

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Monday, October 23, 2023**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Cassidy Conference Room, 562 Main Street, Melrose**

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

**ABSENT:** Tim Bailey

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mr. Sampson.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Planning Board Regular Meeting, September 23, 2023

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

**SITE PLAN REVIEW & SPECIAL PERMITS**

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

David Lucas, Attorney, Max Taylor & Garrett Hogan, Applicants, Will Chalfant, Architect, and Eric Bradanese, Engineer, appeared to present the case. Attorney Lucas noted that since the last hearing, the Applicant discussed switching the ingress to the left side of the building and the egress to the right side with the traffic engineer. The engineer stated that this traffic flow will be safer because it is a more intuitive pattern, and it will minimize vehicular conflicts by aligning the project's ingress with the ingress for the building on the left. He noted that trucks servicing the site will follow the building's traffic pattern but if they do not meet the height clearance of building, they will service the building from the right and back into the site or back out on Tremont Street. Trash trucks currently back into the site to pickup trash. They did not change to a two-way driveway on the northern side of the lot because the ability to maneuver into the parking spaces is challenging with that plan.

Members felt that the northern driveway logistics were still challenging but trash and delivery truck usage will be a private management issue. The driveway and building as designed does not preclude the property along Franklin Street from being redeveloped in the future. One Member commented on the use of the amenity space and the massing of the fifth floor. Mr. Taylor responded that the fifth floor will provide tenants with usable outdoor space since there is no other proposed outdoor space onsite. One Members wondered how tall the building would be

without the fifth floor. Mr. Chalfant commented that it would be about 43 ft. tall with a 5 ft. override from the elevator. One Member asked if the elevator could be stepped back. Mr. Taylor explained that the elevator must be accessible from the lobby to meet ADA requirements and pushing it back would mean it would be located in the garage. That would result in a loss of four parking spaces. Members discussed the advantages of allowing the elevator to fully access the roof.

One Member asked what will be provided in the amenity space. Mr. Chalfant explained that it is designed to be a multi-purpose room with a kitchenette, restroom, work from home space, and some exercise equipment. Mr. Taylor added that they will research what other buildings offer and what residents appreciate. There will also be an outdoor roof deck with seating and planters. Members agreed that the amenity space will greatly benefit tenants' quality of life but suggested modifying the facade of the amenity space. Mr. Chalfant commented that windows can be added, and different materials can be used to create more consistency with the rest of the building.

The Board received 12 written comments and seven community members appeared to comment in front of the Board including Rob Tullis of 8 Thurston Rd., Susan and Fred McGrath of 242 Tremont St., Kori Mendonsa of 42 Richardson Rd., Cheryl Walsh of 271 Tremont St., Cindy Luongo 76 Lake Ave., and Chris Sullivan of 89 East Wyoming Ave. Comments included support for the proposed traffic pattern and concerns around:

- Parking
- Traffic
- The proposed density
- The lack of green space
- The level of affordability
- The design & massing of the building

One member of the public suggested switching the location of the residential and commercial uses on the ground floor to provide more continuity with the abutting uses.

Members agreed that the design of the building will be reviewed by the Design Review Subcommittee. Members discussed the proposed conditions.

Mr. Welch made a motion to close the public hearing. 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 with conditions as discussed. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all voted in favor except for Mr. Gregory and Ms. DeSouza Ward, who abstained because they were not present for one of the public hearings. None were opposed.

Ms. Morelli made a motion to approve the request for a Special Permit for Increased Density in the BA-2 District and for Reduced Parking. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all voted in favor except for Mr. Gregory and Ms. DeSouza Ward, who abstained because they were not present for one of the public hearings. None were opposed.

|            |                              |                                                                                                |
|------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Documents: | Application                  | July 20, 2023                                                                                  |
|            | Construction Management Plan | July 2023                                                                                      |
|            | Green Building Report        | July 5, 2023                                                                                   |
|            | Trash & Recycling Memo       | July 5, 2023                                                                                   |
|            | Traffic Impact Report        | July 2023                                                                                      |
|            | Memo from DPW                | August 2023                                                                                    |
|            | Revised Architectural Plans  | October 22, 2023                                                                               |
|            | Civil Plans                  | September 27, 2023; February 28, 2023;<br>January 8, 2020; August 11, 2020; August<br>21, 2020 |

## **SITE PLAN REVIEW**

### Case 23-001, 32-34 Linwood Avenue, Eric Kenworthy (continued public hearing)

Will Chalfant, Architect, appeared to request a continuance on behalf of the Applicant to the hearing on November 27, 2023.

Mr. King made a motion to continue the public hearing to November 27, 2023. Mr. Aveni seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the continuance. None were opposed.

### Case 23-003, 12-14 Sylvan Street, Treetop Investments, LLC c/o Siddharth Gehlot (continued public hearing)

Robert Bell, Attorney, Eric Bradanese, Engineer, Siddharth Gehlot, Applicant, and Yael Getz Schoen, Architect, appeared to present the case. Attorney Bell explained that since the previous hearing, Mr. Gehlot purchased the property and conducted test pits. Mr. Bradanese explained that the results revealed that the site has a high level of groundwater, and the stormwater system must be redesigned to accommodate the site conditions. Ms. Getz Schoen explained that the development team met with abutters who suggested adding landscaping along the property line to screen the patios. She noted that there will also be a fence along the perimeter of the site. She added that the driveway width was narrowed to 20 ft. wide.

She continued by presenting three different design options that attempt to lessen the massing by revising the roof line. The first lowers the roof over the garage and adds dormers above the garage doors facing into the driveway and along the exterior of the building. This option proposes a mix of hip and gable roofs along the building. The second also lowers the roof over the garage and proposes gable dormers and gable roofs. With this option, the attic space will expand due to the design. The third option proposes a roof deck above the garage and hipped roofs for the rest of the project. This option has the lowest roofline, provides ample outdoor space for residents, and creates more separation between the units.

Board Members felt that the third option reduces the massing, but it does not fit within the neighborhood context, and it will infringe on the neighbors' privacy. Members preferred the first option, noting that from the street, the hipped roof helps reduce the building's massing. Members were concerned about the building massing and impact on the abutters. They felt that the homes

were very large, especially compared to most of the housing stock in Melrose. Members agreed that the Applicant should reduce the building's scale to provide more usable outdoor space.

Four people appeared to speak before the Board including Dennis & Dianne Fazio of 10 Sylvan St., Lisa Landry of 24 Sylvan St., and Karen Sawyer of 12 Mt. Vernon Ave. Concerns included:

- Rodent control
- Light spillover
- Damage to surrounding properties during construction
- Shadows
- Loss of green space
- The size and massing
- The efficacy and maintenance of the proposed stormwater system
- The location of the patios

Members of the public preferred the hip roof design over the other roof deck and the dormer roof.

Mr. Bradanese responded to the public comments about the stormwater system's maintenance schedule, noting that an Operations and Management Plan will be submitted that outlines necessary procedures.

Board Members wondered if the Applicant is intending to protect the trees at the northwestern portion of the lot. Mr. Bradanese responded that the development team will try but it is unclear if it will be possible. One Board Member commented that if the Board wants Applicants to retain existing trees, the Board should formally request that an arborist visit the site and assess if it is possible. Otherwise, during construction the trees will most likely be taken down because it is easier than trying to retain them.

Mr. Aveni made a motion to continue the public hearing to November 27, 2023. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members voted in favor of the continuance. None were opposed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS**

### Case 23-024, 73 Boardman Avenue

Board Members supported the Applicant's commitment to exceeding the energy code. While they recognized that this was a factor in the dormer's design, they felt that it could be redesigned so that it was smaller and more conforming.

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to send a neutral letter to the Board of Appeals. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Application Materials for Case 23-024

### Case 23-025, 608-612 Main Street

Board Members commented that there is limited room on the site to locate a sign and agreed with the comments in the staff brief about the limited impact and interference the sign has on sight lines. Members emphasized that several businesses around the site in the same zoning district have standing signs that do not negatively impact the streetscape.

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to send a neutral letter to the Board of Appeals. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Application Materials for Case 23-025

Case 23-026, 21 Henry Avenue

Members discussed how the project is extending a nonconforming setback on this oddly shaped lot. They agreed that the renovated garage will be an improvement to the streetscape. Members commented that the second floor will be stepped back, which will limit the impact on abutters. Members agreed with the comments in the staff brief regarding the design and the floor plan of the addition.

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to send a neutral letter to the Board of Appeals. Mr. Aveni seconded the motion. By roll call vote, all members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: ZBA Application Materials for Case 23-026

**NEXT MEETING**

The next Planning Board meeting is scheduled for November 27, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.