

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, July 26, 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 and City Planner, Emma Battaglia, Senior Planner & Lori Massa, Planning Coordinator

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM by Mr. Sampson.

Pursuant to An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency signed by Governor Baker on June 16, 2021, this meeting was be conducted via remote participation. Specific information 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 could be found on the City of Melrose's website, at www.cityofmelrose.org. 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, or in the event that we are unable to do so, they would be post on the mmtv3.org website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting. A link was also available on www.cityofmelrose.org.

Meeting access information was found at the following link: www.cityofmelrose.org/remote-meetings.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, May 24, 2021

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor, except Mr. Sadowski and Mr. Mercado who abstained. None were opposed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Case 21-003, 373 Pleasant Street, Boghos Properties, LLC

Raymond Boghos, developer, Giovanni Fodera, Engineer, and Venket Holi, Architect, appeared to present the case.

Mr. Boghos explained how they came up with the plan. Townhouses are a unique housing type in Melrose that will provide a different housing option for families. They will provide an

affordable unit and it will have three bedrooms which is unusual and desired for an affordable unit. Webster Willows, the multi-residential unit building next door, is at a higher elevation and this building is less than half of its height considering the grade difference.

Ms. Battaglia spoke with the Conservation Agent and the Conservation Commission will want to review the project; however, the agent said that since the culvert does not daylight near the property there will be less restrictions than there otherwise would be. The local wetland regulations has a review requirement and no building is allowed within 20 feet of the wetland.

Members asked about details of the site, building and operations. A member asked how much distance there is between the building and the Webster Willows building. The distance is 23 feet 7 inches from the cantilever to the building. There are no roof decks proposed. The cantilever has 9 feet of clearance. Mr. Boghos found a disposal company with a trash truck that has a height of 8 feet. Members were concerned about deliver trucks hitting the cantilevered portion of the building. Mr. Boghos said that trucks should not go down the driveway. There could be a clearance sign or a hanging bar to alert drivers of the building's height. There is on-street parking across the street. They will add a trash enclosure with a pad and totes at the end of the driveway and a truck will drive to the end of the driveway and pick up the trash. They will need more detail and an auto-turn analysis to make sure that the trash pickup will work. The units are 2,500 sf with 2,024 sf of livable space excluding the garage.

Mr. Mercado made a motion to open the hearing for public comment. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Mr. Gaffey read Councilor of Ward 5 MacMaster's letter and noted the other letters that the Board received including from Antonio Furtado, Catherine Carrabis, Chris Morgan, James Grafton, Jr., Kathleen Cowell, Madeline and Robert Bernard, Marianne D'Angelo, Ronald Graf and Mark Borghetti all of 391 Pleasant Street.

Chris Morgan, Robin Gohil, Mark Borghetti, Kathleen Cowell, and Vajira Weerasekara all of 391 Pleasant Street had the following comments and concerns:

- The building is too large for the site and they are seeking too many code violations.
- There are many single-family homes on Pleasant Street that will be redeveloped in this way if this project is allowed.
- Guest parking should be provided.
- More parking will be needed for three-bedrooms.
- Trash pickup times should be limited to be considerate of the neighborhood.
- The driveway is 10 feet away from abutters' units and there is no vegetative buffer.
- The driveway should switch to the other side of the lot to abut that neighbor's driveway.
- There is an MBTA bus stop at the location of the proposed driveway.
- All of the rooms in some of the units in Webster Willows face this building. It will be so close and limit light and air flow.
- There will be a lot of deliveries to the site and they will use the Webster Willows' parking lot.

- The demolition may impact Webster Willows' concrete garage structure because it is so close.
- There will be light pollution from the development.

Finn McSweeney of 160 W Wyoming Avenue spoke in support. He said that this is a rare and desired type of development that is appropriate for families and close to transit in the UR-C district. Much of the Webster Willows lot is a parking lot. The proposed development has no outdoor parking. It could include more sustainable features. There should not be a two car parking requirement per unit in this district.

Mr. Boghos said that the other single-family lots on the street are smaller than the subject property and therefore cannot support a building of this size. If the driveway is on the other side the building will be closer to Webster Willows. He is not concerned about negatively impacting the structure of Webster Willows during demolition. Exterior lights on the left side of the project will be under the cantilever and will shine down. The lights all meet the dark sky initiative.

The Planning Board discussed the following:

- Mr. Sampson said that if the ZBA does not grant the variances the project would need to come back to the Planning Board for approval. Members felt that some of the variances should be reevaluated.
- The MBTA bus stop movement needs to be addressed.
- Engineering has provided comments and the Applicant needs to respond.
- This project is a series of tradeoffs.
- The landscaping in the front and back yards, walkways and connections, mailbox and address number locations, and deliveries needs to be considered and details should be provided to the Board.
- The front yard strip is under-planted. The planting could be lower, colorful, and denser. There are no street trees here.
- The front door leads into a garage but at least it provides the appearance of a front door to the building.
- Mr. Boghos will listen to the Webster Willows residents to see if they would like a fence on top of the retaining wall or not. They may not want it because it will shade their sunlight.
- Could the driveway be increased to 20 feet? They are working on a revised plan that eliminates the driveway and FAR variances.
- It will be a benefit for the City to have large, multi-family ownership units.
- The downspouts will go through the building and go into the infiltration system. The architectural plans show the downspouts on the outside of the building.
- There will be tankless hotwater system that also heats the air efficiently. They were asked to look into solar but it will add height. They will do due diligence to consider possibility of solar panels.
- They did two test pits and found well-draining soil. They will have to raise the building 8 inches because of the ground water level.
- How will they support the retaining wall being so close to the abutting property? The stormwater system will be raised up 3 inches. The footing of the retaining wall will be

designed by a structural engineer. It will not interfere with the recharge system. The building will be slab on grade. They should look at the relationship between the foundation and the recharge system.

- Will the trees interfere with the snow storage? There is a large area for snow storage but they need to designate the snow storage area away from the trees.

Mr. Mercado made a motion to continue the public hearing to August 23, 2021. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Application Materials for Case 21-003

Case 21-001, 52 West Emerson Street, 52 West Emerson Street, LLC c/o Frank Barboza
Rick Salvo, Engineer, and Frank Barboza, Applicant, appeared to present updates to the case materials. Drainage in the area was of great concern at the last hearing on May 24, 2021. Mr. Salvo said that they received late comments from the DPW and have not yet had a chance to respond. They are working on a landscape easement with the abutter at 42-44 West Emerson Street. They did test pits on June 10 to look at the seasonal high water table. They had survey equipment there to get an exact depth. There is a loamy sand and sandy soils which drain well. There are ground water, not surface water, issues for the property behind on Winthrop Street. They propose to infiltrate some of the roof water at the front of the site. The revised infiltration system in the back has a shallower profile. The infiltration systems will hold the 100-year storm event. They reconfigured the parking layout and there will be more green space on the site. The changes to the architectural plans include removal of the exterior ramp and screening of the mechanical equipment.

The Board discussed the follow issues.

With the plants proposed in the back yard there is no space for snow storage. The plants can be shifted back to make room for snow. The mature trees on the site have already been removed.

What assurance will there be that the accessibility lift will be installed in the future? The Applicant said that it can be put into the condominium documents. Submission of the condominium documents with this language can be a condition of approval. The Board wanted to understand how the condominium association would have the money to do this work in the early stages of the association.

Trash totes will be pulled out to be picked up in the driveway. There is not enough space on the plan to pull out the totes and having them stacked in two rows will not be convenient. There will need to be space in between the totes to access them. This detail will need to be looked at during the Design Review Subcommittee meeting. The trash truck will have to back into the site to pick up the totes.

Parking space 6 will be difficult to maneuver into and out of. The ZBA conditioned that the Applicant make best efforts to reduce the number of parking spaces from the 12 originally proposed. Mr. Salvo said that they could eliminate a space and make one of the spaces pervious pavers. Some members said that it would be helpful to have a visitors' parking space on site;

however, the municipal lot is close to and visible from this property where visitors could park. The parking spaces could be uncoupled with the cost of the units so that if people have less cars they pay less.

The addition of the landscape easement for the land to the back of the site adds to the open space but this land will not be usable for the residents as it will often be under water. Mr. Salvo is hoping that the groundwater issues for the property on Winthrop Street will be addressed and the back lot will not always be flooded. The Board requested that there be an alternative plant to grass that will thrive in wet conditions.

The pavement will not be marked with arrows. The arrows are on the plan to show that there will be two-way traffic in the driveway.

The Applicant needs to respond to the Engineering Department's comments.

No one from the public appeared to speak.

Mr. Welch made a motion to continue the public hearing to August 23, 2021. Ms. DeSouza Ward seconded the motion. None were opposed. All members present voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Summary of Revisions
 Civil Plans, Revised 7/26/21
 Architectural Plans, Revised 7/23/21
 Drainage Report, Revised 6/30/21
 DPW Review, Revised 7/26/21
 Response to DPW review, dated 7/26/21

Case 21-002, 735 Newburyport Turnpike, John T. Pugh II

John Pugh, Applicant, Jordan Loffredo and Doug Landry, Civil Engineers, Michael Rosen, Attorney, and Michael Hunton, Landscape Architect, appeared to present updates to the application materials. The case was continued from the June 28, 2021 hearing.

The only change to the plan which is the introduction of pervious asphalt for some of the parking spaces along Newburyport Turnpike. They updated the Operations and Maintenance Plan to include maintaining the pervious pavement. Some members felt that despite the ZBA granting a variance for open space, they would rather the site meet the open space requirement over providing parking. Other members felt that providing the permeable pavement is a good compromise.

Ms. Loffredo requested edits to the proposed conditions. The DOT, not the City, would do the grant of location for the electrical conduit in the right of way because DOT owns the road. Since this is the case, condition 5 is not be needed. Trees will be on the private property and do not need DOT approval so condition 12 can remain as proposed. Regarding condition 16, they asked

that the traffic monitoring be for one-week of monitoring six months after opening. Otherwise, the other conditions were acceptable to the applicants.

The Board found the timing of the traffic monitoring proposed to be acceptable with the addition that the timing must be coordinated with the City to ensure that it is not impacted by an off-peak time of year. If the traffic is not consistent with the traffic reports generated they would come back and offer mitigation or make a change in the business's operation. The condition should include this language.

No one from the public appeared to speak.

Ms. Gaffey reviewed the proposed condition.

Mr. Mercado made a motion to approve the Site Plan with the conditions as amended during the hearing. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. By roll call, all were in favor except that Ms. Petrillo abstained because she missed the first public hearing for the case. None were opposed.

Documents: Plan Set, Revised 7/22/21

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Board of Appeals Public Hearing on August 11, 2021:

Case 21-021, 1023 Main Street, Cara Drew

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to send the Board of Appeals a letter stating that they took no position on the application but pointing out that this is a corner lot and the yards parallel to Pearl Street act as side yards. They found 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 seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant materials for Case 21-021

NEXT MEETING

Planning Board Meeting, Monday, August 23, 2021

The meeting adjourned at 10:17 pm.