

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, July 25, 2022
7:30 PM
Remote Meeting

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

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Denise Gaffey, Director & City Planner, & Lori Massa, Senior Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM by Mr. Sampson.

Pursuant to An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations, signed into law by Governor Baker on July 16, 2022, 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:
<https://www.cityofmelrose.org/remote-meetings>

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, June 27, 2022

Board Members had no comments or adjustments to the minutes. Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

SLOPE PROTECTION SPECIAL PERMIT

Case 22-005, 27 Temple Street, Joseph H. & Robin L. Higgins

Patrick McAvoy, Attorney, appeared before the Board to request a continuance to the August 22, 2022, hearing. He explained that the Applicant was waiting for a set of renderings that were not yet complete and the Applicant was not ready to present their case to the Board.

Mr. Welch made a motion to approve a continuance to the August 22, 2022, meeting. Mr. King seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of a continuance. None were opposed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW & SPECIAL PERMIT

Case 22-003, 14 Chipman Ave., Waypoint Development (continued public hearing)

David Lucas, Attorney, began by noting that since the May hearing, the Applicant updated the architectural plans to incorporate the Board's requested changes, which included improving handicap access for the VFW members, marking on-site tree preservation, and selecting shade tolerant plantings for the walkway in between the Franklin St. project and this development.

William Lee, Architect, further elaborated on the plans' design updates. Lighting fixtures on-site and on the building were selected; the building will have a gooseneck style, wall mounted sconce with a dark metallic finish, pointed at the three signs on the building's façade to minimize light spillage. The signs will have raised metallic lettering and be placed above the main entrance conveying the building's address, adjacent to the main entrance symbolizing the VFW member space, and over the retail entrance on Marvin Rd.

Fencing for the walkway in between Franklin St. and this project, and outdoor bike racks that are safe and easy to use, were also identified. Furthermore, the plans include a trash chute, which leads to the trash room, for residents to empty their waste without going through common spaces. An indoor bike room that residents can access through the lobby was designed for 34 bicycles. The plans also include improved building access for VFW Members. Members can follow a walkway connecting the upper parking lot to the main entrance off Chipman Ave., where there will be a wheelchair lift and stairs for members to access to the canteen. Alternatively, Members can walk around the building to the entrance in the pedestrian thruway on the side of the building.

Mr. Lee reviewed the updated renderings which showed the project from several additional perspectives and modeled the Franklin St. project in relation to this development. The requested rendering of the walkway between the Franklin St. project and this development displayed bike racks, fencing, and new plantings. Mr. Lee also reviewed the project's floor plan, the green features of the parking garage, and the building envelope, which were not altered.

One Member asked about the accessibility of the walkway between the Franklin St. project and this development with the changes in elevation from Chipman Ave. to Marvin Rd. Mr. Lee noted that ramps will be installed although due to the gentle slope of the walkway, handrails will not be needed. Attorney Lucas added that the walkway will be kept open to the public, but an easement will not be given to the City.

Ed Champy, Applicant, responded to Board Members' previous questions about EV chargers in the parking garage. He explained that about two thirds of the spaces can support chargers.

Elizabeth Peart, Traffic Engineer, began by reviewing the traffic study prepared for this project. Ms. Peart mentioned that she has lived in the Highlands for 25 years and is familiar with the neighborhood's traffic challenges. She explained that a team of consultants from Howard Stein Associates analyzed four key intersections in the project's immediate vicinity and evaluated

existing and forecasted traffic patterns. The predicted traffic sequences were derived using the expected number of additional trips caused by this project and other potential redevelopment in the area. Ms. Peart estimated that about 13,000 vehicles currently use the Franklin St. corridor per day and based on the team's analysis, this project will not add a significant number of daily vehicle trips nor will it change the existing level of service. She posited that the traffic generated from this development will be imperceptible to the neighborhood.

Ms. Peart expanded on the methodology used to gather data. She explained that to analyze pre-COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 traffic volume, the team compared the number of vehicular trips observed in 2017 from the Tremont St. and Melrose St. intersection, and then re-counted vehicular trips at that intersection, as well as the four key intersections near 14 Chipman Ave., in 2021. Results showed a 30% decrease in traffic volume from 2017 to 2021. To better account for post-COVID-19 traffic patterns, the team increased the 2021 numbers by 30%.

Attorney Lucas continued by reviewing a financial analysis submitted as a part of the Incentive Zoning Special Permit application. Calculations were derived by comparing the cost per unit with green incentives versus without green incentives. Results showed that by utilizing the Incentive Zoning and including 3 additional market rate units and one additional affordable unit, the value of the project's green infrastructure is about \$303,840. Attorney Lucas explained that the F.A.R for this development is below the maximum amount allowed through the Incentive Zoning Special Permit.

Denise Gaffey, City Planner, confirmed that the Applicant submitted updated renderings, landscaping plans, architectural plans, and a shadow study in response to the comments raised by Board Members during the last meeting. She also noted that there were no outstanding engineering issues that could not be included as conditions of approval.

Ms. Morelli noted that the updated renderings were evaluated to ensure that they depicted how this project and the Franklin St. development fit within the neighborhood context. Site development, landscaping, and tree preservation were changed to respond to the Board's comments, as well as the effect of the Franklin St. project's shadows on the proposed plantings in the walkway between the two developments. Ms. Morelli reiterated that the Applicant was urged to reconsider how VFW members would access the canteen from the parking lot, which they have done.

Ms. Morelli noted that she felt the Developer was extremely responsive to the Planning Board's comments and was thoughtful in their design. She mentioned that the Applicant was made aware of and understands that if approved, the project must be built according to the conditions of approval and approved plans.

Mr. Lee continued by reviewing the requested shadow study which displays the current and proposed impacts on surrounding neighbors during the four seasons at 9:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and

3:00 PM. Mr. Lee also reviewed a shadow study that showed the effect of a by-right redevelopment that did not utilize the Incentive Zoning Special Permit.

One Board Member commented on the weight of the proposed solid waste bins and asked about the solid waste removal plan to move the bins. Mr. Lee explained that they are proposing an automated machine to move the 2-yard trash bins. Mr. Champy clarified that the future waste management company responsible for servicing this property would remove the trash bins and come as needed, which could be twice per week depending on the amount of waste generated. The trash bins would be brought to the front of the building and loaded and unloaded in front of the retail space in the designated loading zone. Recycling would be similarly managed. Mr. Champy also noted that the trash room will be cooled and vented.

One Board Member asked if there would be trash compactors in the kitchen. Mr. Champy clarified that there will not be.

The Board received five letters in opposition and three letters in support of this project. Nine members of the public appeared before the Board including: Mike Nachsen of 20 Chipman Ave., Cathy Churchill of 43 Marvin Rd., Kori Mendonsa of 102 Richardson Rd., Councilwoman Manjula Karamcheti of 24 Botolph St., Finn McSweeney of 160 W. Wyoming Ave, Claire Reed of 115 Richardson Rd., Todd John of 42 Chipman Ave., David and Gail Norcross of 91 West Highland Ave., and Ted Craft of 76 West Highland Ave. Those in support felt that the development will be good for the neighborhood, will provide an improvement in landscaping, is aesthetically pleasing, promotes transit-oriented design and supports bicycle infrastructure. Those in opposition cited concerns over traffic, trash and rodent control during and after construction, shadow impact, and the design and neighborhood fit. Other comments included wanting the tenant for the retail space to add value to the community, wanting more green space and street trees, wanting the developer to repave Chipman Ave., and providing an alternate egress for the bicycle room.

Mr. Sampson responded to concerns about pest and rodent control. He noted that through the City's Health Ordinances and the contents of the project's construction management plan, there will be several procedures in place to address pest control during and after construction. Ms. Gaffey confirmed that the project's construction management plan outlines the steps the Applicant will take to control pests. These include having a licensed pest control contractor on board beginning at demolition through to construction to monitor for rodents, and the placement of tamper resistant bait boxes around the perimeter of the site. Ms. Gaffey also noted that the City's Health Department is very proactive about rodent control.

Mr. Sampson responded to concerns regarding trash operations by noting that the Planning Board's decisions include conditions that require the adherence to the proposed trash removal policies. He agreed that the project's streetscape funds should be used in this area.

Ms. Peart responded to comments regarding traffic volume and provided more context around the scope of the traffic study. The intersections observed for the report included Franklin St. and Greenwood St., Franklin St. and Marvin Rd., Franklin St. and Chipman Ave., and West Highland Ave. and Chipman Ave. She explained that these are the intersections closest to the site that will absorb and process new vehicle trips from the project. She also explained that although this project will add 40 new units, the project will only generate between 13-15 new vehicle trips during peak hours. She noted that this project will not change the neighborhood's existing traffic circulation. Mr. Sampson added that the Applicant has indicated that the units will be marketed as having limited parking to attract renters that do not rely on vehicular transportation.

Mr. Welch felt that the Developer should be conditioned to repave Chipman Ave. if the project is approved. Ms. Gaffey noted that the City imposes a standard condition stipulating that the Developer is responsible for fixing and repaving any destruction to the roadway caused by the construction, however they would not be required to repave the entire street. She added that the construction management plan outlines a construction vehicle route that requires all vehicles to stay on the major roadways that follow the existing truck route. If approved, the Applicant will have to adhere to the plans set forth and refrain from using other roadways for those vehicles.

Attorney Lucas responded to comments regarding the tenant for the retail space. He noted that while the Developer is unsure who will rent the space, it will be used for retail or professional services and open to the building's residents and the public. Attorney Lucas explained that the Developer owns a mixed-use building in Boston with a high-end salon and would be comfortable using this project's retail space in a similar fashion. Attorney Lucas also commented that the Applicant may come back to the Planning Board in the future for approval to remove two market rate units on the second floor and create a second story for the retail space.

Mr. Gregory echoed Ms. Morelli's comments noting that the plans are well thought out and the changes made between the May meeting and tonight are positive overall. Mr. Welch agreed that the Applicant covered all the issues that were raised during the last meeting.

Ms. Gaffey reviewed several of the 42 proposed conditions of approval. These include:

- The project is built according to the plans and any desired changes be brought before the Planning Board for review;
- The project meets Engineering standards and utility infrastructure before a building permit is issued;
- The Construction Management Plan is updated to include pedestrian safety measures during construction, hours of construction, and the placement of construction vehicles;
- The Developer will be responsible for paying for the Police detail during construction;
- The green building features presented to the Board and in the plan will be codified;
- There will be a mockup of the construction materials on the construction site before the building is constructed;
- A pedestrian warning sign will be installed at the garage entrance;
- There will be a contribution to the Streetscape Improvement Fund;

- The Developer will restore or improve the conditions of the sidewalks and roadways to pre-construction condition;
- There will be a Transportation Coordinator on-site;
- Parking will be unbundled from unit rents;
- Residents will be provided with MBTA passes for the first month of tenancy;
- The correct ratio of the affordable units to market rate units is met;
- The Owner will maintain all on-site amenities; and
- Lighting spillage will be minimized.

Mr. Gregory made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Mr. Welch made a motion to approve the Special Permit for Reduced Parking and the Incentive Zoning Special Permit. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all voted in favor. None were opposed.

Ms. Morelli made a motion to approve the Site Plan Review. Mr. King seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Application Materials, April 13, 2022
Letter from Inspectional Services, September 11, 2020
Architectural and Civil Plans, July 21, 2022
Construction Management Plan, September 13, 2021
Traffic Impact Study, July 2021
Green Building Report, March 18, 2022
Water Demand Information, January 18, 2022
Narrative of Community Benefits, March 18, 2022
Renderings, July 21, 2022
Shadow Study, June 7, 2022
Financial Analysis, July 25, 2022

Case 22-006, 681-697 Main St., Green Rise Homes, LLC

David Lucas, Attorney, appeared to present the case. He began by providing a brief overview of the property's history and noted that it was formerly used as a laundromat. Due to suspected groundwater contamination three years ago, the Department of Environmental Protection conducted tests over the course of one year with results showing that there are no pollutants on site. Attorney Lucas explained that the Applicant, Kyle Russo, purchased the property and is proposing a mixed-use building with ground-level retail and 18 residential units above. While the tenant for the retail space has yet to be determined, it will be able to support a restaurant. Attorney Lucas continued noting that the City plans to relocate a sub-terranean culvert on the property that has prohibited previous development attempts, with money awarded through a State funded grant. He also explained that due to the size of the property, no on-site parking is proposed, and the Applicant will apply to the Board of Appeals for a Special Permit for parking

relief in addition to the parking reduction that is part of the current application. He noted that there is a municipal lot that abuts the property which primarily serves the current retailers and would have a sufficient capacity to service the proposed commercial tenant. He clarified that the lot is not intended to be designated for residents of the building. The units will be marketed to tenants without vehicles. However, residents can purchase overnight parking permits from the City that would enable them to park in any municipal lot. He also noted that the proposal includes a bicycle room with 18 spaces and the property is close to public transportation.

Mr. Russo continued by introducing himself and explaining that he has developed other properties in and around Melrose over the last three years and is excited about this project.

Ken Feyl, Architect, began by reviewing the project's architectural plans. The mixed-use project is approximately 30,000 sf with a 4,300-sf retail space on the ground floor and three levels of residential units above. A canopy with recessed lighting lines the left side of the building where the residential entry is located, along with a bike storage room, mail room, trash room, tenant storage, and the lobby and elevator. This corner of the building faces the municipal lot while the retail space occupies the street frontages on Main St. and East Emerson St.

Mr. Feyl went on to review floor plans for the second through fourth levels. Each level will have six residential units with three 2-bedroom and three 1-bedroom units. Kitchen makeup air, and duct and exhaust shafts have been included on each floor leading to the roof where there is a makeup air unit and kitchen exhaust fan. Mechanical units and condensers for heat pumps will also be on the roof along with a 1,700-sf roof deck for residents. The roof deck will have a unisex bathroom off the stair and elevator landing and there will be seven community garden beds. All mechanical units will be screened, and the roof parapet will be tall enough to provide additional screening.

Mr. Feyl explained that the proposed building is about 48 ft. tall from the ground to the roof; the stair tower protrudes a bit higher and is measured at 60 ft. tall. The proposed materials include large, cementitious panels, painted cementitious lap siding, long board, and metal siding. Accent lighting will be located around the building and the stair tower will feature a curtain wall accent. Mr. Feyl noted that the proposed size of the building is like that of the four-story multifamily development located across the municipal lot.

Mr. File went on to describe the sustainability features of the project. He highlighted the transit-oriented aspects of the site including its proximity to public transportation and the development's bike storage provisions. The project will have high efficiency heat pumps and will be completely electric except for the retail gas connection. An energy recovery system will be implemented providing fresh air and the building envelope will have enhanced installation. The units will have ENERGY STAR appliances and low flow toilets fixtures. Research is also being conducted on installing solar panels on the roof of the building.

Kristin LaBrie, Civil Engineer, reviewed the project's civil plans. She began by describing the site's current conditions noting that the culvert located underneath the property will be moved to run underneath Main St. and around the corner under the sidewalk on East Emerson St. Additionally, using funds from a MassWorks grant, the existing parking spaces in front of the

building on Main St. will be redrawn and striped to give more structure, and bike racks will be installed along the building's street frontages.

She explained that the building will be demolished and completely rebuilt. Plans include repaving the perimeter of the site with concrete to match the sidewalk on Main St. and East Emerson St. There will also be sections of asphalt on the back of the site and a transformer will be located on the back right corner near the stair tower entrance. An existing retaining wall on the north side of building will be extended around the east of the building. Water and sewer connections will tie into Main St. and the building's electricity will tie into East Emerson St. and flow through the transformer. The proposed roof drain will empty into a City drain on East Emerson St., which is part of the culvert relocation and maintains the site's current drainage system. Ms. LaBrie explained that the proposed gas shown on the plan is intended to serve the retail space, not the residential units.

Ms. LaBrie provided additional information about the culvert relocation project. She explained that there is currently a drainpipe that leads from Ell Pond to the culvert located underneath the site, which ties into a drainpipe on East Emerson St. The proposal includes placing a 60-inch pipe underneath Main St. and connecting it to the existing drainpipe on East Emerson St. The two catch basins on East Emerson St. and the catch basin on the abutting property, would be replaced with deep sump hooded catch basins. The catch basin on the abutting property would also be rerouted since it currently ties into the culvert. It was clarified that the City would oversee the culvert relocation project and the Applicant would remove the culvert underneath the site once the roadwork is done.

Keri Pike, Traffic Engineer, reviewed the project's Traffic Impact Study. She explained that due to the site's size and the lack of on-site parking, the project will have little impact on existing traffic patterns. Ms. Pike noted that a parking study analyzing on-street and municipal lot parking was conducted last fall showing sufficient capacity and availability. She commented that the proposed retail space is also smaller than the existing space, which would result in less expected parking demand.

Denise Gaffey, City Planner and Director, continued by noting that the City is excited to see the redevelopment of this property and that the Applicant has been easy to work with, and receptive to Staff comments and suggestions. She explained that the location of the culvert under the existing building has impeded construction for many years. The City worked alongside the Applicant to apply for a MassWorks grant, which was awarded and provides enough funds to cover the relocation costs. Ms. Gaffey noted that receiving the State's financial support is an important recognition of this project's promotion of economic development, housing production, transit-oriented development and sustainable growth.

In terms of parking, Ms. Gaffey explained that while there is no residential parking offered, the Applicant submitted an earlier set of plans which showed on-site podium style parking; however, the spaces occupied almost the entire commercial area which would be undesirable in the gateway to downtown. She posited that this development should be thought of like the residential units downtown which are exempt from offering parking. Like those parcels, this site is adjacent to a municipal lot and residents can purchase an overnight parking pass if needed.

Ms. Gaffey continued by reviewing several outstanding items. A robust Traffic Demand Management plan should be created as it will be imperative for this site. The current proposal has the residential entrance facing the municipal lot and Staff would prefer it to be oriented towards the street. The Solid Waste Management Plan needs further development as does the roof design with the installation of solar panels. Lastly, more details on light spillage are needed. Ms. Gaffey noted that the City Engineers are still reviewing the project and have not yet submitted their comments.

Board Members had several questions and comments including:

- How many affordable units does the project propose?
- Has the Applicant considered recharging the roof water?
- Will accessible parking spaces on the street or in the municipal lot be provided?
- How will trash be managed and removed?
- How will the parking needs of the space's multiple uses interact and be accommodated?
- What is the floor plan for the bike storage room?
- How will the stair tower be lit? Too much light could spill over onto the nearby properties.
- How many tenants will occupy the commercial space?
- What is the design for the space in between this project and the abutting property on 10 East Emerson St.?
- The Applicant could bulb out the sidewalk on the corner of East Emerson St. and Main St. to provide more room for congregation and increase the corner's site lines.
- The residential entrance could be relocated for enhanced street activation.
- The corner of the building at East Emerson St. and Main St. could draw more attention.
- Provide more details on the building materials used for the street level.

Board Members appreciated the development's alignment with the Housing Production Plan and the breakdown of the building's facade. Responding to the Board questions, Attorney Lucas clarified that there will be three affordable units. In terms of the space between this site and 10 East Emerson St., Ms. LaBrie explained that the abutting property's driveway separates the existing building and the abutting structure. Katie Enright, Civil Engineer, noted that the existing building is currently built to the property line however, plans include building a 3-3.5 ft. wall along the perimeter of the sidewalk on the north of the property to differentiate the sites. As far as the retail space, Mr. Russo explained that the space could either hold one large restaurant or two small retailers.

The Board received seven letters outlining both support and concern for this project. In addition, three people appeared before the Board including: Kori Mendonsa of 102 Richardson Rd., Kate Kennen of 55 Hillside Ave, and Finn McSweeney for the Pedestrian and Bike Committee of 160 West Wyoming Ave. Those in support noted the transit-oriented nature of the development and the provision of more housing. Others cited concerns over the project's lack of parking, traffic impact, wanting a pest control remediation and solid waste management plan, the reduction of the number of retailers in the building, and the lack of support for the building's current retailers.

Suggestions including expanding the bike room to allow for employee bike storage, planting more street trees, and support for a restaurant, were also shared.

Mr. King asked that the access from the upper municipal parking lot to the lower lot is considered and provided so that people do not have to walk all the way around the block to get from the upper parking to the site.

Ms. Morelli made a motion to approve a continuance to the September 26, 2022, meeting. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all voted in favor of a continuance. None were opposed.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Planning Board is scheduled for Monday, August 22, 2022. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 pm.