MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, November 28, 2022
7:30 PM
Remote Meeting

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

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Denise Gaffey, Director & 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 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

Design Review Subcommittee Meeting, August 11, 2022

Board Members had no comments or adjustments to the minutes. Mr. King made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members voted in favor except for Mr. Aveni who abstained. None were opposed.

Design Review Subcommittee Meeting, May 18, 2022

Board Members had no comments or adjustments to the minutes. Ms. Morelli made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. King seconded the motion. All members voted in favor except for Mr. Welch, Ms. Delahaij, and Mr. Aveni who abstained. None were opposed.

Zoning Subcommittee Meeting, October 19, 2022

Board Members had no comments or adjustments to the minutes. Mr. Gregory made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Sampson seconded the motion. All members voted in favor except for Mr. Aveni and Mr. Welch who abstained. None were opposed.

Planning Board Regular Meeting, October 13, 2022

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

Planning Board Regular Meeting, October 24, 2022

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

Design Review Subcommittee Meeting, November 16, 2022

Mr. Welch requested adjusting the minutes to note that Mr. Johnson must submit a letter certifying that the vapors coming from the existing vent at the abutting Faulkner's Dry Cleaners are at or below a safe level of contaminants for the abutting residential use. Ms. Morelli made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as amended. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the amended minutes. None were opposed.

SUBDIVISION PUBLIC HEARING

Summit Avenue, North Shore Residential Development (continued public hearing)

Patrick McAvoy, Attorney, appeared before the Board to present the case. He explained that the site plan has been updated and the development team is interested in hearing the Board's feedback. He also noted that the Engineers are still working through the peer review comments and they are hoping to have a completed plan for the December hearing.

Attorney McAvoy reviewed the changes since the last hearing noting that the Developer has agreed to remove one house from the subdivision on Lot 7, and donate the land to the Conservation Commission. He explained that this obviates the need for a slope protection special permit unless the new road that is being built as a part of this project requires one. He also noted that the water booster station has been removed and each individual unit will have its own pump. The Developer is also planning to do an asphalt overlay on the full length of Summit Ave., so it is improved up to the subdivision.

Board Members expressed that the changes were positive. They wanted to see cross sections of the site and renderings of the houses which were not included in the updated plans. Members reiterated that the design of the houses needs to conform to the slopes to minimize the amount of destruction on the land and removal of ledge. Members noted that the design presented at previous meetings did not adequately consider the site's topography or ledge conditions.

Members asked about the materials proposed for the retaining walls and Attorney McAvoy explained that they will be made of the ledge found on the project site. Members noted that the plans do not depict a retaining wall along Lots 1 and 2 and felt that the steep drop at the top of the site is a concern.

The Board received one new letter objecting to the proposed subdivision from neighbors living downslope from the project. Concerns included stormwater control, excessive noise from construction, erosion, and the negative environmental impacts related to the loss of green space and increased traffic. Additionally, Kevin Sullivan, Charles Gill representing Paula Byrne of 88 Woodland Ave, and Sean Malkus of 60 Woodland Ave., appeared before the Board with similar comments and questioned the durability and management of the individual water pumps, and requested more details about the peer review.

One Board Member explained that the City retained an independent engineering firm to review the stormwater calculations and plans that the Applicant provided. A report was generated, and the Applicant is responding to the firm's comments and questions. Attorney McAvoy noted that individual owners are responsible for their private water pump and that the pump's function is to increase the pressure of the water going into the house. Board Members requested that the plans show an existing and proposed tree line, and area of clearing to evaluate the extent of proposed clearing.

Denise Gaffey, City Planner, noted that the peer review consultants have received the updated site plan but are waiting on several other items such as the Operations and Maintenance plan. She also explained that any comment elicited in the peer review merits a response. She noted that Staff facilitated a meeting between the peer review consultants, the development team, and the City Engineers where the report was discussed.

Mr. Gregory made a motion to continue to the case to December 19, 2022. Mr. Aveni seconded the motion. All voted in favor of a continuance. None were opposed.

Documents: Subdivision Plan 11.21.2022
Stormwater Drainage Design 11.21.2022
Stormwater Design Report 11.23.2022

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Case 22-005, 27 Temple St., Joseph H. & Robin L. Higgins (continued public hearing)

Patrick McAvoy, Attorney, appeared before the Board to present the case. He explained that the project engineer was reviewing a memo from the City Engineers and would present updated plans at the next hearing. Robin Higgins, Applicant, and her daughter Tara Higgins presented the project's updated renderings. Ms. Higgins explained that the plans were redrawn, and they are proposing a smaller footprint built on the flattest portion of the lot so 75% of the foundation will be on the non-sloped portion of the land. They are also proposing a cultec infiltration system in response to concerns about the longevity of the rain gardens.

Ms. Higgins continued noting that both the garage and house are smaller, which allows for more usable open space on the lot. However, she explained that a two-car garage is necessary because there is no street parking. Additionally, the garage was relocated to the west side of the house, and they plan to utilize the space above the garage, which is a common feature within the neighborhood. She explained that the houses in this neighborhood vary in size and the proposed structure fits within the neighborhood context.

Ms. Higgins explained that the revised design breaks up the roof line and the structure no longer appears to be three stories high from behind. They are proposing a finished, walk out basement and noted that the plans more carefully consider the site's unique characteristics. Additionally, none of the trees on the east side of the proposed building will be affected nor will the trees along the back portion of the lot. The front of the parcel will have seven trees removed out of the thirty that are currently there to make room for the garage but Ms. Higgins noted that they can plant more.

Board Members were supportive of the design changes and felt that the scale of the house was in line with neighboring structures. Members commented that the scale is diminished from the front and the back and the façade was nicely proportioned. Additionally, Members noted that the roof design breaks down the massing and appreciated the addition of the infiltration system and believe it is more likely than the rain gardens to be kept functional. Members also liked the use of the basement to respond to the grade and supported the Applicant's attempt to build on the house and driveway on the flattest portion of the lot. They appreciated the inclusion of usable open space and its location. Board Members agreed that this design fits within the neighborhood context.

The Board received one letter in support of this project.

It was noted that the project's engineer will need to address the City Engineer's comments during the next hearing before the Board can close the public hearing and vote on the proposal.

Mr. Aveni made a motion to continue the case to December 19, 2022. Mr. Gregory seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all voted in favor of a continuance. None were opposed.

Documents: Civil Plans 11.17.2022
Renderings 11.21.2022
Drainage Plan 11.14.2022

<u>Case 22-008, 31-39 West Wyoming Ave, Navem Partners (continued public hearing)</u>
Jim Heffernan, Applicant, Kenneth Feyl, Architect, and Kristen LaBrie, Engineer, appeared before the Board to present the case. Mr. Heffernan explained that since the last hearing, the architectural plans and streetscape plans were updated. He noted that the development team met with Ms. Morelli and planning staff to review the building's design and incorporated her

feedback into the revised materials. Additionally, the project went before the Board of Appeals and was granted a variance for maximum front yard setback.

Mr. Heffernan acknowledged the opposition letter submitted by the abutter at 10 Corey Street, and he noted that the abutter has not reached out to discuss his grievances or respond to his attempts to his attempts to communicate with 10 Corey, and it was the first he was hearing of the cited issues. He also noted that he intends to fully comply with the City Engineer's comments and will update their transportation management plan in accordance with the City Planner's suggestions.

Mr. Feyl reviewed the updated architectural drawings noting that this design breaks down the building's massing. He explained that the corner balconies are more open and the roof line above all the center balconies are unobstructed. The base of the building will be brick and pre-cast and will have banding and corbeling. Exterior lighting was also added to the buildings' base and the cap of the building is more accentuated. The clapboard siding will be maroon and blue.

A sign for the building's locus is shown on the corner of West Wyoming Ave and Berwick St. and there is a retail sign above the retail entrance. Planters and seating were included outside of the patio area to activate the corner. Lighter materials were used to light up the patio area and Mr. Feyl clarified that the roof under the patio is flat despite looking like it is angled in the rendering. Lastly, the transformer near the patio will be screened and bike racks will be installed outside of the building.

Ms. LaBrie noted that the streetscape plan shows bumpouts and shorter crosswalks across West Wyoming Ave. and Berwick St. The Developer is also willing to install a raised crosswalk across West Wyoming Ave. Ms. LaBrie noted that the proposed streetscape improvements are valued at more than the required contribution to the Streetscape Improvement Fund. One Board Member was curious if the Developer was allowed to complete the streetscape improvements rather than contribute to the fund. Ms. Gaffey explained that the City has discretion, and the proposed improvements are greater than the fund contribution and are directly tied to the development.

Members were supportive of the design changes. Ms. Morelli explained that she encouraged the Applicant to break down the massing of the building and layer it with detail. She felt that their new design incorporates the suggestions and is successful in its redesign. She voiced her support for the public accommodation that the patio will bring and believes it will be a good place for commuters to wait for the nearby train. Other Members appreciated the street level detail and brick base. Members also liked the open balconies. One Member commented that tipping the roof up may make the building look bigger and suggested revising this roofline. Members also commented that there could be a better calibration on the building's ground floor between the vertical elements and the buildings columns.

One Board Member asked for more details about the proposed raised crosswalk. Ms. Gaffey explained that the City Engineers were not opposed to it but wanted to make sure that there was not any traffic queuing. She noted that the traffic report conducted by Howard Stein Hudson considered this and according to their review, traffic queuing should not be a concern. Ultimately, the traffic commission needs to approve the design, which will be included as a condition of project approval.

Ms. LaBrie explained that the raised crosswalk will act more like a speed hump. Members were curious how snowplows would navigate the hump. Ms. LaBrie explained that they would lift and adjust their plows or use sidewalk plows to plow the raised section. Members were generally supportive of the raised crosswalk. One Member posited that increasing the bumpouts on Berwick St. may negatively impact bikers by narrowing the width of the travel lane.

The Board received two letters from the public. One was in support of the project noting that it is consistent with the City's Housing Production Plan and that it would provide housing and additional tax revenue for the City. The other letter expressed concern about the building's design suggesting that the structure will stand out instead of blending with the rest of the neighborhood.

Board Members felt that the building's design, which deliberately has modern elements, will bring vibrancy and invigorate the area. Members did not have any questions about the proposed conditions of approval.

Mr. Aveni made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. King seconded the motion.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward made a motion to approve the Site Plan Review and Special Permits for Density Incentives in the BA-2 District and for a Reduced Parking Requirements subject to the drafted conditions. Mr. Aveni seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all voted in favor, except for Jack Welch who abstained as he was not present for one of the public hearings for the case. None were opposed.

Documents: Application, August 10, 2022
Inspectional Services Letter, April 7, 2022
Special Permit Narrative of Community Benefits, August 1, 2022
Traffic Impact Study, February 3, 2020
Parking Study, July 19, 2022
Site Plan, October 21, 2021
Architectural Plan, November 21, 2022
Streetscape Improvement Cost Analysis, November 23, 2022
Landscape Plan, October 5, 2022
Staff Memo, November 23, 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS
Board of Appeals Public Hearing on November 30, 2022

Case 22-021 681-697 Main St.
Board Members recommended approving the requested variances noting that the application was thoroughly reviewed and was granted Site Plan Approval. They felt that although it cannot comply with zoning requirements, the project supports the City's housing goals while activating the streetscape and utilizing green building techniques.

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to send a letter in support to the Board of Appeals. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant Materials for Case 22-021

Case 22-022 516 Lebanon St.
Board Members were not supportive of the request for a front yard variance and felt that the porch could be scaled back. Members noted the modest size of the house compared to abutting properties and felt that while the height of the addition is tall, the size fits within the neighborhood context. Members felt that the side setback of the addition involves judgments that can best be determined by the Board of Appeals and input from abutters at the public hearing.

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to send a letter recommending denial of the front yard variance and no objection to the remainder of the application. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant Materials for Case 22-022

Case 22-023 23 Prescott St.
Members took no position on the requested relief. They felt that the proposed project will be a small change that allows for more practical use of a portion of the front porch while not detracting from the streetscape.

Mr. Aveni made a motion to send a letter of no objection to the Board of Appeals. Ms. DeSouza Ward seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant Materials for Case 22-023

Board of Appeals Public Hearing on December 14, 2022

Case 22-024 45 Water St.
Board Members had varying opinions about the proposal. While Members agreed that the restrictions of a corner lot pose a hardship and understood the desire for additional living space considering the size of the dwelling, some felt that the massing of the proposed addition, overwhelms the principal structure. They discussed the addition's placement, location of the two-car garage and roof design noting that there are other ways to add square footage to the house that better respects the zoning and the design of the existing house. Others felt that the

proposal was acceptable considering that there are some large houses in the neighborhood and variances for setbacks on corner lots are not unusual.

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to send a letter to the Board of Appeals detailing Members' differing opinions. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant Materials for Case 22-024

Case 22-025 216 Main St.
Board Members took no position on the requested relief. They felt the proposed project will be a small change and will not detract from the streetscape. The Board appreciated the presentation of and consistency with the partially enclosed front porches in the neighborhood.

Mr. Welch made a motion to send a neutral letter to the Board of Appeals. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Applicant Materials for Case 22-025

NEXT MEETING
The next regular meeting of the Planning Board is scheduled for Monday, December 19, 2022.
The meeting adjourned at 10:03 pm.