

Welcome to Melrose

Business Permitting Basics

Getting Started

This document provides a summary of the most common state and local permits, licenses and zoning requirements that apply to opening and operating a business in the City of Melrose. We look forward to working with you on your business development plans. Before you get started, we encourage you to contact the Business Development Team to arrange a meeting.

Business Development Team

Created by Mayor Rob Dolan in 2010, the Business Development Team is a resource for small business owners as they navigate through the state and local permitting process. The group is represented by a member of the Planning Department, Health Department, Fire Department, Inspectional Services and the City Solicitor. The Business Development Team will meet with you to discuss your project, identify the approvals that may be required, and assist in providing an estimated time frame for when you can expect to be open for business. This process will include a preliminary evaluation by the City's Zoning Enforcement Officer (a.k.a. the Building Commissioner) to determine whether any zoning relief is required with respect to construction and/or new commercial uses.

Whether your business is looking to move into Melrose, is relocating to a new location within the City, the Business Development Team should be your first stop at City Hall. Contact BusinessTeam@cityofmelrose.org.

Construction and New Commercial Uses

Site Plan Review

All new industrial and commercial uses are subject to a hearing before the Planning Board for Site Plan Review. Extensions in excess of 2,500 sq. ft. of existing industrial and commercial uses and parking lot construction/expansion require Site Plan Review also. The purpose of Site Plan Review is to promote development that will benefit the community and protect the community from harmful impacts. The process begins with a determination by the Building Commissioner. A public hearing is required and the process can take six to eight weeks.

[Link to Site Plan Review Application](#)

For more information concerning the Site Plan Review process contact:

Assistant Planner: Matt Hennigan @ 781 979-4190

Variances and Special Permits

The Board of Appeals considers requests for variances from applicable zoning requirements and requests for special permits for specific uses and/or structures. The process begins with a

determination by the Building Commissioner. A public hearing is required and the process can take three to four months depending on current case load.

[Link to Board of Appeals \(ZBA\) Application](#)

For more information concerning the Board of Appeals process contact:
Board of Appeals Clerk: Jessica Mitchell @ 781 979-4196

Building Permits

All construction and demolition must adhere to the Massachusetts Building Code and therefore requires a Building Permit. Depending on the location of the property in relation to the Melrose Historical District and/or the proximity to wetlands the application process may include a review and decision by the Melrose Historic District Commission and/or Melrose Conservation Commission as well.

The Inspectional Services Department is available during office hours to discuss your plans prior to submitting and application for a Building Permit. Please contact the Inspections Services Office @ 781 979-4135 to schedule an appointment.

Hours of Operation: Monday through Thursday 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM
Fridays 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Building Office Hours: 8:30-10:00 am and 2:00-4:00 pm
Paul Johnson Inspections: Monday thru Thursday
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Electrical Office Hours: 8:00-10:00 am
David Metell Inspections: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Plumbing/Gas Office Hours: 12:00-2:00 pm
James Diozzi Inspections: 2:00-4:00 pm

Weights and Measures Office Hours: 8:00-10:00 am
David Metell Monday – Friday

Once an application for a building permit is determined complete, the Inspector has up to 30 days to either issue a building permit or issue a denial along with a reason for the denial. A denial is required as a first step before proceeding to the Planning Board for Site Plan Review or the Zoning Board of Appeals for zoning relief.

For more information regarding the Building Permit process see the link to [Inspection Services Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Or contact Assistant to the Inspections Director: Cathy Alphen @ 781 979-4135

[Link to Inspection Services Permit Application](#)

Signs

All signs for business establishments require a building permit and are subject to the City of Melrose Zoning Ordinance, Article VII, Signs. Businesses located in the Downtown Historic District must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness for new or modified signage from the Historic District Commission as well.

Guidance regarding the permitting process for signage is provided by the Business Development Team.

Sign and Façade Grant Program

The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) provides grants to business applicants for up to 50% of the cost of attractive business signs and façade improvement. The maximum grant is \$1,000 for a sign and \$500 for a façade improvement. Applications must be received and approved before any work on the project begins. Additional information concerning these programs can be obtained by contacting OPCD @ 781 979-4190.

[Link to Sign and Façade Grant Applications.](#)

Historic District Commission

The Downtown Historic District encompasses the commercial and residential core along Main Street, principally between West and East Foster and West and East Emerson Streets. Any construction or alteration of exterior features on buildings in the Downtown Historic District requires a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic District Commission. The Historic District Commission meets on an as-needed basis to review applications. The process involves a public hearing and typically takes between thirty and forty five days. A Certificate of Appropriateness must be obtained before a building permit will be issued for projects within the Historic District.

The Commission will review proposed changes to buildings of any size or function, as well as signs, fences, walls, light fixtures, or similar devices which are visible from a public street, public way, public park, and public body of water. Building projects which must be reviewed include construction, reconstruction, demolition, and removal of architectural features. The Commission may also review the kind, color, and texture of exterior building materials and the type and style of windows, doors, lights, signs, awnings, and other fixtures.

The Historic District Commission is supported by the staff of the Office of Planning and Community Development. Contact Assistant Planner: Matt Hennigan @ 781 979-4190.

[Link to a Map of the Historic District boundaries.](#)

[Link to the Certificate of Appropriateness Application](#)

Conservation Commission

Construction or additions to businesses within 100 feet of a wetland, intermittent stream, river, pond or floodplain require a hearing before the Conservation Commission. Additionally, if a project is within 200 feet from a river or a perennial stream (a stream that runs year round), then

filing an application is also required. Filing does not mean that a project will be prohibited. It does mean that the Commission will review your project for potential impacts to any of the resource areas listed above. If there are potential impacts, mitigation measures will be necessary.

For more information regarding the Conservation Commission permitting process see the link to [Conservation Commission Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Or Contact Conservation Agent: Kathy Morgan @ 781 979-4312