

Russell Karlstad, Chair Jordan Berg Powers, Vice Chair George Cortes Anthony Dell'Aera Eric Torkornoo Nathan Sabo, Alternate Shannon Campaniello, Alternate

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER February 13, 2023

Worcester City Hall – Levi Lincoln Chamber, with remote participation options available via Webex online at: https://cow.webex.com/meet/planningboardwebex and call-in number 415-655-0001 (Access Code: 160 884 7670).

Zoning Board Members Present: Russell Karlstad, Chair

George Cortes

Shannon Campaniello - Participated Remotely

Nathan Sabo - Participated Remotely
Eric Torkornoo - Participated Remotely
Anthony Dell'Aera- Participated Remotely
Jordan Berg Powers- Participated Remotely

Zoning Board Members Absent:

Staff Participating: Michelle Smith, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services

Rose Russell, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services Paul Dell'Aquila, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services John Kelly, Building Commissioner - *Participated Remotely*

Call to Order:

Mr. Karlstad called the meeting to order at 5:38PM.

Requests for Continuances, Extensions, Postponements, and Withdrawals

Item 3: 11 Earle Terrace (ZB-2022-076) Administrative Appeal

Request to Postpone the Public Meeting to <u>March 13, 2023</u> Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to <u>April 4, 2023</u>

Item 9: 77 Cohasset (ZB-2023-011) Special Permit & Variance

Request to Postpone the Public Meeting to <u>March 13, 2023</u> Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to <u>April 4, 2023</u>

On a motion made by Mr. Berg Powers, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to postpone the applications and extend the constructive grant deadlines.

Old Business - Public Hearings

1. 16 Alden Street (ZB-2022-071) (MBL 06-026-00065)

Variance: For relief from the side yard setback dimensional requirement in an RG-5 Zone (Article IV,

Section 4, Table 4.2)

Petitioner: Sean L. Martin

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a single-family preexisting, non-conforming dwelling.

Zone Designation: RG-5 (Residence, General) zoning district

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks retroactive approval to extend an existing deck

Public Hearing Deadline: 2/13/2023 Constructive Grant Deadline: 3/14/2023

Sean Martin, 16 Alden Street attended virtually and described his application for retroactive approval for a deck that was originally constructed on neighboring property. Mr. Martin states would cut 3 feet off of the deck so it would be setback 0.5 FT from the property line.

Ms. Russell gave a brief summary of the application. She stated Mr. Martin had originally requested 8 FT of relief with a 0 FT setback but has updated his plan and application to reflect request for 7.5 FT of relief with a 0.5 FT setback.

Board Discussion

Mr. Cortes asked for clarification that the deck would be completely off the property line.

Public Comments

Frank Zitomersky, Castle Street Neighborhood Development Corporation, stated that 3 FT setback from the property line would be better than 0 FT for maintenance purposes. He stated he doesn't support this new proposal since the hardship was self-imposed and questioned whether deck would be an improvement to the property since it would affect any future structure on adjacent lot.

Mr. Martin asked what would make Mr. Zitomersky happy and wants to collaborate with neighbors.

Mr. Berg Powers thinks this should be allowed to move forward if it is all on the owner's property line.

Mr. Karlstad would like to propose a 2 FT setback.

Ms. Russell noted that Mr. Torkarnoo couldn't vote

On a motion by Mr. Dell'Aera, and seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 close the public hearing.

Ms. Smith noted conditions of approval and waivers on pages 2-3 of staff memo.

Mr. Karlstad requested to add a condition to allow a 2FT setback from east-end property line.

Mr. Martin accepted the suggested waivers.

Ms. Campaniello made a motion to grant 6FT of relief from 8FT setback in addition to staff-recommended conditions and waivers; seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the application as amended.

New Business - Public Hearings

2. 119 May Street (ZB-2022-066) (MBL 14-026-00032)

Special Permit: To allow placing, filling, dumping, and/or excavation of earth (Article IV, Section 5).

Special Permit: To modify parking, loading requirements, dimensional requirements, layout, and/or the

number of required spaces and/or landscaping requirements (Article IV, Section 7, A, 2)

Petitioner: Dombroski Kynoch Properties, LLC

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a non-conforming multi-family low-rise dwelling with a total

of 4-units.

Zone Designation: RL-7 (Residence Limited)

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to retroactively permit work conducted to place fill in order to

expand the parking area.

Public Hearing Deadline: 2/13/2023 Constructive Grant Deadline: 3/14/2023

Brian Falk, Mirick-O'Connell, 100 Front Street, on behalf of the applicant, introduced owner Bruce Kynoch and Patrick Healy, Thompson-Liston and described the application. Mr. Falk described the petition for retroactive permit of fill and the expansion of parking area being sought.

Mr. Falk detailed staff suggestions and proposed relief as well as plan changes and agreed to all suggested conditions of approval and requested four waiver requests as identified by staff.

Mr. Karlstad stated he wants to continue the hearing until letters from neighbors authorizing work on their property are received. He also stated he would like to add a condition that no additional lighting be installed on lot.

Ms. Russell described staff comments and noted addresses of abutting neighbors affected. Ms. Russell asked for Board feedback on parking configuration and whether spaces should be moved and removal of retaining wall to expand greenspace. Mr. Falk notes reconfigured parking spaces could mean compact spaces now and is amendable to removal of wall.

Board Discussion

Mr. Cortes noted he was glad applicant has accepted City recommendations.

No Public Comment

Ms. Smith noted that normally Board would ask about composition and source of fill material and compaction and asked for Board feedback. Mr. Karlstad suggested applicant do 2 test pits to confirm compaction.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, and seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, and seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to continue the application to March 13, 2023 and extend Constructive Grant Deadline to April 4, 2023.

4. 19 Perry Avenue (ZB-2023-001) (MBL 05-026-00035)

Special Permit: To allow the extension, alteration, or change to a privileged pre-existing, non-conforming

structure/use (Article XVI, Section 4)

Special Permit: To allow a lodging house in an RG-5 Zone (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1, Residential Use

#8)

Petitioner: Patrick Massad

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a non-conforming three-family detached dwelling.

Zone Designation: RG-5 (Residence, General)

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to convert the existing building into a lodging house (with +/- 12

beds) and to conduct associate site work.

Public Hearing Deadline: 3/11/2023 Constructive Grant Deadline: N/A

Patrick Massad, the owner, was present with his attorney Justin Raphaelson who described the petition before the Board to operate a rooming house with a total of 12 bedrooms within an existing three-family dwelling.

Mr. Karlstad asked about the layout and number of bedrooms. Mr. Massad stated he is proposing 4 bedrooms on each floor and noted there is no on-site parking

Ms. Russell described the relief being sought. She stated there are 6 parking spaces required, but the premises has six privileged parking spaces for the existing three-family, so no parking relief is being sought. Ms. Russell asked for clarification on parking, and possible relocation of deck encroachment, and noted the special permit would be conditioned to run with Mr. Mass as operator. Mr. Massad noted porch was there when he bought it but can be relocated to the rear of the property where it will no longer encroach onto the neighboring property.

Mr. Cortes asked about management plan and qualifications for renters. Mr. Massad stated he will do background checks, and install cameras. Mr. Cortes emphasized that he wants a secure neighborhood.

Attorney Justin Raphaelson, on behalf of the applicant, noted security on doors and common areas and stated the applicant is already a landlord with experience and multiple properties. Atty. Raphaelson stated the cost of rooms will be around \$180 week or \$720 month, which is less than half of the average in city.

Mr. Cortes wants security to be noted and a management plan be provided. Ms. Smith noted the existing License Commission procedure for an annual license with health & fire inspections, so suggested caution on adding perpetual conditions regarding management.

Mr. Karlstad asked about who would manage the property and Mr. Massad responded the manager will live on the first floor.

Board Discussion

Mr. Torkornoo expressed concern about a lodging house in this neighborhood and existing density.

Mr. Karlstad asked John Kelly to comment on relocated rear access and ADA compliance. With Mr. Kelly having technical difficulties, Ms. Smith noted general thresholds for accessibility and location of rear access regarding encroachment.

Mr. Karlstad suggested making a unit fully ADA compliant.

Public Comments

Joanne Szlyk, an abutter, stated she is opposed because of parking concerns and how it affects the family-oriented character of the neighborhood and stated concerns about property upkeep and management. She noted houses in the area are already in close proximity to each other.

Mr. Karlstad noted that a three-family would have the same parking intensity as this proposal. Ms. Smith noted the proximity of bus routes and profile of lodging house renters. Ms. Smith noted the city's Now|Next master plan process underway and the need for housing being voiced by the community.

Sandy McGinnis, Mr. Massad's aunt and realtor, stated that rooms were being rented by previous priest owner as a lodging house for a number of years and that Mr. Massad is a good landlord.

Mr. Karlstad asked Mr. Massad if the suggested waivers are requested by applicant, which he confirmed.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the application, the requested waivers, and conditions 1a & 1b to be modified to reflect either a side or rear entrance (Mr. Torkornoo abstained).

5. 757 Salisbury Street (ZB-2023-003) (MBL 50-023-00001)

Variance: For relief from the maximum height requirement in an RS-10 Zone (Article IV, Section 4,

Table 4.2)

Petitioner: UW Senior, LLC

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a vacant single-family detached dwelling and associated

site improvements.

Zone Designation: RS-10 (Residence, Single Family)

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to construct a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC)

consisting of three 3-story multi-family low-rise buildings (with a total of ± 123 dwelling units), one 1-story $\pm 8,300$ SF clubhouse building, an associated driveway network and parking (± 163 spaces), and related site improvements on approximately 17 acres of land

located off Salisbury Street.

Public Hearing Deadline: 3/23/23 Constructive Grant Deadline: 4/27/23

Attorney Robert Buckley, Kristine Hung and Jeff Smetana, were present on half of the applicant. Mr. Buckley stated the applicant is seeking a variance from relief from the habitable story requirement (2+) to allow 3 full habitable stories. Mr. Buckley stated project has received a CCCR Special Permit and Definitive Site Plan approval from the Planning Board. He stated the request is for a habitable third story and noted the height will still be within the 35 FT height maximum, and the if the variance is not approved. Mr. Buckley described the site limitations and noted that the structure won't be highly visible from neighing properties and retain the maximum amount of screening possible. Mr. Buckley also noted the apartments will be rental, thus there will be a more open application process.

Mr. Smetana further described the project, and stated the company from Troy, NY and will focus on active adults. He said the project will draw residents from within the city and open other homes. He stated the Company uses the SUN program (Senior Umbrella Network) for constellation of services and amenities that are part of the CCRC and noted parking will be built below grade under the buildings.

Mr. Smetana noted the elevation gain from Salisbury St. requires a serpentine driveway to reach the plateau; retaining walls will be constructed on site and project will look to avoid poor soil conditions on site and protect green space. He stated the intent to make the upper attic half story habitable is because if only 2 stories were to be constructed, it would increase the area of development and visual impact would be expanded and stated other 3-story developments have been approved in this area. Mr. Smetana noted the development is restricted to 6 acres due to site topographic conditions, and project wouldn't be feasible if it had to expand the footprint.

Mr. Buckley agreed to suggested waivers from staff memo.

Ms. Smith gave a staff report and reviewed statutory criteria for Variances.

Board Discussion

Mr. Berg Powers noted that he thought the requested relief is minimal.

Mr. Karlstad asked for clarification on the SUN Program. Mr. Smetana responded they have been doing the program for 50 years.

Mr. Karlstad asked about the amount of site clearance. Mr. Smetana answered that it is less than the 75% allowed.

Mr. Karlstad asked about location and maintenance of detention basins and the need for them; Mr. Smetana described the facilities. Mr. Karlstad expressed concern about the amount of clearance on the site and noted there is an existing single-family house on the site and the proposal would build 123 units.

Mr. Smetana stated an additional 1.5 other buildings would be needed at 2 stories to make their numbers work for 123 units.

Mr. Karlstad asked about rent levels; Mr. Smetana answered that they would probably be 25-30% above market for other new construction because of amenities provided.

Mr. Karlstad asked if any units would be affordable; Mr. Smetana answered that there would be none.

Mr. Karlstad said he wanted to see affordable units as a gesture of good will.

Public Comments

Khris Beckeman, 62 Barrows Road, said he will see the development from his house and see another layer of lights and thinks it will create its own community next to an existing community rather than incorporate this development into the greater community.

Ben Bruneau, 61 Barrows Road, noted large buffers and setbacks at nearby developments and the large number of units being proposed at this site.

Patrick Cherry, 39 Barrows Road, was concerned about visibility of the development in fall and was concerned about costs and what would happen if the developer can't fill units because they might be rented to college kids.

Mark Borenstein, 80 Barre Road, asked whether there are any viewpoints from adjacent properties and suggested that Barrows Road residents might want to see such visualizations. He also expressed concern about traffic using Barre Road as a cut-through. Mr. Smetana noted that residents would not be peak-hour drivers and questioned where else this kind of development could go in Worcester and noted that traffic analysis was done for Planning Board.

Mr. Karlstad stated that while the location is good for a senior development the proposal was turning its back on the community and expressed concerns about sidewalks and connectivity. Mr. Smetana noted that their residents walk chiefly for exercise.

Mr. Smetana noted the array of amenities for residents and the growing trend for this kind of development.

Mr. Karlstad stated that the proposal not in character for Worcester and asked what could the applicant do to address architectural concerns? Mr. Smetana responded that much thought went into layout & design and discussed building and parking orientation.

Ms. Smith advised the Board on the Law Department's opinion on case law regarding conditioning for Variances.

Board Discussion

Mr. Torkornoo stated that he wasn't comfortable with the style and height of the proposed buildings.

Mr. Berg Powers reiterated that the Board's focus should be on the Variance for height, although he does favor changing zoning to incorporate affordability.

Mr. Dell'Aera noted that he agreed with the Chairman's previous comments.

Mr. Cortes praised the presentation but asked if the apartments would be just for the rich and wanted to see affordability incorporated.

Ms. Smith noted that the applicant could request a withdrawal based on the straw-poll of the Board.

Mr. Smetana noted that the Board's issues seem to be on affordability and view corridor issues and requested a continuance to March 13, 2023

Mr. Karlstad noted that low-impact design for site clearance and detention basins should also be considered.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to accept the applicant's request for a continuance until March 13, 2023.

6. 34, 36 & 38 Blackstone River Road (ZB-2023-004) (MBL 10-016-00008)

34, 36 & 38 Blackstone River Road

Special Permit: To expand, alter, or change a privileged non-conforming use/structure (Article XVI, Section

4)

Special Permit: To modify parking, loading requirements, dimensional requirements, layout, and/or the

number of required spaces and/or landscaping requirements (Article IV, Section 7, A, 2)

Variance: For relief of **1 story** from the 3-story maximum height requirement for a residential

structure in an BL-1.0 & an other permitted residential structure RL-7 Zone (Article IV,

Section 4, Table 4.2)

Additional relief for the structure at 34 Blackstone River Road

Variance: For relief of 4.3' (86%) from the minimum 5' front-yard setback requirement for a ground

floor residential use in the CCOD-E (Article IX, Section 6A)

Variance: For relief of 8.7' (87%) from the minimum 10' side-yard setback requirement for a

residential structure in an BL-1.0 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Additional relief for the structure at 36 Blackstone River Road

Variance: For relief of 12.1' (60.5%) from the 20' minimum rear-yard setback requirement for an

other permitted residential structure in an RL-7 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Variance: For relief of 6' (40%) from the 10' minimum side-yard setback requirement for an other

permitted residential structure in an RL-7 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Additional relief for the structure at 38 Blackstone River Road

Variance: For relief of 8.2' (82%) from the minimum 10' side-yard setback requirement for a

residential structure in an BL-1.0 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Petitioner: Adam Gaval

Present Use: Presently on the premises are two non-conforming low-rise multi-family dwellings known

as 34 & 38 Blackstone River Road and a high-rise multi-family dwelling known as 36

Blackstone River Road and associated site improvements.

Zone Designation: Partially within an RL-7 (Residence, Limited) zoning district, and partially within the BL-1.0

(Business, Limited) zoning district and the CCOD-E (Commercial Corridors Overlay District-

Elsewhere).

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to expand each building in height via 4th story additions and renovate

the structures into a total of ±32 units, to construct associated parking (± 32 spaces) and

conduct associated site improvements.

Public Hearing Deadline: 3/11/23 Public Hearing Deadline: 4/15/23

Attorney Gershon Gulko spoke on behalf of applicant Adam Gaval. Attorney Gulko noted a desire to enhance the neighborhood and introduced, Zac Couture (Engineer, HS&T), Andre Hall (Designer), and Adam Gaval (Applicant).

Mr. Couture detailed the existing site conditions and that the property was developed in early 1900's. Each of the three buildings on the site (34, 36, 38) were described in turn.

Mr. Couture noted the nuance of the underlying Zoning District & CCOD overlay. Each structure is proposed to be renovated: #38 will be demoed & rebuilt with 2 additional stories; an additional story would be added to #34 and #36; and there would be 32 total units with 32 parking spaces; with an underground detention system.

Mr. Hall described the proposed architectural features on each of the buildings.

Mr. Gaval noted that he grew up in Worcester and manages other affordable apartments. He detailed the bedroom composition and the approximate project costs. Mr. Gaval stated the project will have heat pumps and he said his intention is to make these buildings green and also incorporate Historic Commission feedback.

Mr. Karlstad asked if the staff-suggested waivers were accepted, and Mr. Gaval replied that they were.

Ms. Smith reviewed staff-suggested conditions of approval and noted that there are 29 bedrooms onsite now vs. 36 proposed, a net change of 7 bedrooms overall. She noted array of dimensional relief requested for each structure including stories and setback issues and non-conforming use is being extended across the site in addition to varying parking relief; stated parking and drainage would be fully addressed at site plan review with the Planning Board. Ms. Smith showed historic photo from 1983.

Mr. Hall responded and described why arches are being closed. Ms. Smith addressed historical features at #36. Mr. Karlstad noted the possibility of pilaster other features to mimic MACRIS photo and that he is ok with street level features, but roof molding could be challenging. Ms. Smith pointed out features on MACRIS photo and recommended that the applicant look to preserve or mimic ornamental features. Mr. Hall responded with concerns about ice/snow build up and safety. Mr. Gaval said he can dress up lower level, but higher up could pose maintenance issues. Mr. Karlstad noted there are stock moldings that could be used.

Mr. Karlstad suggested a revision to condition d that the applicant work with staff to mimic/recreate ornamental features per the 1983 MACRIS photo shown.

Mr. Gaval noted stormwater will be caught in basin on site.Mr. Couture asked if condition 1i could be struck due to addition of compact and that the requested relief would now be for 2 parking spaces, not 3, which is slightly less than 10%. Ms. Smith confirmed.

Mr. Karlstad spoke about EV charging and that one ADA parking space should have conduit.

Mr. Cortes asked about trash & snow removal. Mr. Couture responded that snow would have to get trucked offsite, which Ms. Smith noted is a standard condition for the Planning Board.

Ms. Smith reiterated revisions to Condition 1.i.

No public comment.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 voted to approve the relief with staff-recommended conditions, with modifications to 1.d. & 1.i., and waivers as requested.

7. 93 Fairfax Road (ZB-2023-008) (MBL 10-033-00028)

Special Permit: To modify dimensional standards for a Residential Conversion in an RG-5 zone (Article IV,

Section 9).

Variance: For relief from the minimum parking requirements for a residential use (Article IV,

Section 7, Table 4.4)

Petitioner: Anna Lee Golphin

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a non-conforming three-family detached dwelling.

Zone Designation: RG-5 (Residence, General)

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks retroactively permit conversion of the structure to a low-rise multi-

family dwelling with a total of five (5) units.

Public Hearing Deadline: 3/30/2023 Public Hearing Deadline: 5/4/2023

The applicant, Anna Golphin introduced herself and gave a brief description of the property. Mr. Dell'Aquila described the application; described the existing and proposed conditions; and the relief for parking and residential conversion requested. Mr. Karlstad asked if Ms. Golphin accepted the recommended waivers and she did. Mr. Dell'Aquila asked Ms. Golphin to describe how she plans to manage parking; she responded.

Board Comments

Mr. Cortes asked for clarification on parking provided on-site; Ms. Smith clarified.

No public comment.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the requested relief and waivers.

8. 177 (aka 177-179) Grafton Street (ZB-2023-010) (MBL 04-014-00004)

Special Permit: To allow a retail sales use in a MG-2.0 zone. (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1, Business Use

#26)

Petitioner: May F. Dejesus

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a multi-tenant commercial building with a mix of uses and

associated surface parking.

Zone Designation: MG-2.0 (Manufacturing, General)

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to open a floral shop, within a vacant portion of the premises.

Public Hearing Deadline: 4/1/2023 Public Hearing Deadline: 4/27/2023

May F Dejesus described her application to open a florist shop in a tenant space within the commercial building (#179A.1.). Mr. Dell'Aquila described the application and requested the applicant to describe the operations; Ms. Dejesus responded that deliveries would be made via small box truck and they would only be using 800 SF not 1500 SF as described.

No board discussion.

No public comment.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

Mr. Dell'Aquila reminded the Board that the applicant should accept the requested waivers; Ms. Dejesus confirmed.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the requested relief and waivers.

10. Communications

a. Scrivener's Error: 525 Lincoln Street Special Permit Corrected Decision

Mr. Karlstad read aloud the draft decision with revised language. Ms. Smith needed that a vote was required to cover change of address.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, and seconded by Ms. Campaniello, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the corrected decision.

11. Approval of Minutes – 12/5/2022; 1/5/2023

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, and seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the minutes from 12/5/22 and 1/5/23.

12. Discussion of Board Policies and Procedures

a. Review & Approval of 2024 Meeting Dates and Filing Deadlines

Ms. Smith described the proposed 2024 meeting calendar and asked for the Board to vote to approve.

On a motion by Mr. Berg Powers, and seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the 2024 Meeting Dates and Filing deadlines.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Dell'Aera, seconded by Mr. Berg Powers, AD, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:58pm.