

**MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

**Special Meeting
Monday, April 13, 2015
7:45 PM**

Mayor's Conference Room, Second Floor, City Hall, 562 Main Street

PRESENT: Carla Morelli, Michael Cassavoy, Ed Cassidy, Anne DeSouza-Ward, Paul King, Robert Mercado, John Sadowski and Jack Welch.

ABSENT: Sharon Petrillo

Denise Gaffey, Director and City Planner, Erin Zwirko, Assistant Planning Director, and Jessica Mitchell, Planning Coordinator, were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 PM by Ms. Morelli.

Mr. Cassidy MADE a MOTION to take agenda items out of order. Ms. DeSouza-Ward SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

ZONING AMENDMENTS

Ms. Denise Gaffey gave a report of the results of the meeting with the Aldermen on Monday, April 6, where the Board of Aldermen voted to approve the Zoning Amendments related to the Commuter Rail Station areas as well as technical amendments to the Rail Corridor Overlay District. She reported that the Aldermen made a lot of positive comments and showed support for the proposal as initially drafted. Ms. DeSouza-Ward, who was also in attendance, said that the Aldermen made a lot of positive comments on the Zoning decisions that were made and they complimented the Site Plan review process. Ms. Gaffey said that the new Zoning Amendments would stimulate economic development initiatives in the areas and that she is aware of some projects that are already ready to start.

Mr. Cassavoy asked if there were any plans to look at zoning for the installation of ground mounted solar panels. Mr. Cassavoy wondered if there were parcels of land in Melrose that might not be appropriate to develop as housing, but that could be used for the installation of ground mounted solar panels. Ms. Gaffey said that this issue has not come up, but that the Energy Efficiency Manager is looking at it.

Mr. Cassidy asked about zoning for heavy equipment storage in the new BA-2 District. He was concerned about the parking lot behind Corinthian Hall as he has seen private contracting equipment stored there and wondered if this is an allowable use? Mr. Mercado added that he thought if it was allowable, that it should be screened. Ms. Gaffey said that she could look into this issue.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Case 15-002, 37 Washington Street, WP East Acquisitions, LLC (public hearing)

Carolyn Zern from Wood Partners presented the application to amend the previously approved site plan for 37 Washington St which is the location for Stone Place Phase II. The original site plan proposed an adaptive reuse of the existing building at 37 Washington St. As they started to develop architectural plans for the rehabilitation of the building, they found that the interior of the existing building is not conducive to a housing use. They would like to modify the original Site Plan Approval to allow demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new building in its place. The site would now contain two new

buildings instead of one refurbished building and one new building. The original 88 units proposed would remain the same. The configuration of the building would change. The original proposal contained 56 units in the existing building and 32 units to be constructed in the new building in the rear. Since both buildings would be new, they would like to change the configuration of the units to contain 34 units in a three story building in the front and 54 units in a five story building in the rear. The front building would contain a fitness center, a business center, and 10 units on the ground floor. The rest of the building would be residential. The rear building would contain parking on the first floor along with 2 units. The remaining floors would be all residential. Between the buildings, there would be landscaping, a fire-pit and some grills.

Ms. Zern pointed out some areas where snow would be stored in the event of smaller storms, but that in larger storms, the snow would be removed from the site.

The current owner of the site would be responsible for the demolition of the building, and the site would be fully abated prior to the demolition. The fire department would be on site during demolition to maintain air quality standards.

Over the winter, they met with the Historical Commission to review the changes and the architecture of the new building. She said that they indicated a strong preference for mimicking the massing of the existing building in the new building.

Rob Del Salvo, architect for the project, reviewed the configuration and layout of the site on the areal pictures.

Mr. Brian Jones, the projects engineer, described the engineering aspects of the project. He said that the front area of Washington Street had been almost completely developed. He described the stormwater plan and grading. The plan will involve the same circulation and drainage concept. Everything discharges to Spot Pond Brook. The small below grade detention area located behind Building F has been enlarged slightly. The plans were very similar to the previously approved plans. The largest change to the plans is the addition of pervious pavement areas. These areas were not part of the calculations for stormwater management of the site. They were included in order to meet the zoning requirements for open space as pervious surface is given credit as open space. He said that the operation and maintenance is a lot like regular pavement. It carries the same loads. It does require more care during the winter as sand and salt can't be used and a special plow head is used for snow removal.

Mr. Jones also reviewed the utility plans and water and sewer connection plans. They performed a video camera inspection of the existing clay pipe connection to the sewer line. They are proposing to install a PVC slip liner for the entire 30-FT length of the pipe. They are using this approach because MWRA requires the reuse of the existing line for Building E off of Washington Street. Building F will have a new sewer line stub off of Phase I. The current regulations would not allow them to place a new sewer connection in the same location. The electric and phone lines would be located underground. The water connections would be connected in a loop that would connect to Stone Place, per the City Engineer.

Mr. Del Salvo continued his presentation of the building layouts. The proposed new building in the front, Building E, would be three stories and does not contain a retail component. The first floor would have a small business center and fitness center for residents and 10 units on the ground floor. The upper two floors would contain 12 units on each floor. The units would consist of mostly one and two bedroom units, with a few 3-bedroom units located in the corners. The ground floor units would have a patio area on the Washington Street side. The building would have a flat roof to mimic the industrial massing of the

building to be replaced. The building would contain more brick detailing than the current building to visually tie in more with the other buildings in the complex.

The second building in the rear would be five stories and consist of parking and residential units. The ground floor would contain 32 parking spaces at grade level and two units. There would be 80 additional parking spaces spread throughout the rest of the site. The parking would be screened with vegetation and plantings.

Tom Minor, landscape architect for the project, described the landscape plans for the site. He described what types of plantings would be in each area and where fences and benches would be placed. The site would contain a mix of shrubs planted around the foundations and trees. Some of the trees that would be included are red oaks on Washington Street and pink dogwoods in the interior courtyard. The shrubs would likely be a mix of magnolia, mixed evergreens and junipers.

Ms. Zern discussed the plans to implement a sidewalk museum that would highlight the historical significance of the area through plaques distributed throughout the site describing the history of Melrose. There would be 3-4 uniform looking plaques with pictures and text throughout the site. The plans of the locations and content of the signs are currently in development. They would be created by VHB, the firm that created the plaques for Stone Place.

Ms. Zern stated that this concluded their presentation and asked the Board if they had any questions for the team.

Mr. Cassidy asked if Stone Place Phase I and Phase II could be sold separately. Ms. Zern replied that they would be able to sell the properties separately; but that the assumption was that they would be a unit and share amenities. She suggested that 2 Washington and Phase II could be packaged together in the future.

Mr. Cassidy asked about the parking distribution on the site. Although the parking seems ample, the majority seemed to be located closer to Building F in the rear and very little was located near Building E in the front. Mr. Jones, engineer for the project, replied that the site was very small and the distances from the parking areas to both buildings was very small. Ms. Zern added that there would be pathways with lighting installed from the parking areas to both buildings. She confirmed that covered parking would be assigned.

Mr. Cassavoy asked about the roofline of the proposed building. He said that he preferred the look of the sloped roofs such as those located on Building A as they had a more residential feel to them and thought it was a better transition to the residential houses in the area.

Mr. Cassavoy asked about the rear building. He noted that even though the building was in the rear of the property, it was very visible to pedestrian traffic behind the site. During the warmer months, the building would be screened by trees, but that there would be 4-5 months where the building was exposed and it is a very tall building now.

Mr. Cassavoy asked about how the pervious surface would look over time and if there were any installations nearby that were 5-10 years in age? Mr. Jones replied that the parking lot at Winchester Hospital had been done this way about 4 years ago.

Ms. Morelli said that she thinks the area has changed with the amount of development in the area and that the context of the buildings located at 37 Washington St has changed. She noted that 2 Washington Street has a flat roof and that the area closest to this site is industrial looking. She did not think that the flat roof

was out of place in this location. The location of Building A is closer to the residential houses. Mr. Cassidy agreed that the context has changed and he thinks either could work.

Mr. Cassidy asked about the mechanical systems on the roof and if they would be screened. Mr. Del Salvo responded that they had done careful site line surveys. The condensers are 28 inches tall and a 3.5-FT tall screening wall is proposed, which will also help muffle any sound from the condensers. He stated that neither the wall nor the condensers will be visible from the street.

Ms. Zern addressed the comments on the roofline of the proposed building. She said the flat roof was proposed in an effort to retain the spirit of the original building. Building A is the entrance to the residential section and the gabled roof helps to make that transition. The proposed flat roof also creates a building of less height. In addition, the Historical Commission indicated in their discussions that they preferred the industrial look of the original building be preserved.

Ms. Gaffey read a letter from Alderman Gail Infurna that indicated she appreciated the brick detailing in the new building and she supports the notion of a new building. She would like to see more screening for the electrical equipment on the site.

Mr. Del Salvo said that the current plan called for 3 electrical devices, however that many may not be required once they receive a response from the electric company regarding the required load. The equipment will be bordered by fence on 3 sides; however they are required to leave the fourth side accessible, so that side will be protected by steel bollards and plantings.

Mr. King asked about the small size of the proposed bike racks near Building F. Ms. Zern responded that most people bring their bikes into their units, so they did not anticipate a lot of bikes parked outside.

Ms. Morelli opened the meeting to the public and asked if anyone would like to speak.

Mr. John Tozza of 99 Washington Street spoke. He said that he has large trucks that need to enter and exit the property and that he had negotiated a driveway width of 35-Ft with the owners of 37 Washington Street. The new plan seems to be offering a much narrower opening than that and he is concerned that it will not offer enough area for the trucks to properly turn while entering and exiting the property. He said that he had made an agreement with the owners which gave them a right of way across his property in order to access electrical services in exchange for the location and width of the driveway which would be partially on his property and partially on 37 Washington Street property. In addition, he is also having some problems with drainage in the rear of his property that did not exist prior to the area being paved.

Mr. William Doe of 8 Ireson Court asked if there would be any attempt to use local help from the trades in the new construction. He said that in the last phase of construction he was unaware of any attempt to post the work for local trades' people.

Mr. Jim Bennett, Chair of the Melrose Historical Commission said that he has met with the applicant to discuss the new proposal. It was obvious to the Historical Commission that the existing building could not be kept up in a historical way. He also noted that he hoped the sidewalk museum project would be a precedent for future developers as it is an asset to the city.

Ms. Zern said that they have looked at 45-FT trucks and will make sure that the flanges in the driveway will allow access.

Mr. Jones said that the driveway will be made of pervious pavement up to the property line and that the driveway would be 24-ft wide at its narrowest point.

There was some discussion regarding Mr. Tozza's agreement and what it entailed and if the current plan would meet the requirements of there reciprocal access agreement. Ms. Zern assured Mr. Tozza that they would meet the agreements in place. Mr. Cassidy also stated that although the Planning Board is not responsible for enforcement of agreements between private parties, they could stipulate in their decision that these agreements must be satisfied. Mr. Tozza's major concerns were the width of the driveway being large enough to accommodate the large trucks that need access to his property, and the installation of a stub on the sewer and water lines for his properties use.

The Board also expressed some concern about the applicants plan to install pervious pavement in half of the driveway up to the property line and leave the existing pavement on Mr. Tozza's half of the driveway. They expressed concern about how this would be effectively plowed as pervious surface requires a different plowing technique than impervious pavement. They expressed it would simplify matters if they provided the same surface all the way up to Mr. Tozza's building and disregarded the location of the property line.

Ms. Zern addressed the comments regarding the request for more use of local tradespeople. She said that she would have to discuss this issue with the Construction Manager and bring some information back.

The Board discussed options for continuing the review of the modifications. Ms. Zern said that they were continuing to develop and refine the plans. Ms. Morelli asked about assigning the review to the Design Review subcommittee of the Planning Board. Mr. Cassidy said that they could review the lighting plans and building mock ups as well as the issues regarding the truck turning radius issues. He thought that they should first continue the discussion at a full Planning Board meeting and if the issues could not be resolved at that time, the remaining issues could be transferred to the Design Review Subcommittee.

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to continue the hearing to the next regular meeting of the Planning Board. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Site Plan Review Application, Case 15-002
 Site Plan Review Decision, Case 08-007, dated June 18, 2009
 Modification of Site Plan Review Decision for Case 08-007, dated September 29, 2014
 Amendment to Memorandum of Agreement Among Massachusetts Historical
 Commission, Department of Environmental Protection, and Stone Place, LP
 Letter to Denise Gaffey, City Planner, from Andrew Street, City Engineer, dated April 8,
 2015

NEXT MEETING

Next Regular Meeting

Scheduled for Monday, April 27, 2015

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.