

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Zoning Subcommittee
Thursday, September 24, 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 7:35 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 BA-1 and BA-2 Districts

The Subcommittee last met on August 31, 2020 and discussed 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.

Members reviewed two versions of the draft amendment. One would allow for height and density incentives through the Site Plan Review process and the other would require a Special Permit. The Site Plan Review process is preferable; however, staff and members were going to research more about the ability to use this permitting process considering that the state law that explicitly allows for incentives by Special Permit.

The Melrose Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee made a good argument for the need to address walking and cycling infrastructure with an increase in density and transit oriented development. Staff added a requirement that the applicant make a payment into the City's Streetscape Improvement Fund in addition to providing other benefits. The payment is the same as what is required in the Rail Corridor Overlay District. Members were not opposed to this requirement. They did want to keep the wide range of benefits that include mobility efforts,

green building practices, and open space to be inclusive in the list of benefits that could be provided. Each site is unique and a benefit that makes sense in one location may not in another.

They discussed the fact that the applicant would have to provide a financial analysis comparing the value of the community amenities offered to the value of the incentives. To determine the value of the incentives, the applicant shall calculate the cost paid to acquire the additional development space or rights on the open market. Some of the benefits have intrinsic value that is not quantifiable. The Board will have to make this determination on a case-by-case basis.

They reviewed the proposed parking standard amendments that tweak existing regulations. They decided to add an amendment that allows the Planning Board during the Site Plan Review to reduce the parking requirements in all districts, not just the BA-1 and BA-2. They chose to add to the driveway width minimum clear-width dimensions of 10 feet for a residential driveway and 20 feet for a commercial driveway to keep the pavement required to a minimum while still making sure that there is sufficient clearance for vehicle mirrors and door swing. They also created two-tiers for the percentage of compact parking spaces to allow for more compact spaces in larger parking lots. In lots with 5 to 19 spaces, 20% of the spaces can be compact, and in lots with 20+ spaces, 30% of the spaces can be compact.

The Subcommittee received letters from Ellen Katz, Susan Murphy, Robert Bell and Finn McSweeney. They opened the meeting up for attendees that wanted to speak and heard from the following people.

- Susan Murphy of 24 Poplar Street, who is on the Melrose Energy Commission, spoke about how incentives are the only way for municipalities to encourage changes in energy efficiency and energy sourcing. It will be harder to retrofit a building built today in ten years to meet net zero standards. Using an existing certification like LEED, net-zero or passive house could provide a presumption of community benefits. Energy analysis can be captured in new buildings to understand the benefits.
- Ellen Katz of 70 Line Street, who is on the Melrose Energy Commission, was glad that some of her recommendations were incorporated into the amendment. She wondered if restoration of bodies of water should be included. Other measures besides cost should be taken into consideration like improved environmental measures.
- Finn McSweeney of 160 W Wyoming Avenue spoke about how building in Melrose, in a transit-oriented community, is in and of itself an impactful way of reducing our carbon footprint.

The restoration of bodies of water would be covered by the existing language about natural restoration.

The Subcommittee will meet again to review another draft of the amendment before discussing the proposal with the full Board.

NEXT MEETING

The Zoning Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for October 15, 2020 at 7:30pm.
The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.