

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, May 24, 2021
7:30 PM
Remote Meeting**

PRESENT: Beth Delahaij, Anne DeSouza Ward, Paul King, Carla Morelli, Sharon Petrillo, Greg Sampson & Jack Welch

ABSENT: Robert Mercado & John Sadowski

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 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 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, April 26, 2021

Ms. DeSouza Ward 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 Joint Public Hearing, April 29, 2021

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

Zoning Subcommittee Meeting, May 18, 2021

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. Mr. Welch abstained. All other members present by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW & AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPECIAL PERMIT

Case 21-001, 52 West Emerson Street, 52 West Emerson Street LLC c/o Frank Barbosa
Jason Jarvis, Architect, Rick Salvo, Civil Engineer, Jack Lister, and Kevin Carter appeared to present the case. In October of 2020 the ZBA granted a special permit to establish 6 units with one affordable unit, and variances for lot area, frontage/lot width, number of stories and driveway width. Mr. Salvo explained the site conditions. The building's slab will be above the ground water table. They will consider the historic high water table when digging a test pit to make sure that they understand the ground water level. The soil here will drain well. With only six units in the building they may not need an accessible unit; however, one of the units can be adaptable as there is enough space in the entryway and bathroom for a wheelchair. Mr. Jarvis explained the building layout and said that there will be a roof deck that will be an amenity for the upper floor units.

The Board discussed the proposed ramp and how it appeared difficult to use by wheelchair. The team said that the 1:12 ramp slope and landing areas meet the required standards. Board members felt that it may meet the requirements but practically it will be difficult to use and it is very long at 74 feet. They questioned why a ramp is proposed. The team said that there is no room for an elevator in the building. There could be an automatic door opener to make it easier to enter the building. An accessible space could be located in the front yard for easier access. Members said that they would have to see how this would work on a plan because generally it is discouraged.

The Board also discussed:

- There is no space for trash storage. The team said that it will be inside the building in totes but they are not on the floorplan. The plans need to include the space for the totes and include recycling. A member said that trash compactors may be a good fit for this project.
- The parking layout looks difficult to maneuver.
- The trim on the existing building is interesting and should be salvaged. It is hard to see this old building be demolished. The team said it is up to the owner to see how carefully they can remove the parts of the building.
- There will be six condensers on the roof. They need to submit the specifications.
- They should explore MassSave incentives and look at the HERS rating of the building.
- Visitors can park on the street, which is allowed on one side, and in the nearby municipal lot.
- The garage parking spaces will be wired for electric charging stations with likely level 1 charging.
- Three of the parking spaces should be pavers or banked in another way and not constructed as proposed.

The Board opened the hearing up for public comment. Scott Noddin of 39-41 Winthrop Street said that there a huge ground water and flooding issue in the neighborhood. The sump pump in his building feeds into a drywell that does not drain and the water is in a continuous loop. This project will make the flood issue worse because there will be nowhere for the water to go. A test well was done prior to the construction of his building too but it did not help to avoid this problem. His basement flooded after two months of living there. Finn McSweeney of 160 W

Wyoming Avenue said that this development is in a central location and easily accessible bicycle storage is important to facilitate bike use. Richard Curl of 155 Myrtle Street submitted a letter with drainage and aesthetic concerns and also spoke during the meeting to say that the groundwater is very close to the surface. Joe Cramer of 56 W Emerson Street said that the plan at the ZBA meeting had trees lining the driveway, which the current plan excludes. Also, his third floor tenant will be disturbed by the noise of the rooftop A/C units. The Board received a letter about drainage concerns from the Kesak Group at 42-44 West Emerson Street.

Mr. Salvo said there is a difference between the observed water table and the historic water table. They would use the historic high water table marker. Instead of putting condensers on the roof they could put them on the low side of the retaining wall near the multifamily unit building.

Mr. Welch made a motion to continue the hearing to July 26, 2021. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor of the continuance. None were opposed.

Documents: Application materials for Case 21-001
Architectural Plans dated April 9, 2021
Civil Plans dated March 8, 2021
Construction Management Plan
Drainage Report
Executive Summary
Transportation Management Plan
DPW Review

SITE PLAN REVIEW & AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPECIAL PERMIT

Case 20-004, 40 Vine Street, 39 Tappan Street LLC

There were not enough Board members present to vote on the case. Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to continue the case to June 28, 2021. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor of the continuance. None were opposed.

ZONING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Incentive Zoning Amendment: Report to the City Council

Ms. Gaffey reviewed the list of public comments received after the public hearing and the proposed changes to the zoning ordinance. Members found that this tool is a good compromise that will encourage sustainable housing and be usable. It balances the competing interests in Melrose. The State is working on changing the stretch code which will address development city-wide and the City is working on a Net Zero Plan that will include future action on sustainable development. The technology for such things as heating and cooling are also evolving.

The Historic District Commission and zoning are two independent authorities; however, the Emerson and Main Street area, which is partially in the historic district, was removed from the zoning amendment and will be evaluated separately in the future.

The Board received a letter from a member of the public about the loading requirements. The report to the City Council will include an explanation about why the loading section is in the amendment.

Ms. DeSousa-Ward made a motion to send the City Council a report with the proposed changes to the amendment as discussed. Mr. King seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Proposed Zoning Amendment May 24, 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Board of Appeals Public Hearing on June 9, 2021:

Case 21-014, 14 Hawes Avenue, M. Razvan & Tina Teodorescu

Ms. Morelli made a motion to send a letter to the Board of Appeals stating that they had no objection to the proposal. Ms. DeSouza Ward seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Application materials for Case 21-014

Case 21-015, 27 Temple Street, Joseph H. & Robin L. Higgins

The Board did not support the application and recommended denying the variances. Members did not see any justification for avoiding the slope protection special permit. They felt that the majority of the land is not buildable without substantial land alteration and the resulting variances are substantial.

Mr. King made a motion to send a recommendation letter to deny the Board of Appeals to deny the variances. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members by roll call voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Application materials for Case 21-015

Case 21-016, 735 Newburyport Turnpike, Pugh Management, LLC

The Planning Board recommended that the Board of Appeals seek additional information on why the thirty-foot building height dimension could not be accommodated. Members were not necessarily opposed to the proposed height; however, there was no justification in the application materials for the need for the variance.

The Planning Board had no objection to the entrance driveway variance. Although large, the driveway seems reasonable to them to allow trucks to enter and not have to cross into the travel lane of oncoming traffic. A crosswalk will be installed across the driveway for pedestrian safety.

Members recommended denying the open space variance. There appeared to be an excessive number of parking spaces and reducing the number of spaces would free up space for more landscaping on the site to satisfy the open space requirement.

The Planning Board recently received a site plan approval application for this proposal and it will be heard at the June meeting.

Ms. DeSouza Ward 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: Application materials for Case 21-016

OTHER

Tripartite Agreement & Covenants for Swains Pond Ave Subdivision

The land that is part of the Swains Pond Avenue/Hillside Park subdivision is being transferred from recorded land to registered land. The Applicants are seeking clarification from the Planning Board that the Board agrees with City Engineering Department on the schedule of values that will be in the Tripartite Agreement between the Applicant, the Bank and the City. The value is the amount of the bond available if the developer does not do the work. The Engineering Department increased some numbers proposed by the applicant. The final value is \$5,488,090. Once the transfer of land is complete the agreement will come back before the Planning Board to sign it. The Planning Board was comfortable with the Engineering Department's proposed values. It is within the Engineering Department's best interest to appropriately cover the cost of the work since they would have to do the work if the Applicant does not finish the job.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Planning Board is scheduled for Monday, June 28, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.