MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
Annual Meeting & Public Hearing
Monday, March 24, 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 7:50 p.m. by Mr. Cassavoy.

MINUTES
a) Regular Meeting & Public Hearing, February 25, 2008 & Public Hearing, March 10, 2008

SUBDIVISION – SLOPE PROTECTION SPECIAL PERMIT

SP 08-001, Boardman Avenue, Green Morningside Nominee Trust
Mr. Connolly MADE a MOTION to move this case before the Board of Appeals cases.
Ms. Desouza-Ward SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.
Louis Izzi, appeared on behalf the Applicant. The Applicant is requesting that the Subdivision Application as well as the Slope Protection Special Permit be continued until June 23, 2008 and that the statute of limitations for each application be extended to September 23, 2008. Mr. Izzi indicated that in the meantime the Applicant will be working with Conservation Commission to address issues related to the proposed lot at Carlida and Cranmore. Mr. Connolly directed the abutters to the Public Work's newsletter on the City website. The newsletter describes the Ward 2 Drain Improvement Project which will address localized street flooding in areas such as Carlida Road. Mr. Connolly suggested that the abutters contact their aldermen-at-large to see about setting up a meeting with the Public Works subcommittee to see that Public Works is informed about the increase in flooding that this area has experienced in recent years. Mr. Pawlina MADE a MOTION to continue the hearing to June 23, 2008. Mr. Sadowski SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

BOARD OF APPEALS
Case 08-008, 11 Baxter Street, Donahue
The Applicants, Mr. and Mrs. Donahue, were present. Mr. Donahue stated he would like to construct a deck measuring 16" x 23" on the side of his house. He told the Planning Board that due to the size of his lot, the deck would need to be constructed right up to the lot line. The Applicant shared that the proposed deck would include a pergola. Mr. Sadowski said that he could not recollect a case where the Planning Board has supported building a structure so close to the lot line. The Planning Board discussed the various safety and access issues involved with the proposal as well as the potential obtrusiveness to the direct abutter. The Applicant indicated to the Board that he shared his plans for the deck with his neighbor. Mr. Cassidy inquired regarding the height of the proposed deck and suggested the possibility of constructing a permanent raised masonry patio that if built at the appropriate elevation would not require a variance. The Applicant responded that the deck is proposed to be 42 inches in height. Mr. Cassavoy reiterated the reluctance of the Board to endorse a proposal that encroaches up to the property line. Mr. Pawlina expressed that the proposed deck is out of scale for what belongs on the Applicant's lot. Additional discussion took place regarding the raised patio option. Mr. Sadowski cautioned to be mindful of creating any drainage issues for the direct abutter. Mr. Pawlina offered an additional

alternative which involved constructing the patio at grade with porous materials up to the property line, which would be permitted without a variance. Mr. Mercado inquired whether the Applicant considered adding to the existing porch. The Applicant responded that the area of lot where the porch is located does not receive sufficient sunlight. Mr. Pawlina MADE a MOTION to send a letter stating the Planning Board cannot support this application as proposed. The Planning Board is concerned about public safety due to the lack of access created by extending the deck to the side lot line. The Board made the Applicant aware of several alternatives that meet their goal, to create an attractive area for their family to enjoy and the Board encouraged the Applicant to pursue any one of the alternatives that were discussed. Mr. Connolly SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Case 08-009, 344 Franklin Street, Schermerhorn
The Applicant, Marshall Schermerhorn, and his representative, Barry Belcastro, were present. Mr. Belcastro shared with the Board that the Applicant is required by the Department of Public Safety to replace the existing freight elevator. Mr. Belcastro explained that it is not feasible to replace the elevator at its existing location due to the size of the modern elevator equipment. As a result, Mr. Belcastro discussed the plan to remove the existing wood stairwell structure on the north side of the building and replace it with a new elevator and stairwell. The Applicant shared that the elevator structure would be constructed a foot further away from the property line than the existing stairwell. The Board evaluated how the abutters would be impacted by the proposal. The Applicant explained that the stairwell structure that would be replaced by the elevator is unattractive and that the proposed structure would be more in character with the building.
Mr. Pawlina MADE a MOTION to send standard letter to the Board of Appeals that notes that the proposed elevator structure will be set back one foot further away from the property line than the existing wood stairwell structure and points out that the Applicant's proposal will improve access to the property as well as the appearance of the building. Ms. Marcus SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Case 08-010, 248 West Wyoming Avenue, Vautin
The Applicants, Mr. and Mrs. Vautin, were present. The Applicants would like to build a second bathroom above the existing sunroom without expanding the footprint of the dwelling. The Applicants explained their home is located on a non-conforming lot. Ms. DeSouza-Ward confirmed that the proposed bathroom would not encroach further into setback. The Applicants explained that their proposal will improve the drainage as currently no gutters exist in that part of dwelling. The Applicants shared that they have spoken to their neighbors who seem unopposed to this construction. Mr. Connolly verified that the proposed addition would not be visible from the street and concluded along with Mr. Cassidy that it would match the character of house.
Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to send standard letter to the Board of Appeals that notes that that the proposed addition to the non-conforming structure would not be visible from the street or increase the encroachment to the rear setback. The Board also expressed that the proposed addition appears to fit with the character of the dwelling. The Planning Board takes no exception to this case. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

OTHER
Smart Growth District Zoning Amendment
Ms. Gaffey presented an outline of the Planning Board's report to the Board of Aldermen that addresses the issues that were raised at the public hearing. Ms Gaffey explained that the Zoning Amendment will be voted on by the Appropriations Committee on April 3 followed by a vote by

the full Board (of Aldermen) on April 7, 2008. Ms. Gaffey reviewed with the Planning Board the issues raised at the public hearing. Concerns included issues related to infrastructure, flooding, traffic, density, commercial vs. residential, and height of the buildings. Ms. Marcus MADE a MOTION to accept the changes to the proposed Smart Growth District Zoning Amendment. Mr. Connolly SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

406 Main Street – Project Modifications

Ms. Gaffey shared with the Planning Board members a letter received from the developer of 406 Main Street. Ms. Gaffey explained that the developer has experienced a lot of financial difficulties and is currently seeking to avoid bankruptcy by obtaining an additional loan of $100,000 to cover cost overruns and the infrastructure required by the City. None of the condominiums have been sold. Ms. Gaffey explained the developer is requesting that the Planning Board modify their Affordable Housing Special Permit decision to allow the developer to make a cash contribution to the City's Affordable Housing Fund in lieu of selling one of the units as affordable. The developer asserts that the cost savings realized by accommodating his request will allow him to bring down the cost of the units to facilitate their sale. Ms. Gaffey pointed out that the Planning Board accepted a cash payment for 814 Main Street under different circumstances. The developer's real estate broker added that the uncertainty associated with the adjacent Sparks site has hurt the sale of the units. The members expressed concern regarding the potential of an empty building in such a prominent location in the City. Ms. Gaffey recommended that if the Planning Board is willing to consider this request it should be done in a public hearing with proper notification. Several members expressed concern about the importance of the precedent involved with this decision. Mr. Pawlina expressed that the Planning Board would require specific information from the developer, including information pertaining to the unexpected costs incurred by the City requirements, more details concerning the pricing of the units as well as assurance that the project will be able to be completed and cash contribution made to the City. Ms. Marcus MADE a MOTION to send a letter to the developer requesting further details that would be required for a public hearing to take place. Mr. Connolly SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Cassavoy noted that this was the annual meeting of the Board and as such members are charged with appointing officers. Mr. Connolly MADE a MOTION to keep the slate of officers the same. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.
Ms. Marcus MADE a MOTION to adjourn. Mr. Connolly SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.