MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER

September 22, 2014
WORCESTER CITY HALL, 455 MAIN STREET, LEVI LINCOLN CHAMBER

Zoning Board Members Present: Lawrence Abramoff, Chair
Joseph Wanat
George Valeri
Timothy Loew
Robert Haddon

Zoning Board Members Absent: Vadim Michajlow, Vice-Chair

Staff Present: Stephen Rolle, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services
Domenica Tatasciore, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services
Michelle Smith, Division of Planning and Regulatory Services
John Kelly, Inspectional Services
David Horne, Inspectional Services

REGULAR MEETING (5:30 PM)

CALL TO ORDER

Lawrence Abramoff called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

REQUESTS FOR WITHDRAWALS, CONTINUANCES, AND TIME EXTENSIONS

1. 50 Winneconnett Road  (ZB-2014-032)

Special Permit: To allow a single-family attached dwelling in a RL-7 (Residence, Limited)
Zone (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1, Residential Use #12)

Petitioners: Real Estate Alternatives, Inc.

Present Use: A vacant lot

Zone Designation: RL-7 (Residence, Limited) and partially within the Mixed Use (MU)
Overlay District

Petition Purpose: To construct a single-family attached dwelling with 5 dwelling units and 10
associated off-street parking spaces, along with related site work and grading

Public Hearing Deadline: 8/28/14, 9/22/14
Mr. Abramoff stated that staff received a letter from the applicant requesting postponement to October 20, 2014 and an extension of the constructive grant deadline to November 11, 2014.

Upon a motion by Mr. Loew and seconded by Mr. Haddon, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the postponement and extension of the constructive grant deadline.

2. 113 (aka 61 N. Ashland Street) and 117 (aka 119 and 121) Highland Street (ZB-2014-038)

113 Highland Street (aka 61 N. Ashland Street):

Special Permit: Extension, Alteration, or Change of a Privileged Pre-existing Nonconforming Structure (Article XVI, Section 4)

Variance: For relief of 10 ft. from the 10 ft. side-yard setback requirement in a BL-1.0 Zoning District (Business, Limited) (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Variance: For relief of 0.99:1 of the maximum floor-to-area-ratio requirement in a BL-1.0 Zoning District (Business, Limited) (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

117 (aka 119 and 121) Highland Street:

Special Permit: Extension, Alteration, or Change of a Privileged Pre-existing Nonconforming Structure (Article XVI, Section 4)

Variance: For relief of 10 ft. from the 10 ft. front-yard setback requirement in a BL-1.0 Zoning District (Business, Limited) (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Variance: For relief of 10 ft. from the 10 ft. side-yard setback requirement in a BL-1.0 Zoning District (Business, Limited) (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Variance: For relief of 0.34:1 of the maximum floor-to-area-ratio requirement in a BL-1.0 Zoning District (Business, Limited) (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Petitioners: Highland/North Ashland Realty Trust and Irene S. John

Present Use: 113 Highland Street (aka 61 N. Ashland Street): An existing ~4,358 SF commercial mixed use structure used as a restaurant and two residential dwellings;

117 (aka 119 and 121) Highland Street: An existing ~17,115 SF commercial mixed use building (used as a restaurant, a liquor store; and six dwelling units)

Zone Designation: BL-1.0 Zoning District (Business, Limited)

Petition Purpose: To construct a ~431 SF commercial addition to the first floor to expand the existing restaurant (The Boynton), to the east. Said expansion is intended to be flush with the exterior portion of the westernmost wall of the existing structure located on 113 Highland Street, thus eliminating the existing alleyway between the two structures

Public Hearing Deadline: 9/19/14, 9/22/14

Constructive Grant Deadline: 10/24/14
Mr. Abramoff stated that staff received a letter from the applicant requesting postponement to October 20, 2014 and an extension of the constructive grant deadline to November 11, 2014.

Upon a motion by Mr. Valeri and seconded by Mr. Loew, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the postponement and extension of the constructive grant deadline.

List of Exhibits
Exhibit A: Variance & Special Permit Application; prepared by Joe Boynton, attorney for Irene S. John and Highland/North Ashland Realty Trust.
Exhibit D: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Zoning Board of Appeals; re: 113 & 117 Highland Street – Special Permit and Variance Application; dated August 11, 2014, revised September 15, 2014.
Exhibit E: Letter from abutter Terry Putnam re: traffic concerns; dated September 15, 2014.

3. 304-308 Park Avenue & 45 Abbott Street (ZB-2014-042)

Special Permit: To allow a food-service drive-through use in a BG-3.0 (Business, General) (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1, Business Use #6)
Special Permit: To modify the drive-through lane and escape lane length requirements (110 ft. provided, 240 ft. required) for a food-service drive-through use (Article IV, Section 7.A.7.c.)
Special Permit: To modify the 5 ft. landscaping buffer width (0.4 ft. provided) and for relief from strict compliance with the landscape screening requirements (Article IV, Section 7, Note 5.a.)

Petitioners: Henry G. Askew
Present Use: A partially paved vacant lot
Zone Designation: BG-3.0 (Business, General)
Petition Purpose: To construct a ~1,940 SF food-service restaurant with an associated drive-through and with a 16 space accessory off-street parking lot along with associated site improvements

Public Hearing Deadline: 10/23/14

Mr. Abramoff stated that staff received a letter from the applicant requesting postponement to October 20, 2014.

Upon a motion by Mr. Loew and seconded by Mr. Wanat, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the postponement.
List of Exhibits

Exhibit A: ZBA – Special Permit Application; received August 19, 2014; prepared by Applicant’s Agent, Attorney Jeffrey Rosario Turco of 378 Broadway Street, Chelsea, MA and Owner Park Avenue Management Group, LLC of 291 Park Avenue, Worcester, MA.


Exhibit D: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Zoning Board of Appeals; re: 304-308 Park Avenue, dated September 18, 2014.

Exhibit E: E-mails from abutter Ted Petsas & City Councilor Gary Rosen, District 5, sent September 11 & 12, 2014.

Exhibit F: E-mail from abutter Ted Petsas, sent September 15, 2014.

Exhibit G: Letter from abutter Konstantinos Petsas, received September 15, 2014.

Exhibit H: E-mail from abutter Argyrios Petsas, sent September 15, 2014.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4. 100 Chatham Street (ZB-2014-027)

Special Permit: To allow a residential conversion from a single-family detached dwelling to a two-family detached dwelling in a RG-5 Zoning District (Residential, General) (Article IV, Section 9)

Special Permit: For relief of 1 parking space from the parking requirements for use as a two-family dwelling (Article IV, Section 7 A. 2.)

Variance: For relief of 3 parking spaces from of parking requirements for use as a two-family dwelling (Article IV, Section 7, Table 4.4)

Petitioner: Harry Avery

Present Use: A single-family detached dwelling

Zone Designation: RG-5 (Residential, General) and within the Crown Hill Local Historic District

Petition Purpose: To convert the existing single-family detached dwelling into a two-family detached dwelling along with associated site improvements

Public Hearing Deadline: 9/22/14

Constructive Grant Deadline: 8/15/14, 9/23/14, 10/21/14

Mr. Abramoff asked the applicant if he wanted to go forward with a four member board (Mr. Valeri had not heard all the testimony regarding this project). Mr. Avery stated that he wanted to move forward regardless.
Harry Avery, owner of 100 Chatham Street, stated that he received approval from the Historical Commission for the changes that need to be done to the exterior and showed a rendering to the Board. He stated that the house has been historically used as a two-family since 1865.

Mr. Rolle stated that this item is being continued from a previous meeting in order to allow for Historical issues to be resolved. He received his approvals from that Commission. If approved, staff respectfully recommends that the Board vote on relief of two (and not three, as advertised) parking spaces from the parking requirements for use as a two-family dwelling (because one parking space is provided on-site and a relief of one is applied for as a Special Permit) with the following suggested conditions of approval:

- That there be no changes to the external appearance of the structure (optional - as approved by the submitted rendering) except for new doors, windows, fire escapes, and/or stairways;¹
- That the structure and use are operated in substantial accordance with the final approved plan;
- That no parking will be provided in the front-yard setback (along Chatham Street); and
- That the front-yard setback remains landscaped and unpaved.

Upon a motion by Mr. Wanat and seconded by Mr. Haddon, the Board voted 5-0 to close the hearing.

Upon a motion by Mr. Wanat and seconded by Mr. Loew, the Board voted 4-0-1 (Mr. Valeri abstained) to approve the findings of fact as modified by staff and to approve the petition with the Conditions of Approval in the memo noting that the Variance is for relief of 2 parking spaces.

**List of Exhibits**

Exhibit A: Variance and Special Permit Application for 100 Chatham Street; received May 7, 2014; prepared by Harry Avery.

Exhibit B: Special Permit Plan; prepared by HS&T Group, Inc.; dated April 28, 2014.

Exhibit C: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Zoning Board of Appeals; re: 100 Chatham Street – Special Permit and Variance Application; dated June 13, 2014, revised August 8, 2014 and updated September 16, 2014.

Exhibit D: Cease and Desist issued by Department of Inspectional Services, Buildings/Zoning Division, prepared by Joseph M. Atchue, Building Inspector; dated May 21, 2014.

Exhibit E: Certificate of Appropriateness and Building Demolition Delay Waiver Application for 100 Chatham Street; prepared by Harry Avery; dated June 9, 2014; received June 12, 2014.

Exhibit F: Historical Commission Decisions - Certificate of Appropriateness and Building Demolition Delay Waiver; recorded with the City Clerk June 11, 2014.

Exhibit G: Request for Continuance (6/16 to 7/28); dated and received June 16, 2014.

Exhibit H: Renderings; prepared by the applicant; undated; received June 25, 2014.

¹ Any future exterior work to the building is subject to separate approval from the Historical Commission
Exhibit I: Request for Continuance (7/28 to 8/18) and Extension of Constructive Grant Deadline (8/18 to 8/25); dated and received July 11, 2014.


Exhibit K: Request for Continuance (8/18 to 9/22) and Extension of Constructive Grant Deadline (8/25 to 10/21); dated and received August 18, 2014.

NEW BUSINESS

5. 922 Grafton Street (ZB-2014-033)

Special Permit: To modify parking layout with respect to required 5 ft. landscaping buffer and screening (Article IV, Section 7, Table 4.4, Note 5)

Petitioner: Winter Village, LLC

Present Use: A ~2,964 SF commercial structure used for retail sales

Zone Designation: BL-1.0 (Business, Limited)

Petition Purpose: To re-configure the existing parking layout and associated landscaping, removing landscape buffers along the northerly and southerly lot lines

Public Hearing Deadline: 9/6/14, 9/22/14

Patrick Burke, engineer with HS&T Group, stated that the applicant seeks to decrease parking by removing 2 spaces which impede access to the rear of the building and reconfiguring the remaining parking spaces to allow access to the rear of the structure and changing traffic flow to one-way circulation (north to south). In order to do this they need relief from the landscaping buffer zone. Mr. Burke stated that they are struggling to find tenants because they want improved vehicular access for deliveries and dumpster pickups. He stated that he was amenable to the suggested conditions of approval.

Ms. Smith stated that the applicant has submitted a request for a waiver to label abutters and abutters thereto within 300 ft. on the plan. The site is non-compliant with regards to a previously approved landscaping bed adjacent to Grafton Street and with the number of trees. She asked the applicant to confirm that this site and the one next door will not be linked in any way and to clarify the roof runoff.

Mr. Burke stated that the parking lots will not be linked in any way. He stated that the drainage was built previously. He stated that there are roof leaders and catch basins but he couldn’t see what was beneath the pavement to verify that it was built as previously proposed. Mr. Burke stated that snow will be trucked off site.

Mr. Kelly stated that a condition should be set that if a change in use is not required the owner needs to call inspectional services for a compliance check before occupancy.

Upon a motion by Mr. Loew and seconded by Mr. Wanat, the Board voted 5-0 to close the hearing.
Upon a motion by Mr. Wanat and seconded by Mr. Valeri, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the findings of fact as modified by staff and to approve the petition with the conditions of approval in the memo and that compliance with landscaping is verified by Inspectional Services Department, that curbing be installed between this lot and the parcel located to its south and proof of storm water management system installation has been completed and submitted to the Planning Division prior to further occupancy.

Upon a motion by Mr. Loew and seconded by Mr. Wanat, the Board voted 5-0 to grant the waiver for labeling abutters.

**List of Exhibits:**

Exhibit A: 922 Grafton Street – Special Permit Application; received 7/3/2014; prepared by Winter Village, LLC.

Exhibit B: 922 Grafton Street – Special Permit Plan; dated 7/14/2005, revised 6/30/2014; prepared by HS&T Group.

Exhibit C: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Zoning Board of Appeals; re: 922 Grafton Street – Special Permit; dated 8/7/2014.

Exhibit D: Request for Postponement; re: 922 Grafton Street – Special Permit; dated 8/18/2014.

Exhibit E: Letter from HS&T Group; re: 922 Grafton Street – Special Permit; dated 9/17/2014, received 9/18/14.

6. **Bonair Road (formerly part of 1438 Grafton Street, MBL 34-036-42-50) (ZB-2014-039)**

**Special Permit:** To allow motor vehicle sales in a BL-1.0 (Business, Limited) Zoning District (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1, Business Use #15)

**Special Permit:** To allow motor vehicle service, repair, garage, and display in a BL-1.0 (Business, Limited) Zoning District (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1, Business Use #16)

**Petitioners:** Sonia Realty, LLC

**Present Use:** A vacant lot

**Zone Designation:** BL-1.0 (Business, Limited)

**Petition Purpose:** To construct a 64 space accessory parking lot for vehicle sales and display, and for storage of repair vehicles [repair conducted at a commonly owned adjacent parcel at 1446 (aka 1448) Grafton Street] along with associated paving and site improvements

**Public Hearing Deadline:** 9/28/14
Brian Hill, Land Planning & Engineering Surveying, introduced Calvin, representing Sonia Realty. Mr. Hill stated that presently located at Bonair Road is a partially vegetated lot to be cleared for the use as a 64 space parking lot accessory to the existing 1448 Grafton Street business. Additionally proposed at 1448 Grafton Street are two new garage bays and a pedestrian entrance to the structure from the new parking area. The snow will just take up 2-3 spaces on each lot. His client expressed that he would add curbing along Bonair Road so that people aren’t driving over the landscaping in the front. There are no residential properties directly abutting this parcel.

Ms. Smith stated that the two parking spaces in the center aisle closest to Bonair Road will be difficult to access. The applicant may wish to consider eliminating these two spaces, or designating these spaces as employee only or display spaces. Mr. Hill stated that they will be designated display spaces. Ms. Smith stated that given the proposal renders much of a currently permeable site impervious, staff suggest plantings typically associated with rain gardens in the 5 ft. buffer area which would help mitigate runoff. She also reviewed the remaining questions to the applicant (in the memo) with Mr. Hill.

Upon a motion by Mr. Loew and seconded by Mr. Wanat, the Board voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

Upon a motion by Mr. Wanat and seconded by Mr. Valeri, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the findings of fact as modified by staff and to approve the petition with the conditions of approval in the memo and that all items are addressed with a final plan before the Planning Board and approve the requested waiver for showing the entire locus on the plans.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Bonair Road Application; received 7/25/14; prepared by Sonia Realty, LLC.
Exhibit B: Bonair Road Plan; dated 6/27/14, revised 9/10/14; prepared by Land Planning, Inc.
Exhibit C: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Zoning Board of Appeals; re: Bonair Road (formerly part of 1438 Grafton Street) - Special Permits; dated 9/18/14.
Exhibit D: Emails between staff and the applicant’s engineer; dated 8/22/14 and 9/3/14.
Exhibit F: Memorandum from Land Planning, Inc. to Zoning Board members; re: Bonair Road (formerly part of 1438 Grafton Street); dated 9/5/14.
Exhibit G: 1438 Grafton Street ANR plan, endorsed by the Planning Board on 4/30/14 and recorded on 5/6/14 at the Registry of Deeds (Book 906, Plan 122).

7. 16 Norwich Street (ZB-2014-040)

Variance: For relief of 126.19 ft. from the minimum frontage requirement for a four dwelling residential use (33.81 provided, 160 SF required) in a BG-6.0 (Business, General) Zoning District (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Variance: For relief of 1,916 SF from the minimum lot area requirement for a residential use (3,084 SF provided, 5,000 SF required) in a BG-6.0 (Business, General) Zoning District (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)
Petitioners:  AZ Realty, LLC
Present Use:  A vacant 6-story ~18,504 SF commercial building
Zone Designation:  BG-6.0 (Business, General) and within the MU (Mixed Use Development Overlay District) and DSOD (Downtown/Blackstone Canal Sign Overlay District)
Petition Purpose:  To convert the structure into a mixed use building with retail space on the first floor, office space on the second floor and with 4, three-bedroom apartments on floors three through six
Public Hearing Deadline:  10/23/14
Constructive Grant Deadline:  11/27/14

Frank Zitomersky, president of A-Z Realty LLC, stated that he wants to provide retail space on the first floor, office space on the second floor and to convert the upper floors into 3-bedroom apartments on floors 3 - 6.

Ms. Tatasciore stated that at this time the applicant has not yet requested any waivers; however, the applicant should:

1. Request a waiver of the application requirement to show and label all abutter and abutters thereto within 300 ft. on the plan, or provide revised plans showing said abutters on the plan;
2. Request a waiver of the application requirement to provide a to-scale plan, or provide six (6) copies of to-scale plans.

Ms. Tatasciore also stated that as proposed, the CCOD Ordinance Amendment currently before the City Council, would eliminate the minimum lot area and frontage requirements currently applicable to this project. Should the CCOD be enacted as proposed, the variances would be unnecessary.

Mr. Zitromersky stated that he preferred to move forward with the variances.

Upon a motion by Mr. Loew and seconded by Mr. Haddon, the Board voted 5-0 to close the hearing.

Upon a motion by Mr. Wanat and seconded by Mr. Loew, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the findings of fact as modified by staff and to approve the petition and to grant the waiver for to-scale plans and labeling abutters.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A:  16 Norwich Street Variance Application; received August 19, 2014; prepared by Frank Zitomersky of A-Z Realty LLC.
Exhibit B:  16 Norwich Street Plot Plan; dated July 4, 2011; prepared by Hub Survey Associates Inc.
Exhibit C:  Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Zoning Board of Appeals; re: 16 Norwich Street; dated September 16, 2014.
Exhibit D:  MACRIS Inventory Listing – Norwich Street Commercial Area.
8.  586 Grafton Street  (ZB-2014-041)

Special Permit:  To allow a professional office use in a RG-5 (Residence, General) Zoning District (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1, Business Use #19)

Petitioners:  Ernest Acquaah-Harrison

Present Use:  A two-family detached dwelling

Zone Designation:  RG-5 (Residence, General)

Petition Purpose:  To convert the first floor or ~1,200 SF into a real estate office along with associated paving and site work to allow for the creation of an additional five accessory parking spaces in the rear (southerly) of the structure

Public Hearing Deadline:  10/23/14

Attorney Robert Osol, representing Mr. Harrison, stated that plans have been revised and provided the revised plans to the Board. They addressed all of staff’s comments in the revisions and reviewed the details with the Board.

Mr. Abramoff called a five minute recess.

Mr. Abramoff called the meeting back to order.

Mr. Osol stated that they are providing 5 parking spaces, which should be sufficient to accommodate the employees and clients.

Ms. Tatasciore stated that the petitioner seeks to convert the front portion (1,200 SF) of an existing two-family dwelling into a real estate office and maintain the rear unit as a residence. Associated paving and site work are proposed to create five accessory off-street parking spaces in the rear of the structure. There is existing tandem parking for three vehicles along Grafton Street, which will be reduced to two spaces for residential use on site. She asked Mr. Osol to discuss pedestrian circulation from the designated employee parking spaces that are located to the rear of the structure.

Mr. Osol stated that there is access to the real estate office through the deck in the back or people can walk up the walkway and into the front entrance.

Mr. Kelley stated that this needs to be handicapped accessible.

Mr. Osol stated that a ramp van be added to the deck to become accessible or add one at the front if the grade is correct.

Eddy Keen, 3 Lamar Ave, stated that parking on Lamar Ave is difficult. He is concerned about the children that cross there to get to Rice Square school. His children used to live in that house so he is familiar with the property and the entrance through the deck will not work. He is also concerned with snow.

John Ronco, 1 Lamar Ave, submitted Exhibit E, a petition opposing the proposal. He expressed his opposition to the project.

Joseph George, 8 Lamar Ave, stated that he opposed the application because he thought it would negatively impact the neighborhood and affect the property value of his home.

Paul Wallace, 18 Lamar Ave, read a letter he wrote to the Board regarding his concerns about this petition.
Patricia Ronco, 1 Lamar Ave, stated that she opposed the petition because it will negative for the neighborhood character. Her concerns were the entrance and exit onto Lamar Avenue, the additional parking on Lamar Ave, the runoff from the parking, having a parking lot looking into her dining room, and the additional traffic on the street.

Sheila Haddad Trupasso, 203 Delmont Ave, stated that she is concerned for the safety of the children that have to cross the street right in front of this property.

John Fresolo, 25 Dolly Drive, stated that the traffic at that intersection (Grafton & Lamar) is very dangerous.

Mr. Abramoff stated that the applicant should meet with the neighbors.

Mr. Osol stated that he did not believe that a few extra parking spaces would create more traffic in this area and that the parking lot will be built to prevent runoff from going into Lamar Ave. As for the view from the neighbor’s window, they will be screening the area with plantings and a fence.

Mr. Wanat stated that he did not want to see lighting that will disturb the neighbors in this parking lot. He is concerned about handicapped circulation and the additional impervious area.

Carol Reddon, HS&T Group, stated that they are creating a 2.5:1 slope along the southern property line pitched towards the street. There will be a 6” curb to maintain any runoff from going to the neighbor’s property.

Upon a motion by Mr. Wanat and seconded by Mr. Loew, the Board voted 5-0 to continue the meeting to October 20, 2014.

**List of Exhibits**

Exhibit A: Special Permit Application; August 1, 2014; prepared by Ernest Acquaah-Harrison.

Exhibit B: Special Permit Site Plan; dated August 14, 2014; prepared by HS&T Group, Inc.

Exhibit C: Memorandum from the City of Worcester Division of Planning & Regulatory Services to the Zoning Board of Appeals; re: 586 Grafton street; dated September 17, 2014.


Exhibit E: Petition in Opposition from Abutters; received September 22, 2014.

Exhibit F: Letter in opposition from Paul Wallace; received September 22, 2014.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

9. Communications

   a. Letter from Vernon Medical Center II re: Request to allow a PWSF at 128 Providence Street (ZB-2014-030) – No comments
10. Scrivener’s Error Decision re: 4 Greenhalge Street – Variance Approved 7/7/14 – (ZB-2014-018)

Upon a motion by Mr. Wanat and seconded by Mr. Loew, the Board voted 4-0-1 (Mr. Valeri abstained) to sign the amended decision.

11. Signing of Decisions from prior meetings

- 128 Providence Street – SP for PWSF
- 8 aka 18 Grafton Street – SP for Lodging House
- 0 aka 30 Tory Ft. Ln. – Variance
- 9 Billow St – Variance
- 79 Kendig – SPECNA
- 1 Winter St – Variance
- 4 Greenhalge – Variance (Scrivener’s error)

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Mr. Loew and seconded by Mr. Valeri, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn at 7:40 p.m.