

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, May 21, 2024
7:00 PM
Cassidy Conference Room, 562 Main Street, Melrose

PRESENT: Greg Sampson, Beth Delahaij, Brian Gregory, & Anne DeSouza Ward

ABSENT: None

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Ms. DeSouza Ward.

ZONING ORDINANCE RECODIFICATION PROJECT

Planning Staff, Subcommittee Members, and Consultants Nels Nelson, Attorney Jonathan Silverstein, and Jeff Levine, discussed the draft zoning ordinance and Subcommittee Members' recommendations including:

- In place of using "Board", specify whether the responsible body is the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals
- Add Reduced Parking and Slope Protection to the list of special permits for which the Planning Board is the Special Permit Granting Authority
- Increase Site Plan Approval validity to three years
- Provide a more general description of the zoning districts
- Eliminate Earth Removal and Fill, and Filling of Water Bodies or Wet Areas
- Eliminate the definition of cellar, and any references to cellar in the ordinance, and clarify within the definition of basement, when to include the space in the calculations for floor area ratio and number of stories
- Within the definition of frontage, specify that it must provide access to a lot from the street
- Clarify the definitions for building line, lot line, and lot width
- Clarify that open porches and decks are not included in the footprint of a nonconforming structure, unlike enclosed additions
- Lower the by-right size of additions to 250 sf for total demolitions and reconstructions of structures on undersized lots

Members discussed the affordable housing regulations and the dimensional regulations of corner lots and agreed that the existing language is satisfactory. Members also agreed that fenestration alterations on nonconforming buildings could impact abutters and discussed how to regulate potential impacts. Regarding average grade calculations, Members wondered if the ordinance should dictate where site grades should be measured on the lot to ensure that the average grade is accurate and representative of existing conditions for determining the height of structure.

Members also discussed the regulations for nonconforming structures and the proposed allowable size of by-right additions for one- and two-family structures on undersized lots. Planning Staff offered to review recent applications to the Board of Appeals that included relief for proposed additions to better inform the new regulations.

Mr. Nelson provided an update to Subcommittee Members on the meetings he conducted with nine stakeholders. The feedback on the current rezoning effort mainly focused on clarifying existing definitions, adding more definitions, ensuring eCode360 is up to date and navigable, adding more diagrams for dimensional regulations, and ensuring that the administrative section of the code is clear and consistent.

The comments from the meeting will be incorporated into another draft of the Ordinance.

The meeting ended at 10:00 PM.