

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, March 22, 2021
7:30 PM
Remote Meeting

PRESENT: Beth Delahaij, 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 Battaglia, Senior Planner & Lori Massa, Planning Coordinator

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM by Ms. DeSouza-Ward.

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 of the Melrose Planning Board 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, February 22, 2021

Mr. Mercado made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members present by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Planning Board Special Meeting, March 8, 2021

Mr. Mercado made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. King seconded the motion. All members present by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Design Review Subcommittee Meeting, February 11, 2021

Mr. Mercado made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members present by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Zoning Subcommittee Meeting, March 8, 2021

Mr. Welch made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Mercado seconded the motion. All members present by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Ms. Petrillo appeared at the meeting.

SLOPE PROTECTION SPECIAL PERMIT

Case 20-003, 22 Montvale Street, Armando Plato (request to continue to April 26, 2021)

This case has been continued several times. It has taken the development team some time to generate revised engineering plans and although the team has said that they finished the plans, they did not submit them in time for this meeting. The members discussed that if the development team is not ready to present at the April meeting they should withdraw their application and reapply when they are ready.

Mr. Sampson made a motion to continue the case to April 26, 2021. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members present by roll call voted in favor of the continuance. None were opposed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW & AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPECIAL PERMIT

Case 20-004, 40 Vine Street, 39 Tappan Street LLC (continued public hearing)

Ms. Delahaij is not able to vote on the case because she missed the first hearing.

The Engineering Department reviewed the revised materials and found them to be satisfactory.

Attorney McAvoy, Michael Carter, Civil Engineer, Jim McClutchy, Architect, Daniel Galvin, Developer, Edward Mitchell, and Kevin Carter, appeared to present the case.

Mr. Carter, described the changes to the site. They are proposing granite curbing in response to the concern about cars driving onto neighboring properties. They have done a test to determine the ground water depth and since it is higher than anticipated they moved the building forward and elevated it 17 inches. This caused the ramp to access the front door to be more substantial. There will be landscaping along the side of the building. The previous version of the site plan had the driveway next to the building. There will be 20 hemlock trees along the fence. The utilities will be coming in from a different point on the site than was originally proposed. The driveway aisle width was increased to 20 feet.

The Planning Board asked questions and discussed the following about the site. The curbing will be 5 inches not a full curb height reveal for a granite curb. The curb will be concrete. The caliper of the trees will be 2.5 to 3.5 inches. The back out space will still be tight and cars may hit the fence. They discussed the lighting and the ramp design and suggested that they should be more residential in appearance. The ramp location in terms of prominence, access and location directly in front of a unit is unfortunate. Mr. Carter said that the water table is the issue that caused the building to need to be elevated. As proposed the building is as low as possible. Members asked if the rear entrance could suffice for handicapped access. Another idea was to build a berm at the front of the property so that the ramp is integrated into the landscape.

The Board also asked questions and discussed the following about the building. The reason that they would construct a basement would be for bicycle and tenant storage. They discussed if constructing half of a basement would work so that the front of the building would not have to be elevated. Another ideas were that there may be a better solution for bicycle storage and the units are relatively large and may not need storage in the basement. They could go back to no basement but the bike storage would be moved outside at the corner of the building. The bike storage room in the basement would be about the same size as the outside space. Ms. Gaffey said that the original plan submitted to the Board did have a basement. The team was referencing a previous plan that was not submitted as part of the application.

Mr. Galvin said that it is financially difficult to keep revising the plans. Members said that the design process is iterative and it takes versions of plans to get to the finished product.

They discussed how some aspects of the site would function. There is no irrigation shown. They reviewed the stormwater management plan and the driveway slope. The driveway slopes towards the street. They graded it this way to balance the stormwater in the same way that it flows today. Members felt that it would be a good investment to install vehicle charging stations. Mr. Carter said that the spaces will be assigned, which may make it difficult. At the last meeting Mr. Galvin was amenable to installing this infrastructure during the construction. Deliveries to the building will be to the front door. A delivery vehicle driving to the back would have a difficult time getting out. Because this is the Rail Corridor Overlay District there are standards for landscaping. There should be a ten-foot buffer with six-foot tall shrubs when a site abuts a residential district. Attorney McAvoy said that he will review regulation. The zoning determination letter references the plan with the driveway on the other side and does not address the design standards. The utility plan caused the driveway to be flipped to the other side of the lot.

Mr. McClutchy was filling in for the architect and he was asked to explain how the height of the building changed with this revised proposal. He said that they lowered the height of the building so that it would be the same overall height as before even with raising the building 17 inches. They reduced the decking height of the structure or the amount of structure between the floors. The building height will be the same from grade as originally presented and the floor to ceiling heights will be the same at 7.5 feet.

The Board commented on the façade on the left side of the building and the front windows for the first floor units at the last hearing. The revised plan has bay projections on both sides on both sides of the building. The first floor front windows changed from sliders to two-over-two windows. The Board asked for the architect to explain the other changes to the building but the team was not prepared to fill this request.

The Board opened the meeting up for people who would like to speak. No one appeared to speak. They left the hearing open.

The Board asked in the past for the specifications of the condensing units on roof and screening, changes to the articulation and general massing of the building, and signage and lighting plans. A new request was to get more information about the buffer requirement. The Board would recommend more screening but would be willing to decrease the ten-foot requirement. They

would be less compliant with moving the building and having parking in the buffer area. They asked if Mr. Galvin had reached out the neighbor to the left. He spoke with the abutter on this side and he said that she was concerned about dust and noise. She was also concerned about the height of the building and shadow. She was not sure that the property lines were accurate.

Members felt that changing the front façade to include two-over-two windows on the ground floor was a good move to make the building look more residential. The plans should not revert back to the original façade. The pattern and the vertical panels on the elevations need to be detailed. The material look like EIFS. They requested a narrative of the changes so that they are easier to follow.

Mr. Galvin said that the condenser units will be in the middle of the roof. He felt that a screen around them would be seen more than the equipment itself. The request was for information on what would be on the roof. The condenser units will be 30 inches in length, width and height. The Board requested the specifications of the units to know the SEER rating.

Mr. Sampson made a motion to continue the case to April 26, 2021. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor of the continuance. None were opposed.

Documents: Architectural Plans dated 3/2/2021
Updated Civil Plan dated 3/12/2021
Response to DPW letter dated 3/16/2021

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Case 20-002, 138 Main Street, Metro Credit Union

Attorney Tolley requested to withdraw the case without prejudice. They withdrew their application before the Zoning Board of Appeals because it appeared that they would not get a favorable vote.

Mr. Mercado made a motion to approve the request to withdraw the case without prejudice. Mr. Sadowski seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Document: Email from Attorney Tolley

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Case 21-010, 34 & 45-55 Summit Avenue, North Shore Residential Development (April 14, 2021)

The Board was unable to provide a recommendation on the request with the information given. They found that the use of the property for one or more two-family dwellings may be an acceptable use, but members had concerns about numerous aspects of the proposal that are not addressed by the current plans. In particular, the Planning Board had concerns about the length and accessibility of the street, the size of the lots and the slope of the land, the large footprints and sizes of the houses, and other site considerations. The Planning Board was of the opinion

that the use of the property for two-family dwellings can only be fully assessed following the necessary subdivision, site plan review and slope protection special permit processes.

Mr. Sampson made a motion to send the Board of Appeals a letter with this information. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant materials for Case 21-010

Case 21-005, 62 Slayton Road, Jeffrey Reed (April 28, 2021)

The Planning Board had no objection to this application. It did not appear that the proposed addition would negatively impact neighbors. The second floor addition had been designed to respect the form of the house. It does not increase the footprint of the structure and is below the maximum height allowed.

Mr. Sadowski made a motion to send the Board of Appeals a letter with this information. Mr. Sampson seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant materials for Case 21-005

Case 21-006, 330 West Emerson Street, Paul Casey (April 28, 2021)

The Planning Board had no objection to this application. They believed that this case involves 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. Mercado made a motion to send the Board of Appeals a letter of no objection. Mr. Sampson seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant materials for Case 21-006

Case 21-007, 1 Birch Hill Road, Joseph Sullivan (April 28, 2021)

The Planning Board had no objection to this application. They found that the addition matched the character of the structure. They believed that this case involves 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. They thought that it will be particularly important for this proposal to understand if the closest abutter to the north has concerns about the impact of the addition.

Mr. Sadowski made a motion to send the Board of Appeals a letter with this information. Mr. Mercado seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant materials for Case 21-007

Case 21-008, 25 Oakland Street, Caroline Himamshu (April 28, 2021)

The Board recommend approving the request. The proposed portico will be no closer to the front lot line than the existing landing.

Mr. Sadowski made a motion to send the Board of Appeals a letter with this information. Mr. Sampson seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant materials for Case 21-008

OTHER

Design Review Subcommittee Update, 419-429 Main Street

Ms. Morelli gave an update on the review of the items that were constructed at 419-429 Main Street that do not conform to the Site Plan approved plans.

The last issue that the Subcommittee discussed was the location of the trash storage since the dumpster area was not built behind the building. The development team insisted on it being in the alley. The Subcommittee will require that they submit a detailed waste management plan that includes that the trash will be picked up from the rear of the building in the parking lot. They will be required to check back in six months. The sides of the tote area in the alley will be screened. Members felt that the trash storage affects everyone around them and applicants should do a better job of having as it as an integral part of the building's design.

They discussed some of the changes to the open space and landscape plant. The meaningless landscape that was on the sides of the building was consolidated in the back. The revised plan widens the depth of the landscaped bed. The landscaping will screen the ramp in the rear.

Zoning Update

The incentive and parking standards zoning amendment was filed with the City Council. They will be coordinating with the Planning Board for a joint public hearing date. Staff will send notices to all of the property owns in the affected area. April 15 or April 29 are possible dates for the hearing that will work for the Planning Board members.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. DeSouza-Ward nominated Mr. Sampson to be Chair of the Planning Board. Ms. DeSouza-Ward offered to be Clerk. Mr. Mercado seconded the nominations. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Mr. Sampson, as Chair, appointed the subcommittee members.

Ms. Morelli will be Chair of the Design Review Subcommittee. Mr. King requested to change to the Design Review Subcommittee. Mr. King, Mr. Welch, Mr. Mercado and Mr. Sadowaski will be members of this subcommittee.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward will be Chair of the Zoning Subcommittee. Ms. Delahaij, Ms. Petrillo and Mr. Sampson and will be members of this subcommittee.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Planning Board is scheduled for Monday, April 26, 2021. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.