currently park on her property. The neighborhood is not residential as there is an armory close by. Finn McSweeney of 160 W Wyoming Street said that there is always space available in the Hunt's parking lot and shared parking should be pursued. He asked if the two trees along Sylvan Street would be affected. The Applicant confirmed that the trees will not be touched as a part of this proposal.

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

- It is difficult to deal with the design and conditions when the Board is not sure if the ZBA will grant approval for the use.
- Where will the snow be stored?
  - The snow would be plowed into a parking space and removed for larger storms. They remove the snow from the existing bank lot.
- Is lighting or a dumpster proposed?
  - No.
- How will the stormwater be treated?

  - They are coordinating a tie-in with the City Engineer. The site will be sending less water offsite with the infiltration and treatment proposed. There will be an improvement in the amount of pervious coverage.
- Has the water table depth been found yet?
  - Not yet.
- What is proposed for landscaping?
  - There is a plant list on the revised plan. The proposed landscape strip along the sidewalk will define the pedestrian connection around the site.
- A boundary wall will be removed as part of the project. Is there a grade change?
  - No, the site is flat.

After the Board made the recommendation to the Board of Appeals as noted above, Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to continue the public hearing to the next meeting on November 25, 2019. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Mr. Sampson arrived at the meeting.

SITE PLAN REVIEW & AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPECIAL PERMIT

<u>Case 19-004, 360 Main Street, Matthew Roman</u>
This case was continued from the public hearing on September 9, 2019.

Attorney Bob Bell, Applicant Mathew Roman, and Peter Quinn of Peter Quinn Architects, appeared to explain the changes to the proposal since the last meeting that respond to the feedback made at that meeting. The information is outlined in a memo dated October 24, 2019. The building is pulled back from Corey Street to allow for space to plant trees. There are curved windows on the first floor of the building along Corey Street to help reduce the scale of the building at the street. The driveway from Main Street has a new design. The pedestrian path and bicycle parking will still be covered by the building. Vehicles will have a separate space with a two-way signal. The number of parking spaces on the ground level is three with one being a handicapped van space. This space is not required to be accessible. The accessible spaces in the garage will have a head height that will be tall enough for a van. The trash and recycling will be in six four-yard dumpsters that will either be motorized or movable with a dolly up the ramp to the street. The dumpsters would be emptied once brought to the street and returned to the trash room. They will not be stored on the street. The trash room is big enough to store larger items that are being thrown away. The columns in the garage will be away from the front of the parking spaces so that it is easier to maneuver into the space but the exact location of the columns has not yet been determined. They requested that the acoustical report is submitted at a later time. They have not yet chosen the equipment but know that it will be on the roof. There will be a parapet on the building as shown on sheet A-10 that will block the noise from the street. The floor plans have not changed since the last meeting. The residential entrance to the building has the same detailing as the retail spaces. There will be fence along the side of the property that abuts the lot with Dunkin' and the fence will taper down near the sidewalk. The usable/leasable commercial space will be 6,900 sf. The original plans listed a different number that included gross square feet.

They explained the green building program for the building that is also outlined in a memo dated October 24, 2019. There will be an electric car in the garage that will be available for all of the residents to use with a nominal charge. There will be ten bikes with electric assists and cargo baskets for residents to lease. The car and bikes can be reserved using an app and will operate like Zipcar and Lime. There will be six EV charging stations in the garage with the ability to expand. In the residential lobby there will be an MBTA real-time monitor so that residents can wait in the lobby instead of outside for the bus. The residents will get a free month MBTA pass. They will use healthy building materials. The excess building materials will be recycled and there will be a free materials day for Melrose residents. The sub-contractors will be encouraged to carpool.

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

- Will the roof be solar panel ready or will the panels be installed?
  - The roof will be PV ready. Mr. Roman has not yet entered into an agreement for installation but intends to. The solar programs change over time and he will put the project out to bid when the project is farther along in the process.
- How will the reimbursement of electricity costs be handled?
  - Some of the units could have electricity included in the rent and the rent would be more expensive. The electricity cost for an apartment is pretty standard so the calculation can be figured out.
- The columns in the garage could get quite long, potentially 3 to 4 feet, so a member cautioned to make sure that the columns will not prevent car doors from opening.
- The green building program is tremendous – especially the electric vehicle and bicycles.
- Will the windows be operational?
  - Yes.
- The trash pickup will be quite an operation. Will there be management onsite?
  - Yes but not full-time.

The Planning Board received five letters from residents. One was from Mr. King acting as a resident. He read the letter during the hearing which explained why he was not in support of the proposed variances for the project. Three other letters were supportive, one was supportive with changes and one was opposed.

James Oosterman of 54 Ellis Farm Lane, the Melrose Housing Authority and a Melrose Bank Housing Officer, Dan Krechmer of 110 E Emerson Street and the Traffic Commission and Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee, Finn McSweeney of 160 W Wyoming Street, Marybeth Margolis of 22 Stowecroft Road and MMTV, and Dave Roh of 54 York Terrace and MMTV, appeared to speak in support of the proposal. Comments included the following. If the comment was mentioned more than once the number of times is in parenthesis.

- The project will bring much needed affordable and market rates units to the City and help with the regional housing shortage (2).

- There was support for the green energy efforts (2). This will be the greenest building in Melrose and will set the standard for other developments.
- There was support for reduced parking (3). People that choose to live here will not need a lot of parking. The development will create less traffic than one with a lot of parking. If we don’t build transit oriented development, people will move farther away from Boston and drive through Melrose to get into Boston which will increase traffic.
- This should be a zero parking building.
- The project is well designed (2). It looks like it belongs in Melrose.
- This is a transit oriented development near downtown. People can walk to get groceries and coffee and we want as much foot traffic as possible downtown and in Wyoming Hill.
- This location is more walkable than the proposed development in the Marty’s Furniture building because of the abundance of services on Main Street.
- If we are too restrictive nothing will be redeveloped.
- MMTV is excited to return to the building. Mr. Roman has been considerate of their needs (2). MMTV has found a partner in Mr. Roman just as they found a partner in Paul Ahern, the current owner of the building.
- This end of Main Street has been ignored in terms of the new zoning districts.
- This is the time, location, and developer that will create redevelopment.
- Mr. Roman grew up here, owned a skate shop, and allowed youngsters to hang out at the shop.
- Technology is changing and it will be exciting to have MMTV in a green building. MMTV looks to the future and is community oriented and that is what this building represents.
- The development at Oak Grove was a big change and shows that there is room for change without negative impacts.
- The advantages of this building need to be considered along with the request for zoning relief.

Attorney Bell said that in the rezoning efforts the development potential of this block was not considered. He said that parking drives the deal. Redevelopment in downtown has an advantage because there are no parking requirements. There is a high cost with this development to build 40 parking spaces. The City will see the benefits of real estate and excise taxes. They need the density to pay for the amenities that will be provided.

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

- The section of the building provided is schematic. A more detailed section was requested.
- The FAR of 2 is low for this area and they are not exempt from parking. The Board did discuss FAR in this area in the past but should revisit it. This development fits the context.
- The area used to be blighted. It had a Coke Cola bottling plant and gas stations. The area will have come a long way if this building is built.
- This site is on Main Street and is a part of downtown.
- The variance relief will be tough to justify.

- The change to the parking on the ground floor works better.
- Parking management will come with the development and there will be people that do not own cars here.
- The Board did not understand the burden of development in this area. The site is unique and this development is what they were hoping for here. It will be an excellent contribution to the City.
- The density compared to the services makes sense.
- There may need to be tweaks to the design after site plan review.
- The path on the right side of the building should provide a welcoming path for pedestrians to be able to cut-through the site.
- They asked for an update on what green building practices were able to be incorporated into the site before a Certificate of Occupancy is issued since some of the ideas are conceptual and the members want to know what is implemented.

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

Ms. Gaffey outlined the proposed conditions of approval. The Board added the following:

- Design Review Subcommittee approval of the materials, colors, landscaping, acoustical report, bay windows, storefront design, connectivity and design of the pedestrian path on the right side of the site.
- A mockup of the building materials.
- The Applicant will pursue seeking approval for the proposed drop-off/pick-up space on the street.

Members said as recommendations that it would be beneficial to have operable storefront windows and to install a vent shaft to be able to have a full service restaurant as a tenant. They reviewed the units that will be affordable as marked on the plans. They mentioned other buildings in the City that are of the proposed height or taller.

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to approve the Site Plan with conditions as amended above. Mr. Sampson SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Mr. Sampson MADE a MOTION to grant the Affordable Housing Incentive Special Permit with conditions. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Site Plan Approval and Affordable Housing Special Permit Application, Case 19-004
Planning Staff Memo with Proposed Conditions
Architect’s Response to Planning Board Feedback dated October 24, 2019
Proposed Green Building Program dated October 24, 2019
Proposed Architectural Plans, dated revised October 24, 2019

OTHER

Building Design Modification: Case 17-002, 419-429 Main Street, Theodore Lantzakis
Matthew Roman became the general contractor for the construction of 419-429 Main Street after the project was permitted. He thought of ways to improve the project and presented the changes to the Board for their approval. The first change is that the balconies would be eliminated because they are difficult to maintain. The second change is to the façade materials from hardi panels to brick on the third floor and surrounding the storefronts and from a pre-made cornice to a BORAL composite for the cornices. The revised materials will last longer and not have the potential for oil canning. The final change is to add a storefront on the side of the building adjacent to Eastern Bank to let more light into the commercial space.

The development team may also propose adding two micro units to the building, which would increase the unit count to 12, and a small commercial space in the basement. The Board agreed with staff that this change is significant and would require a public hearing to review.

The Board had no problems with the proposed changes and approving them as an administrative change. The comments included that the building will look heavier but the materials are high quality and will last longer. Removal of the balconies that were decorative and not functional was not detrimental to the design. A member asked if there will be signage on the side of the building and Mr. Roman said there will not be a sign there. The Board felt that the windows on the side are a great addition. One member cautioned that if a retailer tenants the space they may want to block the windows for merchandise placement.

Unrelated to the proposed changes a member cautioned Mr. Roman that Arriscraft will not hold up over time as a base material.

Mr. Sampson MADE a MOTION to approve the requested modifications, excluding the micro units on the proposed list of changes, administratively. Mr. Cassavoy SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

NEXT MEETING
The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday November 25, 2019, at 7:45pm.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 pm.