

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Zoning Subcommittee Meeting
December 9, 2024
7:30 PM
Cassidy Conference Room, 562 Main Street, Melrose

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

ABSENT: Brian Gregory

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM by Ms. DeSouza Ward.

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

Lori Massa, Director and City Planner, explained that the State recently enacted the Affordable Homes Act (AHA), which includes legislation around Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). She presented an overview of Section 7 and 8 of the AHA, which amends the Zoning Act to define ADUs and establishes laws around their use and regulation. Section 7 went into effect immediately on August 6, 2024, and Section 8 will go into effect on February 2, 2025, at which point, ADUs will be allowed by-right in residential districts that allow single-family dwelling units. She noted that the State is allowing municipalities to enact reasonable dimensional restrictions and reviewed draft regulations which propose the following changes to Melrose Zoning Ordinance:

- Amend the definition of Accessory Building and add a definition for ADU
- Amend Section 235-5.3.1 Accessory Uses to reduce the percentage of allowable area of the total use of a structure or lot and create an exemption for ADUs
- Strike Section 235-5.3.6 In-Law Apartment and create new ADU use regulations
- Amend the dimensional requirements for accessory buildings in Section 235-9.1 for consistency and to reflect the reality of the City's existing built environment
- Remove reference to in-law apartments and include parking requirements for ADUs in Table 11.1 Off-Street Parking Requirements
- Amend the Table of Use and Parking Regulation to remove reference to in-law apartments and add ADUs under Accessory Use

Ms. Massa also noted that the State is requiring municipalities to collect and maintain data on the number of approved and denied ADU permit applications and the number of occupancy permits issued for any ADU, and submit annual reports to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). Additionally, the State released guidelines to further clarify the legislation and is accepting public comments on the regulations. One Member wondered if comments could be submitted to the State from the Melrose Planning Board, specifically asking

for more clarity about where ADUs can be located by-right and what the State considers reasonable dimensional restrictions.

Zoning Subcommittee Members discussed the State legislation and the proposed amendment. One Member wondered if the ADU setback requirements are sufficient. One Member wondered if ADUs would still be subject to slope protection and Ms. Massa responded that they will be. Members agreed that details regarding the design of ADUs should be clarified and codified, and it should be clear that proposals will be reviewed for compliance by Inspectional Services and Planning Staff.

The draft regulations will be edited to incorporate the feedback from Zoning Subcommittee Members before the full Planning Board reviews the amendment at their next hearing on December 16, 2024.

The meeting ended at 8:45 PM.