

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, February 24, 2025
7:00 PM
Cassidy Conference Room, 562 Main Street, Melrose

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

ABSENT: Tim Bailey

STAFF PRESENT: Lori Massa, Director & City Planner, and Maya Noviski, Senior Planner

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, January 27, 2025

Members requested that the minutes be amended to capitalize the type of ventilation system proposed for 40 Vine Street so that it was clear that it was a brand name. Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, as amended. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

SLOPE PROTECTION SPECIAL PERMIT

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

Jesse Schomer, Attorney, submitted a written request for a continuance to the Planning Board meeting on March 24, 2025, prior to the hearing. The request noted that since the updated materials were submitted on the day of the hearing, the Applicant preferred to continue the case and allow Members additional time to review the materials.

Ms. Morelli made a motion to continue the case to March 24, 2025. Mr. Gregory seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed

SITE PLAN APPROVAL

Case 24-003, 40 Vine Street, 140 Tremont Street, LLC (continued public hearing)

Rick Salvo, Engineer, submitted a written request for a continuance to the Planning Board meeting on March 24, 2025, prior to the hearing. The request noted that the Applicant required additional time to respond to the items requested by the Planning Board at the previous meeting.

Mr. Welch made a motion to continue the case to March 24, 2025. Ms. Delahaij seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

SITE PLAN APPROVAL & SPECIAL PERMITS

Case 24-004, 186 Tremont Street, Ronen and Nir Drory (continued public hearing)

Ronen and Nir Drory, Applicants, David Lucas, Attorney, Douglas Annino, Architect, and Eric Bradanese, Engineer, appeared before the Board. Mr. Bradanese noted that in response to the Engineering Department's comments, the Applicant has agreed to CCTV inspect the existing city-owned clay pipe that runs through the site before and after construction to ensure no damage has occurred. Additionally, the Applicant will replace the portion of the pipe that would be underneath the proposed building so that at least that portion is new since it would be more challenging to replace under the building in the future. Mr. Bradanese added that the average number of vehicles utilizing the car wash during the week and on weekends was provided to the Board using data from the business to supplement the traffic memorandum submitted during the last hearing and the numbers are similar.

Mr. Annino presented the updated architectural plans, which include:

- Combining the two commercial spaces into one larger unit with the ability to subdivide for two tenants as needed;
- Removing two parking spaces at the back of the site and shifting the transformer from the front yard to this location if approved by National Grid;
- Shifting the residential lobby to the right side of the building and adding a fitness area, an entry vestibule, and a mail and package room on the first floor;
- Expanding the bicycle parking area;
- Creating a jog in the north side of the building to break up the massing.

Mr. Annino also reviewed a shadow study showing how the building's shadow would impact abutting buildings on December 21 at 9 AM, 12 PM, and 2 PM. In response to the Planning Board's comments at the previous meeting, he commented that the balconies could not be wider than 2 ft. without violating the required setbacks in the zoning ordinance. Mr. Annino also provided the Board with samples of the proposed building materials and colors.

Lori Massa, Director & City Planner, reviewed a list of outstanding items that were requested at the last hearing that the Applicant has not yet addressed.

Members were supportive of locating the transformer at the back of the site and combining the commercial spaces. Members wondered about the length of the clay pipe and the number of properties it ran through. Attorney Lucas responded that the pipe outlets at Ell Pond; he was unsure of the number of properties. Members wondered about the number of trash and recycling dumpsters proposed. Mr. Annino commented that results from a trash study show that the residential units are expected to generate 26 yards of waste per week and the commercial unit is expected to generate 8 yards per week. As a result, two, 8-yard dumpsters are proposed for trash and one, 3-yard dumpster is proposed for recycling. There will be two pickups per week.

Members were unsure if the proposed trash enclosure would provide enough space for the three receptacles. Members also felt that requiring tenants to bring their trash to the trash enclosure would be inconvenient and an internal trash room or closer location for the dumpsters should be considered.

One Member commented that the bicycle room does not appear large enough to accommodate the required number of bicycle parking spaces and requested information about the proposed layout. Additionally, Members requested that the Applicant ensure that a bicycle could park at the rack in front of the building without it protruding onto the sidewalk. One Member wondered if the balconies on the fifth floor are private and Mr. Annino confirmed that they are. One Member wondered if the parking spaces at the front of the building will be visible through the glass facade and Mr. Annino noted that the glass could be translucent or transparent. One Member commented that frosted glass may impact the line of sight for vehicles exiting the property.

Members also had the following comments:

- The affordable units should be more evenly distributed throughout the building
- The landscape plan should specify the designated site materials such as the areas that will be asphalt, concrete, grass, etc.
- The Applicant should consider coordinating deliveries, so they are outside the hours of school start and dismissal
- Depending on the type of commercial tenant, the Applicant could consider designing spill out space in front of the unit

Frank Goodwin of 349 Washington Street appeared before the Board and wondered how many new housing units the City is able to accommodate. Mr. Sampson responded that information about housing and goals is documented in the City's Housing Production Plan.

Mr. Welch made a motion to continue the case to March 24, 2025. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT PROPOSALS

The Planning Board discussed the comments and questions posed by the City Councilors at the Joint Public Hearing. No public comments were submitted. In response to concerns that the proposed regulations do not explicitly prevent Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) from being used as short-term rentals, Ms. Massa explained that since the term "short term rental" is not currently defined or referenced in the zoning ordinance, it was preferable to use existing language to convey such a restriction, which is accomplished by using the proposed "temporary lodging" term. Additionally, Ms. Massa noted that the regulations for ADUs cannot be more restrictive than those for single-family dwellings so the zoning ordinance would need to be amended to include a definition for short term rentals and to specifically prohibit their use for all dwelling units.

Members felt that regulating short term rentals should be a part of a more comprehensive review and should not be included with the ADU amendment. Members did not recommend revising this section of the proposed amendment.

Ms. Massa reviewed a draft letter from the Planning Board to the City Council addressing the other questions and comments raised during the hearing. One Member recommended simplifying the explanation of the reasoning behind the proposed dimensional regulations for accessory buildings.

Ms. Massa noted that the recommendation includes clarifying that the ADU regulation preventing decks and balconies on the rear or the side closest to the rear abutter is for detached ADUs. There are no recommended changes to the basement height amendment.

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to send the Planning Board's recommendation and revised zoning amendment to the City Council. Mr. Aveni seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next regular Planning Board meeting is scheduled for March 24, 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.