

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, August 28, 2023
7:30 PM
Remote Meeting

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

ABSENT: None

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM by Mr. Sampson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, August 2, 2023

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

SITE PLAN REVIEW & SPECIAL PERMITS

Case 22-009, 14-24 Tremont Street, Eli Pechthold & Greg Young—K&K Developers Inc (c/o Garden Homes Development)

The Board closed the public hearing for the case on August 2, 2023. Mr. Sampson asked Denise Gaffey, City Planner, to review the proposed conditions of approval for the project. Ms. Gaffey provided a summary of conditions stating that most are standard conditions and outlined that conditions that were specific to this project including:

- Construction workers' vehicles shall not park on Tremont Street, Lake Avenue, or other residential streets;
- The Applicant shall engage a Licensed Site Professional to develop a sampling plan for construction dewatering based on known contaminants of concern on or near the site and if contaminants are detected in excess, the water must be contained, treated, and re-tested or legally disposed of offsite;
- Sound attenuation measures must be documented considering proximity to the train tracks;
- Grades must be designed and constructed such that no stormwater will run-off to the garage drain;
- The maximum size of the trash and recycling trucks that service the development shall be 30 ft. with 2 axels;

- Signage will be installed in the driveway notifying trucks that they must turn left when exiting;
- Sensors and signs must be installed at the garage driveway to warn pedestrians of exiting vehicles;
- The Applicant will design a mid-block crosswalk with a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon, on Tremont St. adjacent to the athletic facilities and will bring it to the Melrose Traffic Commission for approval; if approved they will construct it;
- Five (5) parking spaces shall be designated for visitors and signage will be installed at those spaces; and,
- The Applicant shall submit an annual report on on-site parking utilization for five (5) years.

Board Members asked if the truck routes were modified in the Construction Management Plan. Greg Young, Applicant, confirmed that they were - trucks would not use Lynn Fells Parking. Those coming from the North will use Franklin St. and trucks coming from the South will use West Emerson St. One Board Member requested that the Design Review Subcommittee evaluate the proposed solar panel locations once they have been determined and assess if additional public street furniture can be included onsite. One Board Member asked about the enforcement of the construction management. Ms. Gaffey explained that it will be the Building Commissioner's and the Traffic Division's responsibility. She emphasized that prior to construction, the Developers will meet with City Staff to review the construction management plan to ensure that all the granular details are covered. Board Members discussed adding a condition of approval that a trash and recycling truck circulation plan is submitted to the Planning Department for review and approval in consultation with the Police Department and Department of Public Works. Other changes that they made to the conditions include that solar panels will be installed and their location will be reviewed with the Design Review Subcommittee (DRSC). The DRSC will also review the ability to add an additional bench in the front yard.

Ms. Morelli made a motion to approve the Special Permit for multi-family residential use in a non-residentially zoned area with the conditions as amended. Mr. Gregory seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all voted in favor. None were opposed. Mr. King and Mr. Bailey abstained as they were not present at one of the public hearings for the case.

Mr. Welch made a motion to approve the Special Permit for a reduced number of required parking spaces with the conditions as amended. Ms. DeSouza Ward seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all voted in favor. None were opposed. Mr. King and Mr. Bailey abstained.

Mr. Gregory made a motion to approve the Special Permit for the number of compact parking spaces with the conditions as amended. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all voted in favor. None were opposed. Mr. King and Mr. Bailey abstained.

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to approve Site Plan Review with the conditions as amended. Mr. Gregory seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all voted in favor. None were opposed. Mr. King and Mr. Bailey abstained.

Case 23-002, 272 Tremont Street, OnPoint Capital (continued public hearing)

David Lucas, Attorney, Will Chalfant, Architect, and Garret Hogan and Max Taylor, Applicants, appeared before the Board to present the case. Attorney Lucas explained that since the last hearing, the locations for the entrance and exit to the parking area switched, and the turning radius for cars maneuvering within the parking area was added to the plans. He also provided more information on the easements on the left and right sides of the property. On the left, a 6 ft. easement was created in 1972 to allow abutters pedestrian and vehicular access. On the right, there is a 9 ft. easement that allows access to the abutter's trash and storage area, and for pedestrian and vehicular access. No obstructions, including parking, are allowed within either easement.

Mr. Chalfant continued explaining that the height of the building above the parking area was increased to 12 ft., which provides enough clearance for bigger vehicles, by changing the floor to floor heights as opposed to increasing the overall height of the building. A typical UPS truck is 11 feet tall. A large truck is 13.5 feet; which will not fit. The landscape plan was updated to include a more diverse array of seasonal plants and the planters on the roof deck will have seasonal vegetation, as well. The project's three affordable units were identified on the plans and a shadow study was provided that includes the Planning Board's recently approved projects that are located nearby. During the winter months, the development will cast a shadow on Franklin St., but for the majority of the year, there will be little impact to surrounding buildings. Mr. Chalfant explained that a photometric plan was not submitted but the Applicant is only proposing shielded lights and there is no anticipated spillover.

Board Members commented that the ingress to the parking area has an acute corner, which may be difficult for trucks to navigate. Mr. Chalfant noted that currently, there is one continuous curb cut and the Planning Board for the past case requested that a small curb be installed between the right abutter and the proposed driveway, but he will review the plans. Members recommended placing signage at the entrance of the driveway alerting trucks of the height clearance.

Members had concerns about the easements and the rights for ingress and egress. These issues are between the private property owners but should be addressed now. Members wondered how delivery and trash vehicles would maneuver and if they would block vehicles parking at the property. One Member wanted to know if the Applicant is proposing any changes to neighboring property. Mr. Chalfant explained that the Applicant is proposing to install pavers between the properties, but all modifications would be contained onsite.

Board Members noted that the building's proposed traffic pattern conflicts with the circulation on 260 Tremont St. and wondered if the driveway could be separated or if arrows could be added to distinguish between cars entering and exiting. One Member suggested that the Applicant discuss reversing the vehicle circulation on 260 Tremont St. with the abutter, to align with the proposed building. Attorney Lucas responded that there is currently two-way traffic on the right side of the property and there are no conflicts.

Members felt that the proposed parking spaces were tight, and residents would have to make a few movements to get into the spaces. One Member asked about the proposed snow storage location and wondered how snow will be removed if cars are parked. Mr. Chalfant explained that

most of the lot is covered so there will be minimal snow accumulation, but a bobcat can be used for the exposed areas. One Member felt that snow should be taken offsite and the building include a visitor parking space.

Board Members were curious about the proposed location for the building's transformer. Mr. Chalfant explained that it will be vaulted underground. It was clarified that the building will be all electric. One Member asked if there can be additional landscaping next to parking space 11 and if the area by the electric meters is landscaped. Mr. Chalfant responded that they will take a look at the space next to parking space 11 and the area next to the electric meters will be pavers or permeable stone. Members requested that the site's exiting tree be retained if possible. The Board discussed options for adding bicycle parking in the building.

One Board Member asked why the condensers are located on the back of the roof and wondered where the solar panels will be located, noting that if they are at the front of the fifth floor a parapet should be installed around the building. Mr. Chalfant explained that placing the condensers at the back of the fifth floor provides the most screening and the location for the solar panels has not yet been determined. Plans include a 2 ft. parapet around the main roof. One Member asked about the community space on the fifth floor. Mr. Taylor explained that due to the elevator's override, the fifth floor is accessible, so a community space was added as an amenity for residents. He also emphasized that the fifth floor is stepped back and is not visible from the street.

One Member asked where the roof planters will be located and if they could screen the elevator. Mr. Chalfant noted that the planters will be on the deck. Members requested that the Applicant add more plant variety and wondered if the proposed trees on the back of the site will have enough room to grow. Mr. Chalfant explained that the proposed variety is used in narrow conditions. There is also 15-20 ft. behind the site that is not paved but is MBTA land. The Board asked about the need for MBTA review because the site is in the zone of influence. The Attorney believes that the MBTA issued a letter of non-applicability for the prior proposal. One Member commented that the trees will be up against the building and the Applicant should revise the landscape plan.

The Board received four letters and two members of the public appeared to speak including Karen Hall of 246 Tremont St. and Kori Mendonsa of 102 Richardson Rd. Concerns regarding the building's size, traffic impacts, sound of mechanical equipment, and the Applicant's lack of communication with neighbors, were voiced.

Denise Gaffey, City Planner, explained that City officials met to discuss the project at a Department Head meeting and that the proposed plans are very similar to the project approved by the Planning Board in 2020.

Planning Board Members requested that the Applicant connect with the abutters, provide additional information about the easements, traffic circulation, and circulation signage, the roof layout with planters and solar, bike parking, snow storage, and an updated landscape plan.

Mr. Aveni made a motion to continue the public hearing to September 18, 2023. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members voted in favor of a continuance. None were opposed.

PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENT

Ms. Gaffey provided an overview of the draft report from the Planning Board to the City Council to address the items that were brought up during the joint public hearing held on August 14, 2023, regarding the proposed Brewery Zoning Amendment. Two public comments were submitted, both in support of the amendment. One letter raised concerns about potential odors emanating from breweries and requested that air quality be considered. Members requested that the report also explain the rationale for where breweries are proposed to be allowed to locate in relation to the concern about being near multi-family housing. The report does not recommend any changes to the proposed zoning amendment.

Mr. Welch made a motion to accept the report and send it to City Council, as amended. Ms. DeSouza Ward seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Ms. Gaffey shared that the City has been updating its Open Space and Recreation Plan over the past year and is preparing a final draft to send to the Division of Conversation Services. A letter of recommendation from the Planning Board is required and she requested that Members submit any comments or questions about the plan to Planning Staff so a draft letter can be reviewed at the next meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS

Case 23-020, 4 Vinton St.

Board Members commented that the site is small and oddly shaped, and moving the stairs to the front of the house is logical. Members noted that the proposed setback is similar to many of the surrounding houses with front stairs. However, Members felt that the plans lacked sufficient information to truly understand the proposal. It was clarified that no exterior changes were being proposed and the request only included installing a door on the front of the house and relocating the stairs from the side yard to the new front entrance.

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to send a neutral letter with these comments noted to the Board of Appeals. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. All voted in favor, none were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Application Materials for Case 23-020

NEXT MEETING

The next Planning Board meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 10:09 PM.