

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, April 28, 2025
7:00 PM
Cassidy Conference Room, 562 Main Street, Melrose

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

ABSENT: Brian Gregory, Tim Bailey

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM by Mr. Sampson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Board Regular Meeting, February 24, 2025

Ms. DeSouza Ward made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. King seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Planning Board Regular Meeting, March 24, 2025

Mr. Welch made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Ms. Delahaij seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

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

Rick Salvo, Engineer, appeared before the Board to present on the updated plans for the 40 Vine Street project. The proposed changes are the following:

- The front of the building was modified to be more accessible and ADA compliant. The basement storage area was removed.
- Updated Operations and Management Plan. The trash storage location was relocated to the rear of the site.
- Updated Construction Management Plan with information on construction worker parking and the proposed truck routes.
- Modified bicycle parking plan.
- A transformer will not be needed for this project.
- Updated roof plan showing the location of roof drains and vents.
- Updated landscape plan. The Korean Dogwood in the back right corner of the lot was replaced with a Prospector Elm to provide more shade

Board members appreciated the changes in the updated plans. They had the following questions and comments:

- Members discussed the Rail Corridor Overlay District (RCOD) design standard that requires the installation of a landscaped buffer strip of at least 10 feet in width along any lot line abutting a residential zoning district. Due to the size and shape of the lot, there are different options to satisfy this design standard. Members agreed that the Design Review Subcommittee will review the proposed landscape buffer.
- One Member wondered if the condenser units could be moved to the roof so that existing landscaping in the side yard could remain. Another Member commented that the units location on the plan is standard practice in the HVAC industry and that is the most practical location.
- One Member asked about the trash management. How many bins and how often will they be picked up. Mr. Salvo explained that a private service will pick up the trash bins 1-2 times a week. Another Member commented that not enough trash and recycling bins are shown on the plan for a residential property with this many units.
- Members commented that the current parking layout would be difficult for residents to use the spaces closest to the proposed location of the trash bins. Mr. Salvo explained that the four Arborvitaes could be removed so that the trash bins can be relocated and that residents could more easily use those spaces.

The Board received no public comments.

Members reviewed the conditions for approval. Mr. Sampson went over the list of recommended conditions. Members discussed the following changes to the conditions:

- Condition #2 making it clear that the Planning Board approved the design and the specific elements listed will be reviewed in detail with the Design Review Subcommittee

Ms. Morelli made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Mr. Aveni made a motion to grant the requested waivers. Ms. Morelli seconded the motion. Six members voted in favor. None were opposed. Mr. King abstained as he was not present at one of the public hearings for the case.

Mr. Welch made a motion to approve the Site Plan for 40 Vine Street. Six members voted in favor with conditions attached. None were opposed. Mr. King abstained as he was not present at one of the public hearings for the case.

Documents: Application Materials, Updates and Draft Conditions Memo

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Case 25-001, 15 Green Street, Mathew O'Reilly c/o Melrose Wakefield Healthcare, Inc.

Patrick McAvoy, Attorney, Justin Mosca, Engineer, and Matthew O'Reilly, Applicant and Director of Facilities and Construction, Melrose Wakefield Hospital, appeared before the Board. Attorney McAvoy gave an overview of the project's history. He explained that prior to starting the site work the Applicant was unaware that Site Plan Review was required for changes to the parking lot. He noted that the work has been completed and the Building Commissioner issued a temporary certificate of occupancy contingent upon the Planning Board's approval.

Mr. Mosca presented an overview of the following changes to the site:

- Transformer was added to the site.
- The parking lot was expanded with additional parking spaces, including an ADA parking space.
- At the front of the site, the existing rock wall was extended, and bollards were installed in front of the spaces along Main Street.
- ADA compliant ramp installed to access the main entrance.
- Landscape buffer added to rear of site to shield the parking lot from an abutter.
- A water quality unit was added to treat stormwater from the site that connects to the city system.
- The parking lot was regraded so that stormwater will be redirected to catch basins and keep mulch and other debris off the sidewalk and street.
- The Stormwater management plan has been created based on feedback from the City.

Members were concerned with the loss of landscaping in the front of the site. They suggested adding more plantings in the front of the site as well as throughout the property where possible. Members were also concerned with the increase in impervious surface. The Board requested that a condition of approval be added to ensure that the site is further landscaped. Mr. O'Reilly confirmed that they are exploring different landscaping options.

Members had the following additional comments and questions:

- Members discussed the bollards' height and color. They agreed that the bollards should be dark green.
- Mr. Mosca explained that the bollard covers extend the height. Members suggested revising the proposed condition of approval to state that the new dark green covers will be at a consistent height and as low as practicable.
- One Member asked about the hours of operation of the site and who uses it. Mr. O'Reilly explained that employees use the site and that the building does close in the evening, so it is not a 24-hour operation.
- One Member asked if the site lighting can be turned off half an hour after the building closes. Mr. O'Reilly says that it cannot be due to safety reasons and that some staff occasionally work after hours. He added that they are working with abutters to mitigate any potential issues caused by site lighting. Members suggested striking the proposed condition about lighting be turned off half an hour after closing.
- Members asked about trash storage. Mr. O'Reilly explained that there is a small dumpster at the back of the site and abutters have not raised any concerns.
- Members asked about a gate located at the rear of the property. Mr. O'Reilly explained that the gate is for emergency egress for an abutting property.

The Board received no public comments.

Members reviewed the conditions for approval. Mr. Sampson went over the list of recommended conditions. Members discussed the following changes to the conditions:

- Amend condition #5 to specify that bollards are consistent height and as low as practicable.
- Add condition #7 (Add landscaping to center island of parking lot)
- Strike condition #10 (The Applicant/Owner shall extinguish any site lighting half an hour after the parking lot closes)

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

Mr. Welch made a motion to grant the requested waivers. Mr. Aveni seconded the motion. All voted in favor. None were opposed.

Mr. Welch made a motion to approve the Site Plan for 15 Green Street. All voted in favor with conditions attached. None were opposed.

Documents: Application materials, Updates and Draft Conditions Memo

RECOMMENDATION FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT APPLICATION
Case 25-002, 199-201 Essex Street

Mark Carroll, Applicant, and Robert Bell, Attorney, appeared before the Board to present an overview of the Comprehensive Permit Project at 199-201 Essex Street.

Attorney Bell gave an overview of the strategy of Ch. 40B development and how this project is beneficial to the Cedar Park neighborhood and the City overall.

Mr. Carroll presented an overview of the project. The proposal is to construct an approximately 11,000 sq. ft., 5-story building with 50 residential units for rent, 1,400 sq. ft commercial space, and 20 parking spaces. A total of 13 residential units will be affordable. He also noted that they have had several community meetings. Abutters are mostly supportive of the project and there were some concerns over parking.

The Board had the following questions and comments:

- Board Members wondered if the three temporary spaces in front of the building on Essex Street were on site and if they would be used for ride share/deliveries. Mr. Carroll explained that the parking spaces would be in the right of way and that yes they will be used by ride share and delivery services as well as typical off-site parking spaces.
- Board members discussed the benefits of the parking layout.

The Board discussed supporting the project and making recommendations to the ZBA. They supported the following aspects of the project:

- The proposed development is consistent with the Zoning District. The scale is similar to the abutting properties on Essex Street.
- They approve of the design of the building and uses: commercial and enclosed parking on the first floor and residential above.
- The site will be more pedestrian friendly than the existing condition. The proposed development will decrease the curb cut and this will lead to improved safety for pedestrians.
- Members were pleased that the Applicant has been communicating directly with abutters over parking concerns and landscaping improvements.
- Members supported the parking ratio.
- The Board is overall supportive of the proposed project, which will add much needed housing in a transit-oriented location.

The Board will review a written recommendation at their next meeting to send to the ZBA for their consideration during the public hearing process.

Documents: Application materials

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT PROPOSALS

The Board scheduled a joint public hearing with City Council for May 15, 2025 at 8pm to consider the Floodplain Overlay District & Registered Marijuana Dispensaries and Marijuana Establishments Zoning Amendments.

Documents: Floodplain Overlay District & Registered Marijuana Dispensaries and Marijuana Establishments Zoning Amendments

OTHER BUSINESS

The next regular Planning Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 19, 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.