MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, November 18, 2024
7:00 PM
Cassidy Conference Room, 562 Main Street, Melrose

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

ABSENT: Carla Morelli, Michael Aveni

STAFF PRESENT: Lori Massa, Director & City Planner & Maya Noviski, Senior Planner & Adam Forrester, Assistant Planner

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by Mr. Sampson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, October 28, 2024
Mr. King made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Design Review Subcommittee Meeting, October 28, 2024
Mr. King made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL

Case 24-001, 1 Washington Street
Barry Greenwood, Applicant, Robert Bell, Attorney, and Brian Salomon, a representative for the Melrose Wakefield Hospital, appeared before the Board. Attorney Bell provided an overview of the project noting that the Melrose Wakefield Hospital currently utilizes the parking lot at 164 Essex Street, however, a proposal to convert the property into a 76-unit multifamily residential building was recently approved by the Board of Appeals through the Comprehensive Permit process. Thus, the hospital requires an alternative parking arrangement for their employees. He explained that the site is well served by public transportation, which employees are expected to utilize. Mr. Salomon explained that off campus parking for clinicians is critical for ensuring that there is parking for patients and visitors at the hospital.

Board Members wondered how the gate separating the two lots would operate. Mr. Greenwood explained that the gate is on rollers and the shuttle driver will manually open the gate in the morning and close the gate in the evening. One Board Member suggested adding a private parking sign on the lot. Mr. Greenwood explained that there is an existing sign and there has never been an issue with the public utilizing the lot. One Member wondered if there is a designated parking area for the shuttle while the driver waits for passengers. Mr. Greenwood explained that the shuttle will pick employees up at their cars. One Board Member suggested installing a shelter to protect employees using public transportation from inclement weather while waiting for the shuttle.

One Board Member voiced concern about the width of the curb cut and the increase in vehicles entering and exiting the site, noting that there is a high amount of pedestrian and bicycle activity along the stretch of Washington Street where the site is located. Members discussed adding pavement markings to narrow the ingress and egress to the site for additional safety measures. Board Members discussed adding onsite bicycle racks for employees. Mr. Greenwood noted that there was space on the site to accommodate bicycle facilities if there is a need.

Board Members discussed the feasibility of the proposed snow storage areas. Mr. Greenwood explained that snow will be moved to the storage areas at night once the lot is empty. One Board Member suggested adding plantings between the front and rear parking areas to provide additional screening and noted that depending on the longevity of the contract between the hospital and the site, the Applicant could consider planting trees to mitigate heat island effect. Mr. Greenwood commented that the tenure of the contract has not yet been decided.

Some Board Members had concerns about the proposed stormwater management system's treatment of pollutants and wondered if the Applicant conducted soil testing. Mr. Greenwood explained that historical data was used to design the system. He noted that there is an existing drywell onsite. One Member wondered if the site required soil remediation. Mr. Greenwood explained that the southeast corner of the lot required remediation in the 1990s but the proposed parking area is fill comprised of ledge from Spot Pond. Members requested that a condition of approval be added that requires the City Engineer to conduct a site visit prior to the installation of the drywells and issue final approval on the stormwater system.

Board Members reviewed the draft conditions of approval and edited them as discussed above. The conditions added to the list were as follows: the City Engineer will conduct a site visit prior to the installation of the drywells, the Applicant/Owner shall install a shelter or canopy onsite for employees waiting for the shuttle, and the Applicant/Owner shall create pavement markings to narrow and designate the ingress and egress for vehicles entering and exiting the site.

Mr. Welch made a motion to approve the requested Waivers. Mr. King seconded the motion. All voted in favor of approving the requested Waivers from the Application Materials. None were opposed.

The Board did not receive any public comments.

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

Mr. Welch made a motion to approve the Site Plan. Mr. King seconded the motion. All voted in favor with the conditions attached as amended. None were opposed. Carla Morelli and Michael Aveni were absent.

Documents: Application Form, Executive Summary, & Light Specs dated October 22, 2024
Drainage Memo dated November 6, 2024
Revised Site Plan dated November 7, 2024
Traffic memo dated November 15, 2023

PLANNING BOARD RULES AND REGULATIONS & UPDATED APPLICATION

Lori Massa, Director & City Planner, reviewed a revised draft of the newly created Planning Board Rules and Regulations. Board Members reviewed and provided comments on the draft. One Member commented that the section containing the description of Membership of the Board be altered to have a definition that clarifies that the Board consists of Members from a variety of professional backgrounds but not limited to those backgrounds. Another Member commented on the responsibilities of the Chair section. They suggested that the Chair can elect someone to preside over their role in their absence. Hearing procedures were also discussed by the Board. A Board Member noted that the Chair and Members can alter the order of the meeting if the Chair and a majority of the Board agree. The Board discussed altering the section regarding schedules. One Board member commented that the requirement for a schedule change should be broader and not only due to holidays. The Board discussed the section regarding continuance of a hearing since it was a long sentence. It could be edited to specify that it just for projects seeking definitive subdivision approval, that Applicants choosing to request a continuance during a public hearing must also document the request in writing.

Board members also discussed the updated application forms. A Board Member suggested that the forms should include a solid waste operation plan. In addition, the forms should also include a site operational plan that includes trash management, snow removal, and package delivery management.

The edits suggested to the rules and regulations draft and the application form draft will be reviewed at the December meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next regular Planning Board meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.