

Executive Summary

Property: 272 Tremont Street

Owner: 495, LLC

Procedural History:

This property is the subject of a variance before the Board of Appeals and came before the Planning Board on November 25, 2019. Due to comments made at the Planning Board public meeting and recommendations by the Board, including the suggestion that the applicant reconfigure the existing curb cuts and berms, the applicant decided to pursue site plan review and modify its original plan, prior to its Board of Appeals hearing in April of 2020.

As the Planning Board knows, the emergency pandemic put new applications to the City of Melrose on a standstill. This required the applicant to continue its hearing before the Board of Appeals several times. **It is currently scheduled to be heard on June 10, 2020.** The applicant took the last two (2) months to modify its plan further, to construct 15 residential units, two (2) of which will be designated as affordable units, and one (1) commercial retail unit. The original plan called for construction of twelve (12) residential units.

The applicant now applies for Site Plan Review and an Affordable Housing Special Permit, from the Melrose Planning Board.

Particulars:

Applicant seeks to remove an existing unattractive three-family dwelling and build a mixed-use, 4-story facility consisting of fifteen (15) residential units, and one (1) retail unit on the first floor. If successful, the fifteen (15) residential units would include two (2) “bonus” units, pursuant to the Affordable Housing Incentive Ordinance, where two (2) of the original thirteen (13) units are designated as affordable. Six of the residential units shall contain 1 bedroom and 1 bathroom. Nine units shall continue 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms.

The property is located close to the intersection of Tremont Street and Franklin Street, at the edge of the BA-2 district, between RJM Motors Sales & Service and a twenty-three (23) unit condominium building. Other than the automotive use, the surrounding uses in the neighborhood are entirely multi-family and single-family dwellings.

Fourteen (14) parking spaces are proposed for the project, whereas sixteen (16) spaces are required – necessitating a variance. It should be noted that this property is within a very short walking distance of the Melrose Highlands MBTA Commuter Rail Station.

The property also has a non-conforming driveway aisle width leading into the lot of eighteen (18) feet, necessitating another variance (20 feet required). This driveway will serve as the vehicle entrance and exit to the rear of the lot and parking areas of the building. The plan has been reviewed by the Melrose Fire Department, which reportedly has no issue with emergency vehicle access or fire-fighting capabilities for the building. A portion of this driveway, being a 9

feet-wide strip running the length of the way, is subject to an easement granting the right of the commercial abutters to pass and re-pass by foot or by motor vehicle, and specifically for taking deliveries from vehicles. This easement will not impede traffic along this way

The property and intended use comply with all other aspects of the Melrose Zoning Ordinance.

Waivers Requested:

The applicant believes that the addition of eight (8) motor vehicles to the site – calculated as 14 parking spaces less 6 current parking spaces – will have no effect upon traffic in the neighborhood, nor any effect upon the level of service at the intersection of Tremont Street and Franklin Street. Waivers are therefore requested for traffic counts and level of service (LOS) calculations.

Additionally, no wetlands or bodies of water are near this property, and no bedrock is being excavated. The existing site is almost entirely impervious, and the proposed building will capture almost all precipitation upon the roof, exiting the site in accordance with the drainage plan submitted. As such, waivers are requested for wetland delineations, topography and 100-year flood studies.