

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Annual Meeting
Monday, March 28, 2022
7:30 PM
Remote Meeting

PRESENT: Tim Bailey, Beth Delahaij, Anne DeSouza Ward, Brian Gregory, Paul King, Robert Mercado, Greg Sampson & Jack Welch

ABSENT: Carla Morelli

STAFF PRESENT: Denise Gaffey, Director and City Planner, Lori Massa, Senior Planner & Maya Noviski, Assistant Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 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/remotemeetings.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, February 28, 2022

Board Members had no comments or adjustments to previous minutes. Mr. King made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Mercado seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Case 22-001, 148 Myrtle St., Brown Dog Properties, LLC

Robert Bell, Attorney, appeared on behalf of the Applicants to ask for a continuance. Attorney Bell noted that the Applicants did not submit the supplemental materials the Board requested during last month's meeting with sufficient time for review.

No public comment or testimony was taken at the meeting. Mr. Sampson noted that the new materials will be posted online and the Planning Board received copies of the written public comments that were submitted.

Mr. Welch made a motion to accept a continuance and hear this case on April 25, 2022. Mr. Gregory seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. None were opposed and none abstained.

OTHER

Net Zero Action Plan

Martha Grover, Sustainability Manager for the City of Melrose, appeared to present the City's recently completed Net Zero Action Plan. Ms. Gaffey began by introducing Ms. Grover and explained that she had been working on this plan throughout the pandemic and is interested in receiving feedback from the community. Ms. Gaffey noted that many action items in this plan overlap with the Planning Board's activities and complement action items in the recently approved Housing Production Plan. Ms. Grover continued with her presentation explaining that this plan was created with the help of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. Ms. Grover outlined how the plan seeks to move the City towards net zero emissions by making homes and buildings as efficient as possible; electrifying residential heating/cooling and cooking systems; electrifying transportation; making walking, biking and public transportation as easy as possible; and greening the grid.

Ms. Grover noted that the plan presents roadmap milestones and midterm goals for 2030 and 2050, and for every goal there are action steps and suggested strategies, which are iterative and adaptable. She made sure to highlight several important policy areas that may be of particular interest to the Planning Board. These include incentivizing energy efficiency and renewable energy in new construction and major renovations, adopting zero emission mobility zoning measures, supporting transportation oriented development, adopting efficient use of parking spaces, and reducing single occupancy vehicles. Ms. Grover concluded by explaining that she hopes that this plan can act as a guide to the Planning Board as they consider new policy measures and when reviewing new projects.

Once Ms. Grover finished her presentation, Ms. DeSouza Ward asked for clarification around the building design standards promoted in the plan. Ms. Grover explained that the City is currently working with Malden and Medford to develop green design guidelines specifically around energy use and sustainable building features. Ms. Gaffey expanded on this by adding that the Planning Board already started on this work with creating incentive zoning ordinance last year around sustainable design standards so having this plan will be a nice complement to the work that has been started.

Mr. Welch commented on two things he felt the City could do to help achieve the goals outlined in the plan were changing the Building Code, specifically around solar energy, and the enforcement of traffic laws to prioritize pedestrian and cyclists' safety to allow for this form of transportation to be more feasible. No other questions or comments were raised. Ms. Grover mentioned that there will be links on the City's website with more information and she will be releasing the plan to the public in April.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Board of Appeals Public Hearing on April 13, 2022:

Case 22-002, 68 Granite Street, Michael Carter

The Board found that due to the uniqueness of the grade of this property and existing massing of the house they were not opposed to a variance for the dormer. They discussed that while they usually are protective of the dormer regulations, they felt that this case was a unique situation. Additionally, it was noted that the lot is very deep and the dormer's proposed placement will leave the streetscape unaffected, which garnered further support. A motion was made by Mr. Welch and was seconded by Ms. DeSouza Ward to send this recommendation. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant Materials for Case 22-002

Case 22-004, 69 Glendale Ave, Stephanie Lawson

The Board took a neutral position on the proposed addition. They noted that this addition is consistent with the neighborhood and that the dimensional requirements for corner lots can be challenging. The Board felt that the proposed encroachment on the front yard setback is minor. Mr. Gregory made a motion to send a neutral letter and Ms. DeSouza Ward seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant Materials for Case 22-004

Case 22-005, 61 Tappan Street, Joseph Coelho

The Board did not find that the proposal would be detrimental and did not have any issues with the proposed addition. Mr. Welch made a motion to send a neutral letter of recommendation for the case. Mr. Mercado seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant Materials for Case 22-005

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Mercado made a motion to nominate Mr. Sampson as Planning Board Chair and Ms. DeSouza Ward as Clerk. All members voted in favor. None were opposed and none abstained.

Mr. Sampson, as Chair, reappointed the subcommittee members - Ms. Morelli as Chair of the Design Review Subcommittee and Ms. DeSouza Ward as Chair of the Zoning Subcommittee.

Mr. King, Mr. Welch, and Mr. Bailey will be members of the Design Review Subcommittee. Ms. Delahaij, Mr. Gregory and Mr. Sampson and will be members of the Zoning Subcommittee.

Mr. Mercado announced that he is stepped down as a Planning Board member and this will be his last meeting. The members thanked him for his twenty years of service.

NEXT MEETING

The next Zoning Subcommittee is scheduled for Wednesday, April 6, 2022. The next regular meeting of the Planning Board is scheduled for Monday, April 25, 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm.