

DRAFT
MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
Regular Meeting & Public Hearing
Monday, April 27, 2009
7:45 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room

PRESENT: Richard Connolly, Ed Cassidy, Gerry Marcus, John Sadowski, Anne DeSouza-Ward, Tom Pawlina, Bob Mercado, Carla Francazio, and Mike Cassavoy

Denise Gaffey, Planner, and Matt Hennigan, Assistant Planner were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 p.m. by Mr. Connolly.

ASSENT CALENDAR

Case 09-004, 60 Cochrane Street, Casey

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to approve the item on the Assent Calendar and send a standard letter to the Board of Appeals that notes that the Applicant's single family dwelling is located on a corner lot. Mr. Pawlina SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

BOARD OF APPEALS

Case 09-003, 78 Florence Avenue, Roland

The Applicant, Larry Roland, presented the application to the Board which includes the construction of two (2) third story dormers including a gabled dormer in the front and a shed dormer in the rear of the dwelling as well as an addition to the existing garage. Mr. Cassavoy confirmed that the Applicant would be performing the work himself. Mr. Sadowski confirmed that the addition to the garage would be set back. Ms. Francazio pointed out that the application does not include a rear elevation. Mr. Cassidy suggested an alternative design that would assist to lower the visual impression of the dwelling. Mr. Sadowski inquired if there were any other three-story dwellings in the area and questioned whether the Applicant's proposal would fit with the character of the neighborhood. Mr. Mercado inquired regarding the proposed height of the structure and was informed that it would be 32 feet tall. Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to send a letter to the Board of Appeals stating that the Board finds that the proposed dormers trigger a significant variance that should take into account how the apparent three story dwelling will fit within the surrounding area. Should the Board of Appeals deem the resulting 3-story structure appropriate, we recommend the Applicant redesign the proposed rear shed dormer to create a symmetrical gabled roof set back 1 ½ feet on either side with a recessed dormer which will assist to lower the visual impact of the dwelling. In addition, the Applicant should show the existing rear elevation on the drawings along with a plan depicting the proposed rear dormer. Mr. Sadowski added with respect to the garage component of the application, the Board has no objection to the proposed addition to the garage given the Applicant's representation that the garage will continue to be used in its current manner as vehicle storage. Mr. Cassavoy SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Case 09-005, 41 Damon Avenue, Riley

The Applicant, Jennifer Riley, was present to describe the details of the application which involves tearing down the existing three-season porch and constructing a one story addition that would serve as a family room. Mr. Cassidy confirmed that Applicant's proposal increases the non-conformity by two feet. The Applicant informed the Board that the neighbors do not have any objection to the proposed addition. Mr. Cassidy suggested that the Applicant consider adding more windows to the front and rear to keep more with the present architecture of the dwelling. Ms. DeSouza-Ward MADE a MOTION to send a

standard letter to the Board of Appeals stating that the Board views the encroachment to the side setback as minor. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Case 09-006, 37 Washington Street, MetroPCS of Massachusetts

Scott Lacey from Prince Lobel Glovsky & Tye, LLP on behalf of the Applicant was in attendance to present the application. Mr. Lacey stated the proposal includes the installation of a temporary monopole at 37 Washington Street to allow MetroPCS to provide service to Melrose. Mr. Lacey indicated that the long-term destination for the wireless communication service facility equipment is the smokestack also located at the former mill complex. Mr. Lacey stated that the monopole would require a 30' x 30' fenced in area and that the only disturbance to the ground would be associated with the necessary underground utility cabling. Mr. Cassavoy commented that the monopole would likely be affected by the wind and that it would be a good idea for a structural engineer to review the design. Mr. Cassidy cautioned that the smokestack might fail and that the City would be stuck with the monopole. Mr. Sadowski questioned whether the Applicant exhausted all their options before electing to move forward with the monopole proposal. Mr. Lacey shared that the monopole would be located at rear of property along the fence and cabinets will be included with the foundation. Ms. Marcus inquired how long the temporary installation would be in place. Mr. Lacey stated that the availability of the smokestack would be the determining factor and that the Applicant anticipates that the Zoning Board of Appeals will institute a time limit for the special permit. Mr. Sadowski cautioned regarding the current difficult economic climate and the possibility that the Applicant may not be around to take the monopole down. Ms. Francazio inquired regarding the coordination of this project in respect to the Site Plan Review application for the same property. Mr. Lacey stated that the owner is aware of ZBA application, which is separate application that stands on its own. Ms. DeSouza-Ward expressed that she was not comfortable with the temporary nature of the installation and questioned whether the Applicant had adequately explored alternative locations pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance. Ms. DeSouza-Ward supported a time limit for the special permit. Mr. Cassidy commented that it would be appropriate for the equipment to be screened with fencing consistent with the area. Mr. Cassavoy noted that Applicant agrees to remove the foundation and all supporting structures.

Mr. Pawlina with the assistance from the members composed the following letter to the Board of Appeals stating that the Planning Board had a lengthy discussion regarding this application and expressed several concerns. Board members who were actively involved in the creation of the Wireless Communication Service Facility (WCSF) Ordinance recall the monopole option to be an option of last resort and less desirable than the typical building-mounted installation. In addition, the Board was not convinced that the Applicant had adequately explored alternative WCSF locations, pursuant to §235-73 paragraph A of the Zoning Ordinance. The Board has concerns about the compatibility of this proposal with the residential development currently under review and noted the very real possibility that the smokestack might not be able to be salvaged, which might then cause the Applicant to pursue a more permanent status for the monopole installation. In light of this possibility and should the Zoning Board of Appeals support a Special Permit for this installation, we strongly recommend limiting the Special Permit to no more than two years. Mr. Pawlina added that the Board noted that the application is schematic in nature and additional information is needed to thoroughly review the application. In addition to demonstrating that there are no alternative installation locations, the Applicant should address in writing the conditions required within § 235-86 of the Zoning Ordinance specific to Wireless Communication Service Facilities. The Board noted potential structural concerns and recommended review by a structural engineer and emphasized the need for screening consistent with the character of other fences in the area should the ZBA approve the Special Permit. Ms. DeSouza-Ward MADE a MOTION to send a letter to the Board of Appeals that was summarized by Mr. Pawlina. Mr. Sadowski SECONDED the MOTION. Seven members voted in favor. Mr. Cassidy and Ms. Marcus voted in opposition.

SUBDIVISION – SLOPE PROTECTION SPECIAL PERMIT

SP 08-001, Boardman Avenue, Green Morningside Nominee Trust (continued public hearing)

The Applicants, Linda Bulman and Mark Hutchinson, were present along with their Representative, Louis Izzi and Engineer, Richard Williams from Hayes Engineering. Mr. Izzi expressed that unfortunately the Engineer was not able to respond to the peer review in time for tonight's meeting. Mr. Izzi asked for a continuance so that a comprehensive response could be provided. The Board expressed frustration regarding the lack of progress and indicated to the Applicant that this public hearing would be a good opportunity to clarify some on-going issues involved with the application. Mr. Cassidy emphasized the importance of sensitive and appropriate landscaping along the property line. He stated that the details of the retaining walls are important and need to demonstrate the appropriate use of natural rock that is carefully placed rather than machine-placed concrete masonry solutions. Mr. Cassidy expressed that highway drainage structures are not appropriate for residential properties and that the Board is in favor of as little pavement as possible. Mr. Cassidy asked the status of the Saugus culvert improvements and was informed that it is the intention of the City of Saugus to perform the work, but there is currently no information available on the timetable. In terms of architecture, Ms. DeSouza-Ward emphasized that it is important that the dwellings are not too large in scale.

Mr. Connolly opened the meeting to public comment.

Paul Ormand, 25 Arlington Road

Mr. Ormand presented a letter signed by forty residents from the neighborhood that highlighted their position in respect to the proposed subdivision. Mr. Ormand expressed concern regarding the proposed rip rap slope, the degree of grading shown in the drawings, the size of the dwellings, and the width of the roadway. Mr. Ormand indicated that the proposed type of rip rap slope does not exist in this neighborhood and pointed out that residents take it upon themselves to match the existing character of the neighborhood. Mr. Ormand stated the grading plan would impact 95% of the site right up to the property line of the abutting homes and include large rock cuts while hardly leaving any trees standing.

Kevin Hegarty, 11 Cranmore Lane

Mr. Hegarty discouraged the installation of a fence around the detention ponds for child safety issues and expressed support for narrowing the roadway and eliminating the sidewalk on one side of the street.

Ursula Renier, 11 Arlington Road

Ms. Renier expressed concern that the size of the proposed dwellings would be a strong contrast to the existing neighborhood. Ms. Renier inquired whether it had been calculated how much the subdivision would cost the City.

Kathleen Driscoll, 23 Cranmore Lane

Ms. Driscoll expressed concern regarding sewer issues in the area as well as status of the Saugus culvert work.

Jan Crafts, 171 Boardman Avenue

Ms. Crafts indicated flooding is her main concern. Ms. Crafts indicated that she does not feel that the subdivision project should proceed until the Saugus culvert is repaired. Ms. Crafts inquired regarding the precise size of the mitigation field that proposed to be located near her home. Ms. Crafts concluded by stating that she does not feel that the proposed subdivision will be a benefit to the neighborhood.

Fred O'Brien, 27 Arlington Road

Mr. O'Brien stated that he is primarily concerned with how the flooding will be affected behind his house and how the drainage structures will appear.

Alan Finley, 125 Boardman Avenue

Mr. Finley inquired whether blasting would take place and asked for consideration in respect to the increased truck traffic in the neighborhood and child safety.

Louis Crafts, 171 Boardman Avenue

Mr. Crafts inquired regarding how the mitigation field near his home will function and how it will be maintained.

James Renier, 11 Arlington Road

Mr. Renier presented an image that he created of what the area between the proposed subdivision and abutting homes to the west will look like when construction is complete.

Peter Bowman, 24 Arlington Road

Mr. Bowman expressed some frustration that the application has not progressed and that it is time for the Applicants to put a complete plan in place so that the neighbors can better understand what is proposed. Mr. Bowman referenced the Master Plan process and stated that it does not appear that the proposed subdivision is in keeping with the character of the existing area. Mr. Bowman asked if there is a commitment from the Applicants not to construct McMansion-style dwellings.

Mr. Connolly asked the members of the Board for comment. Ms. DeSouza-Ward discussed the possibility of adding green space in the center of the cul-de-sac. Mr. Sadowski raised the issue of turning radii in relation to the cul-de-sac and Mr. Pawlina added that the Board has approved hammerhead turnarounds in the past, which are less pavement intensive. Ms. Gaffey stated that these issues could be addressed as part of the waiver process. Mr. Cassavoy voiced difficulty reading the plans and encouraged the Engineer to use a larger scale. Mr. Cassavoy expressed that it would be useful for the abutters to see how everything will appear along the property line and provide some perspective in terms of the location of the proposed dwellings in comparison to the actual locations of the abutters' homes. Mr. Cassidy raised the question of whether cluster development would be a possibility. Mr. Gaffey expressed that while cluster development might be appropriate; it would not be permissible under the City's Zoning Ordinance without obtaining the necessary variances. Mr. Pawlina expressed frustration with the timeliness of the meetings. Ms. Francazio cautioned that the planning is flawed and that the Applicant might need to take a step back. Mr. Cassidy and Mr. Sadowski discussed the difficulty with working with Definitive Plan without the benefit of a Preliminary Plan. Ms. Marcus MADE a MOTION to continue the public hearing to June 29, 2009. Mr. Cassidy SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED

Greenwood Street, Lot 113 Melrose Realty Trust

Mr. Cassidy explained the circumstances associated with the proposed ANR application. Mr. Cassidy stated he became interested in purchasing the land behind his home when he became aware that the land in the rear was not public land as he had been told when he purchased his single family dwelling. Mr. Cassidy explained that his proposal involves a swap of parcels with the Conservation Commission that will allow his lot to be in conformance with the City's Zoning Ordinance and allow the Conservation Commission to gain a sizable piece land that will come under its protection. Mr. Cassidy indicated that an extensive approval process is needed which will include authorization from the State and the Melrose Conservation Commission as well as the Planning Board. The ANR is the first step. Mr. Cassidy left the room so that the Board could begin deliberations. After brief discussion, Ms. Marcus MADE a MOTION to approve the ANR. Mr. Cassavoy SECONDED the MOTION. All in favor. None opposed. Meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.