

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Monday, December 16, 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 November 25, 2019

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to approve the regular meeting minutes from November 25, 2019. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor except for Mr. Cassavoy, Ms. Petrillo and Mr. Sampson who were not at the meeting and abstained. None were opposed.

**ASSENT CALENDAR**

*Board of Appeals Public Hearing on January 8, 2020*

Case 19-038, 20 Meadowview Road, Stephen G. Curry, Jr.

Case 19-040, 152 Grove Street, Daniel & Elizabeth Hayden

Case 19-041, 2 Walnut Street, Lauren Knott

Case 19-042, 17 Worth Street, Andrew & Kerrienne Pippy

Mr. Sampson MADE a MOTION to send the Board of Appeals letters for each of these cases 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 19-038, 19-040, 19-041 & 19-042

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS**

*Board of Appeals Public Hearing on January 8, 2020*

Case 19-039, 299 Beech Avenue, Timothy White

Mr. White, Applicant and Owner, appeared to present the case. He would like to add an addition onto his house and the property has three front yards.

Board members asked about the back lot. Mr. White said that he has no plans to do anything with it currently. He may put a garage on it in the future. He has no intention of removing the wood fence. The back lot was used by a prior owner for a business that involved construction vehicles and storage of materials like stone but the lot has been cleared.

The Board ordinarily does not support encroachments in front yards but there are unusual circumstances for this property. The property has three front yards which is unusual and onerous. Highland Street is a paper street that is semi-paved. People can drive on it but it is not a heavily traveled path. There is conservation land across the street and therefore the land around the property will likely not be developed in the future. If a ladder was needed to be placed in or near the road to maintain the side of the building with the narrow front yard, it would not interfere with the street.

Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to request that the Board of Appeals take this information into consideration along with the information provided by the applicant and abutters at the public hearing in making a determination on this case. Mr. Cassavoy SECONDED the MOTION. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Applications, Case 19-039

**SITE PLAN REVIEW & AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPECIAL PERMIT**

Case 19-003, 12-16 Essex Street, Mark Carroll (public hearing continued from September 23 & November 25, 2019)

Attorney Bob Bell, Applicant Mark Carroll, Tim Johnson of Tim Johnson Architect, LLC, Al Vitukevich, Structural Engineer, and Patrick Flaherty from CityLift, appeared to explain the proposal.

Attorney Bell said that since the last hearing Mr. Carroll has added surrounding buildings to the physical model that he created. The building under construction at 530 Main Street will be taller and bulkier than the proposed building. The proposed building conforms to the height and FAR allowed in the Zoning Ordinance. The massing was dictated by the building program including commercial with a 13 foot ceiling height, parking, and residences. The proposal is unique in that it will provide on-site parking in a downtown location. Other benefits to the project are the building will be accessible, which is difficult to make happen with the existing building; there will be two affordable units and a cash contribution to the affordable housing trust; and there will be significant taxes generated from this building.

Demolishing the building has generated controversy from the Historical Commission. The Historic District Commission (HDC) has jurisdiction over whether the building can be demolished or not. The next HDC meeting to hear this case again is January 14, 2020. They will have to come back before the Planning Board if the HDC requires design changes in their approval.

Mr. Carroll reviewed the items in the memo that he wrote dated October 24, 2019 that responded to outstanding items or concerns that were in the staff report. He showed the Board a video of a mid-sized pickup truck pulling into and out of a mockup of the garage door to show that the layout of the proposed driveway and parking garage are functional.

Mr. Johnson explained how the design was formulated. They looked at the style of buildings in the area that were built around 1860-1880. From that time buildings were often Italianate or Second Empire, which was modern at that time. They chose to take elements of the Second Empire style like large double hung windows, heavy cornices, towers, projecting bays and the façade materials of brick, sandstone, and cast iron. The two towers demarcate the two main entrances to the building. The commercial and residential entrances are distinct. Mr. Carroll showed pictures of details on existing buildings on Main Street to show how the proposed building related to them. The building extends the style of Main Street down Essex Street. The buildings currently on Essex Street like the cleaners and grocery store do not have Main Street character.

Mr. Flaherty presented on how the parking space lifts works and members asked questions about it. He also gave background information on CityLift. The type of system that is integrated into buildings has been in place for about five years. Similar systems have been in place in Asia for many years. There are approximately 25 in the Boston area and 250 in the U.S. CityLift is the only company to have UL Certification. They have all of the parts available at a warehouse in Chelsea. The State's Elevator Board inspects the lifts. There is a feedback system in place to warn of when service is needed. The system does not tie into the structural support of the building except that there is a load to consider on the floor. A few more sprinklers are required for the lift in the garage. The system is very quiet at 52 decibels and only makes noise when in motion. There is a strobe light to warn people when it is in motion. The car retrieval time is about 30 seconds so it is unlikely that there would be a cue of people waiting to get their cars. The interior columns of the building have been designed to align with the lift. The parking trays can be different sizes but the ones for this building will be 8.5 feet wide, which is a typical parking space size, and should not be hard to get into. There are built-in gutters to prevent ice and snow or oil from dripping on the car below. There would be an oil separator in the garage drain and the garage will be ventilated with or without the lift. A backup generator for the lift system is required. It is super-efficient and is only on when needed.

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

Doug Pippy of 354 Upham Street, Greg Messina of 132 Country Club Road, and Bill Ahern of 88 Ellis Farm Lane appeared to speak in support of the proposal. Comments included the following:

- Mr. Carroll builds quality projects and he has helped Melrose progress in a positive way with development.
- People come to Melrose because of the downtown and the City has done a good job with the Master Plan. This building fits in with the plan and provides quality housing.
- This project will raise the tax base. An example given of the benefit of a tax increase is that a \$63,000 increase is enough to cover a 2.5 million bond. The City has a lot of capital improvement projects and this money will help to have the funds to do the work.

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

- Where will the sliding door on the trash room be located?
  - It will be on the driveway side. The exact size and location will be in the construction drawings but it will be approximately 4 feet wide.
- When does trash pickup occur?
  - Currently trash is picked up once-a-week between 6-7am and there have been no complaints. Trash will likely be picked up two times per week after the building is constructed.
- The catch basin for the driveway should not be in the trash room because there will likely be trash on the floor.
  - The catch basin can be moved forward. The final details of the stormwater plans need to be completed. All of the stormwater will be captured on-site. The building will have internal drains to the infiltration system and there will be no gutters. They did soil and environmental testing and found that the ground water is low at 14 feet deep which is good for infiltration.
- What is the plan to not undermine the foundation of the abutting building?
  - They will be underpinning a portion of the building by the elevator and are otherwise constructing away from the abutting building. They may use helical piles to not touch the abutting building. The soil is good for this type of construction.
- What are the back doors of 534 Main Street that exit onto the driveway used for?
  - None of the doors are required for egress or used regularly. The first is for deliveries for Beacon Hill Wine, the second is to the back office for RE/MAX and the third is for residential storage in the basement. This is an existing condition that will not change with the proposal.
- Could a plow fit down the driveway?
  - Yes but it should not be needed with the heated driveway.
- How does the pedestrian warning sign work?
  - A car will trigger the sign to blink and make noise. The sign will project over the sidewalk with an 8 foot clearance.
- Are the parking spaces in the existing lot that will be eliminated leased and who will lose parking? Was 534 Main Street permitted with those parking spaces?
  - Some commercial and residential tenants have parking space at 12-16 Essex Street but there are no long-term leases. Some of the original tenants are gone and all are aware that they will no longer be able to park in the lot if the development

moves forward. These spaces are not required parking for the Main Street building.

- Do the bay overhangs need approval? Yes, the City Solicitor said that the City Council will need to give approval. This would happen outside of the Planning Board's process.
- How many bedrooms will the two affordable units have?
  - One affordable unit will be one bedroom and the other will be two bedrooms to reflect the mix in the building.
- The model with the surrounding buildings is helpful to see how the proposal will fit in with the area. The one story building next door is relatively temporary and the proposal will create a new existing condition for the area. Unfortunately the taller tower cannot be flipped to the other side of the building because of the building's programming.
- It was clever to bring the Main Street vernacular around the corner.
- The shadows are a concern but there is no way to avoid them.
- There is a lot going on with the design of the building with Second Empire and modern elements together. There are many competing elements, which is somewhat Victorian but should be simplified. The building has a lot of detail and does not need many colors.
- The west elevation should be broken up in some way. Essex Street is changing with development underway and other potential developments but it might be years before the one-story building next door is developed. Members had varying opinions on installing a mural or ghost advertisements in the wall. The front corner is the most visible part of the blank wall. The tower could be expressed by having it wrap the corner with a material other than clapboard. The materials would need to be relatively flat. Vertical elements could be placed at regular intervals to break up the clapboard. The clapboards should be painted a darker color to make it be less prominent.
  - The building will actually provide a screen for the unsightly HVAC units and roof tops of the Main Street buildings.
- Mr. Carroll was open to making changes to the façade materials and color. The board and batten will be removed, colors will be simplified and the blank wall will have other treatments.
- Where will the transformer go and has National Grid been notified?
  - The development can tie into the new transformer on Cerretani Way that was installed for the development at 530 Main Street. National Grid has been contacted to start the planning for electrical and gas.

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

Members reviewed the requested waivers from application materials. Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to grant the requested application material waivers. Mr. King SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Members reviewed the draft conditions of approval. They added the review of the pedestrian warning sign to the Design Review Subcommittee condition because the specifications were not detailed on the sign's plan. They also added the review of the catch basin placement in the trash room to the stormwater condition.

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

Documents: Site Plan Approval and Affordable Housing Special Permit Application, Case 19-003  
Response to Staff Report Memo from Mark Carroll to Denise Gaffey, Director and City Planner dated October 24, 2019

**NEXT MEETING**

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday January 27, 2020, at 7:45pm.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 pm.