

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Zoning Subcommittee
Monday, August 31, 2020
7:30 PM
Remote Meeting**

PRESENT: Anne DeSouza-Ward, Paul King, & Greg Sampson

ABSENT: Sharon Petrillo

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Mr. Sampson.

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting was conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Meeting access and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting was found on the City of Melrose's website, at www.cityofmelrose.org/remote-meetings. No in-person attendance of members of the public was permitted, but every effort was made to ensure that the public could adequately access the proceedings in real time. An audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings was posted on the mmtv3.org website as soon as possible after the meeting. A link was also available on www.cityofmelrose.org.

Incentive Zoning for TOD Locations, including BA-1 and BA-2 Districts

The subcommittee last met on July 23, 2020 and discussed possible changes to the Zoning Ordinance for the BA-1 and/or BA-2 districts that would allow for development that they support with an incentive structure. Often projects that they approve in the Site Plan review process require variances that add an unnecessary layer of approval and are easily appealed.

The amendment would promote sustainable development and community benefits in exchange for additional height and FAR. As drafted the incentives would be approved through the Site Plan Review process. There was discussion about if a Special Permit should be required for the incentives because the Board members will have to use discretion in the approval process. There was also a question on if there should be an upper cap on FAR.

Incentive language is already a tool in the zoning ordinance designated as 'design review permit'. The draft language uses this existing framework to create incentives in the BA district. The members discussed the advantages and disadvantages to allowing for off-site mitigation.

The City already has off-site mitigation funds established for streetscape improvements, open space and stormwater.

The Subcommittee contemplated if the incentive should be for the BA-1 and -2 or just for BA-2 and rezone the area along Main Street from Wyoming Avenue to Grove Street to BA-2. This area is more similar to the BA-2 zones around commuter rail stations than it is to downtown.

The letters from the Melrose Energy Commission and Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee will be reviewed to see if the amendment could incorporate benefits that are not yet captured.

Additional affordable housing benefits will be studied as part of the Housing Production Plan and will not be incorporated at this time.

A parking reduction is already allowed as part of the Site Plan Approval in the BA-1 and BA-2 districts. The Subcommittee discussed other changes to the parking and driveway regulations for which projects which they support often require variances. An 18-foot aisle width for backing out of spaces may be too tight but an 18-foot two-way driveway is sufficient for residential or residential mixed-use projects. The regulations could require that turning radii are required but the templates are very conservative and would require more paving than is needed.

The Subcommittee opened the meeting up for attendees that wanted to speak. Ellen Katz of 70 Line Street, who is on the Melrose Energy Commission, read the letter from the Commission. Finn McSweeney of 160 W Wyoming Avenue was in favor of adding density for community benefits. He said that the number one thing that people are concerned with is traffic and this is a chief quality of life issue. It would be more impactful for developments to improve non-vehicular modes of transit than implementing energy efficiency measures.

The Subcommittee will meet again to review another draft of the amendment.

NEXT MEETING

The Zoning Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2020 at 7:30pm.
The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.