

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, December 16, 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, Carla Morelli, and Micheal Aveni

ABSENT: none

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by Mr. Sampson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, November 18, 2024

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Aveni abstained.

Zoning Subcommittee Meeting, December 9, 2024

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Mr. Aveni abstained.

SLOPE PROTECTION SPECIAL PERMIT

Case 24-002, Beech Avenue (G6 0 44 & 53), Szecon Development Inc.

Sean and Laura Szekely from Szecon Development, Applicants, Jesse Schomer, Attorney, and Rich Williams, Engineer, appeared before the Board. Attorney Schomer provided an overview of the project. The proposed development is on a vacant lot on sloped land. The proposal is to construct a single-family house. An overview of the plot and the design of the structure was provided: the frontage must be on Beech Avenue because the frontage on Oak Street is insufficient in length, the driveway will use existing contours of the land, the structure will be built on the flattest portion of the land, and the garage will be below grade and not visible from the rear of the property.

Mr. Williams provided an overview of the existing conditions and stormwater management plan. An infiltration system is proposed to capture the runoff from the house. Abutters within 250 ft. will be notified before blasting and a pre-blast survey will be conducted. The specifics of the sewer work and where the best connection to limit earth work in a slope area is still being determined. A mulch sock will be used for erosion control to limit sedimentation going into abutter's properties. The grade and location of the driveway has been designed to reduce rock

removal. Mr. Szekely, Applicant, added more context on the blasting impact. He will be communicating with abutters. He is not opposed to limiting the time when blasting can occur.

Mr. Welch wondered if there is a curb on Beech Avenue and what materials will be used for the driveway. In addition, Board Members asked for clarity on the permeable surfaces of the lot. Mr. Szekely and Mr. Williams gave more information on the materials that would be used and its impact on stormwater runoff. Mr. Sampson noted that the Board doesn't regulate curbing, the DPW does.

Board members asked about the logistics for blasting. They wondered about how many days blasting would occur, how many truckloads of material would be removed, and the routes trucks would take through the City. Mr. Szekely explained that this is a two-week project, and they will calculate the amount of removal; however, the estimate is 1500 yards. He noted that the truck route would include Mt. Hood Terrace. Mr. Aveni asked about the distance between the bottom of the infiltration chamber to refusal. Mr. Williams explained that it would be 2 ft. and that there is bedrock underneath. The outflow of material will be towards Mill Road, which is a narrow way that provides access to one house.

Board members wondered about the street width at the end of the driveway and why the driveway does not access Oak Street. Mr. Williams explained that the street width at the driveway is 19 ft. Board members wondered about firetruck and emergency access to the property. Mr. Williams explained that the driveway access would be from Beech Ave. to meet the frontage requirement of the property. A Variance would be needed to have the driveway access be on Oak St. A Board member asked about what is considered frontage. Also, they wondered about the difference between the existing runoff and runoff from a steep driveway exiting onto Beech Ave. Ms. Massa explained how frontage is determined and what Variance would be required. Mr. Williams explained that there would be firetruck access as the right of way has sufficient access and the driveway would be 20 ft wide with a few feet of gravel on either side of the pavers.

Members asked where catch basins were located on the street, what material would be used for pavers, and how many trees would be saved during construction. He also noted that it would be helpful to see on the site plan what sloped area will be untouched. Ms. Morelli asked how tall the retaining wall would be and if the north side of the property will be left open or fenced. Mr. Szekely explained the plan for screening, fencing, and trees. He wants to work with the abutters to find a solution.

The Board heard several public comments. Rob Harding, 31 Mt. Hood Terrace, Kim and Don Perrotti, 310 Beech Ave., Mike Ford, 27 Mt. Hood Terrace, Matos Raimundo, 30 Mt. Hood Terrace, Simon Warfield, 308 Beech Ave., and Alex Carroll, 33 Mt. Hood Terrace.

They had the following comments and questions:

- stormwater management and flooding
- construction vehicle route

- the proposed driveway entrance
- firetruck and emergency vehicle access
- redirected stormwater runoff and where it ends up
- impact of blasting, notices for blasting, who will be informed, and if there is a study of the existing conditions of the ground/rocks and blasting impact
- will there be a site visit?
- road safety issues
- proposed construction's impact on wetland/conservation land
- access should be from Oak Street

Mr. Szekely explained the process of informing abutters of blasting and that an approved blasting plan is developed prior to any work.

Mr. Sampson agreed that a site visit would be helpful. Also, that a more detailed blasting plan and more detail on the scope of the work and volumes of removal is needed. Board members agreed that a site visit would be helpful and asked the Applicant to flag the center of the driveway, driveway width, and foundation of the house for the site visit. The scheduled the site visit for 12/27/24 at 9 AM. Mr. Szekely said that he would reach out to abutters to address concerns. Ms. DeSouza Ward commented that the design should be altered to mitigate impact.

Ms. Morelli made a motion to continue the case to January 27, 2025. Mr. Gregory seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed

Documents: Application Form dated November 15, 2024
 Executive Summary dated November 15, 2024
 Site plan dated October 28, 2024
 Landscape Plan dated November 11, 2024
 Erosion Control Plan dated November 11, 2024
 Renderings dated October 24, 2024
 Site Section dated December 16, 2024
 Construction Management Plan dated October 31, 2023
 Stormwater Report dated November 12, 2024
 DPW Review dated December 13, 2024

Mr. Gregory left the meeting.

PLANNING BOARD RULES AND REGULATIONS & UPDATED APPLICATION FORMS

Maya Noviski, Senior Planner, went over the updated application form. Board members reviewed and provided comments on the updated draft. The Board discussed adding a limit of work plan and site section to the list of required materials for a slope protection Special Permit that shows the existing grade, proposed area of land alteration, relevant nearby properties, and a

scale that is the same vertically/horizontally. The Board also discussed the inclusion of a site operational plan in the site plan review application.

Mr. Welch made a motion to approve the Rules and Regulations, and application forms as edited during the meeting. Ms. DeSouza Ward seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Lori Massa, Planner Director, provided a presentation to the Board regarding the proposed zoning amendments. She reviewed an overview of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), the State law requiring ADUs by right, proposed districts ADUs will be allowed in Melrose, and other proposed regulations of ADUs in Melrose. She also provided an overview of the process of creating this proposed zoning amendment, that included a meeting with the Zoning Subcommittee. Board Members had questions about setbacks, accessory buildings, design guidelines, and ownership requirements related to ADUs. Ms. Massa provided detailed answers to those questions. The Board also discussed the proposed amendment to Section 235-6.3.4.f, which seeks to clarify the height and story requirements for basements.

The timeline could be that the Board submits the proposal to the City Council for their January meeting and a joint public hearing is scheduled for February.

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to send the proposed ADU zoning amendment to City Council. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Mr. Aveni made a motion to send the Basement height zoning amendment to City Council. Ms. DeSouza Ward seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next regular Planning Board meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.