

DRAFT
MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
Special Meeting
Monday, February 4, 2008
7:50 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room

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

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:55 p.m. by Mr. Cassavoy.

Ms. Gaffey said she would like to give a brief overview of the Smart Growth Task Force's efforts to date. She stated that a consultant, Rick Taintor of Taintor & Associates had been hired to assist on the zoning change for lower Washington Street. Mayor Dolan created the Smart Growth Task Force to look at the City's vision for lower Washington Street – it is close to transportation so the intent is to promote mixed use, i.e. residential and commercial. The current zoning designation is obsolete. The Task Force contemplated designating the area a BB-1 district like Pembroke or an overlay district. The members questioned whether it would be more streamlined to work with a different designation as opposed to an overlay. They ultimately decided it would be pretty complicated because another factor is that the existing uses would become more non-conforming. Therefore, it is felt that structuring the zoning amendment as an overlay is the direction to take. Ms. Gaffey said that the Task Force held a public workshop a year ago to learn about the neighbors' vision for the site. They also would like to see mixed use with small businesses, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and traffic-calming measures. The public was encouraged by what the Task Force is trying to accomplish. Ms. Gaffey

spoke about 40R legislation and said that after evaluation, it was decided that some components of 40R would not be good for Melrose , namely, the requirement of 20% affordable housing (Melrose at 10%) and the loss of local control under the state-run 40R. A key point is the fact that the as-of-right zoning is tied to the Site Plan Review process. If this zoning amendment is approved, a developer would come before the Planning Board. Therefore, it would be a good time to review the Site Plan Review process also. Ms. Gaffey said certain areas of the SPR could be strengthened. The Task Force worked with four primary property owners in this 15 acre industrial district, plus MA Electric which owns a substation at Stone Place. There is much interest in preserving existing mill buildings as these landmark buildings make the area unique. Ms. Gaffey turned the meeting over to Mr. Taintor who showed slides of the lower Washington Street area that are specific to the ordinance.

The Planning Board members discussed the draft zoning ordinance they had been distributed at the January 28, 2008 PB meeting. The members discussed whether or not material should be specified on Page 8. Mr. Pawlina thought concrete would be preferred over stick-built. Mr. Cassavoy agreed that the use of masonry should be encouraged. Mr. Sadowski also agreed and stated that he would rather the ordinance be clear on the materials that are to be used. He said development should be fostered not discouraged. The members wondered how 40R would compare to this smart growth ordinance. Mr. Taintor stated that it is pretty typical for an overlay district. He said that 40R was created to make it easier to go through the development process. There was discussion regarding the definition of overlay and Ms. Regan said that a definition could be put onto the

website. Mr. Cassidy thought it would be worth saying or suggesting that residential-style, stick-built, big-house construction is probably not what the Planning Board members would like to see. Mr. Pawlina commented on the word 'material' being left out of page 8 – Ms. Regan stated that the Task Force wanted to leave room for a modern look. Ms. Gaffey stated they have received enough feedback in order to clarify the issue of what materials would be preferred. Mr. Sadowski noted that there is nothing in the draft ordinance about sign regulations. Discussion took place about #3 on Page Five – this should be reviewed with the Building Inspector. Regarding #6 on Page Six, Mr. Cassavoy would like to see a diagram. There was discussion about where the definition of the building height falls and Mr. Taintor stated this could be looked at again. Ms. Regan stated that the way it is worded leaves a lot of wiggle room for the Building Inspector. Mr. Connolly spoke about the present parking danger surrounding the Registry of Motor Vehicles building. He speculated if a letter should be written to state legislator suggesting a move elsewhere. He stated the Registry will come up for a lease renewal at some point and, perhaps, at that time the traffic hazard could be addressed. The Task Force wants to encourage as much open space as possible. Both the Task Force and the neighbors feel strongly about this. The Task Force created a mechanism for design in increase in open space that would go into an open space fund. The developers have been comfortable with that.

Site Plan Review

Ms. Gaffey asked the members for feedback for the proposed changes to the Site Plan Review Criteria memorandum that was distributed last week. Mr. Cassavoy questioned

whether the word 'formally' should be added to #2 on Page Four. Mr. Cassidy agreed that the word should be taken out of that section. The Planning Board members discussed the wording in #7 on Page Five. They felt the word 'significantly' is not suitable.

Mr. Pawlina MADE a MOTION to incorporate changes discussed to the draft Smart Growth District Regulations and to the Site Plan Review Criteria and then to send both documents to the Board of Aldermen. Ms. Marcus SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Ms. Desouza-Ward MADE a MOTION to adjourn. Ms. Marcus SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.