



The City of Worcester

Executive Office of Economic Development

Planning & Regulatory Services

Zoning Board of Appeals

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MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER Monday, March 24, 2025

Worcester City Hall – Levi Lincoln Chamber,
with remote participation options available via Zoom online at:
<https://worcesterma.zoomgov.com/j/16084667877> and
call-in number 1-669-021-5252 (Access Code: 160 8466 7877).

Zoning Board Members Present: Jordan Berg Powers, Vice-Chair/Acting Chair
Lawrence Abramoff
Shannon Campaniello
George Cortes
Eric Torkornoo – *Participated Remotely*
Erik Bartenhagen – *Alternate*

Zoning Board Members Absent:

Staff Participating:

Victor Panak, *Division of Planning & Regulatory Services*
Amy Beth Laythe, *Division of Planning & Regulatory Services*
David Horne, *Inspectional Services Department*

Call to Order:

Mr. Berg Powers called the meeting to order at 5:30PM.

Requests for Continuances, Extensions, Postponements, and Withdrawals

Continuances/Postponements/Withdrawals

POSTPONEMENTS

Item 2. 640 Franklin Street (ZB-2024-080)

Request to Postpone the Public Hearing to April 14, 2025

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to May 6, 2025

Item 3. 85 Lake Ave North & 55 Mohican Road (ZB-2025-021)

Request to Postpone the Public Hearing to April 14, 2025

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to May 6, 2025

On a motion by Ms. Campaniello, seconded by Mr. Cortes, Board voted 5-0 to grant all Postponements.

Old Business – Public Hearings

1. 4 Brandt Lane/0 Grafton Street (ZB-2024-098)

Variance: For relief from the minimum parking requirements for a multi-family dwelling. (Article IV, Section 7, Table 4.4)

Variance: For relief from the minimum setback requirement for an accessory structure (Article IV, Section 8.B.10)

Special Permit: To modify the parking dimensional, layout, and/or landscaping requirements, loading requirements, and/or the number of required parking spaces. (Article IV, Section 7.A.2).

Petitioner: Brandt Lane Development, LLC

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a vacant single-family dwelling and 16.9 acres of land historically used as a landfill/dumping ground

Zone Designation: BG-2.0 (Business, General) zoning district

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to remove all existing improvements, clean the landfill area, and construct five mixed use, 4-5 story multi-family apartment buildings with amenities, parking and associated site improvements. Overall, the proposal includes ±491 dwelling units, ±793 surface and garage parking spaces, ±2,089 SF of commercial space, and indoor and outdoor amenity spaces

- Exhibits:
- Exhibit A: Application; clerked 12/18/24; prepared by Attorney Stephen Madaus
 - Exhibit B: Site Plans dated 10/31/24; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc
 - Exhibit C: Architectural Plans revised 1/3/25 prepared by Maugel Destafano
 - Exhibit D: Traffic Study Dated October 2024 prepared by Kimley Horn and Associates, Inc.
 - Exhibit E: Stormwater Calculations Report Dated 10/30/2024 prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc.
 - Exhibit F: TDM Plan dated 1/23/25 prepared by Kimley Horn
 - Exhibit G: Traffic Study dated 2/25/25 prepared by Kimley Horn
 - Exhibit H: EV and Guest Parking Exhibit dated 3/17/25 prepared by Thopson-Liston Associated, Inc
 - Exhibit I: Site Plans dated 3/17/25; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc
 - Exhibit J: Traffic Study dated 2/25/25; prepared by Kimley Horn and Associates

Public Hearing Deadline: 3/24/2025 Public Hearing Deadline: 3/24/2025

Heard Second

Stephen Madaus attorney on behalf of the applicant gave an overview of the project and the changes that have been made since the last board presentation. Also present were Jeremy Baldwin, Architect, William Scully, Traffic Engineer and Patrick Healy, Project Engineer. Patrick Healy gave an overview of the circulation and amenities being provided in this project and spoke to the photo slides presented.

Victor Panak, Planning Division, gave an overview of the project, changes, and proposed conditions of approval on behalf of the city.

Mr. Madaus discussed staff conditions in the board memo and edits the applicant would like to make.

Mr. Berg Powers clarified that this item still will proceed to Site Plan at the Planning Board and the applicant could provide more renderings at that time.

Mr. Panak spoke to the staff conditions of approval addressed by Mr. Madaus.

Public Comment:

Donna Dickey, 1 Pine Hill Road, stated that her property abuts this project on two sides and understands the applicant doesn't want to extend the sidewalks, but it would benefit the children in the neighborhood. She said since Pine Hill is a private road, the residents pay to fix the road every year. She said she also believes the applicant should landscape down Pine Hill Road and is concerned about traffic onto Pine Hill Road. Mr. Madaus said the project's primary point of egress is Brandt Lane, but there is a driveway off of Pine Hill Road. Mr. Madaus said the applicant is proposing full reconstruction on Pine Hill Road up until the driveway into the project and will agree to landscaping the length of the property along Pine Hill Road.

Board Comment:

Mr. Berg Powers said he appreciates the changes that were made and appreciates the abutter comments.

Mr. Abramoff asked for clarification on the number of delivery spaces. He said the residents are going to have a lot of deliveries and he doesn't know if there would be enough spaces. He asked if the applicant considered a centrally located delivery spot. Mr. Healy, Project Engineer, said the design team looked at this. He said each building has a dedicated mail room and larger items will be brought in from the garage entrance. He asked for the board to grant the relief of the loading spaces and then allow the applicant to negotiate the logistics. Mr. Abramoff said he believes the project needs the planned delivery spaces and he would approve the maximum number possible. Mr. Madaus said the original proposal for loading spaces was 9.

Ms. Campaniello said she is comfortable with reducing the number of loading spaces to no more than 7 spaces. She added that she would like to see the sidewalk extended down Pine Hill Road and sees it as a value to the neighborhood and wanting to connect with the neighborhood to Grafton Street.

Mr. Cortes thanked the applicant for making changes and listening to the abutters. He asked if the applicant is looking for additional parking in other off-site areas if needed. Mr. Madaus said the parking calculations indicate that additional parking wouldn't be needed and the Department of Transportation and Mobility agreed. He added that if the parking is not adequate, the applicant could look at additional off-site parking. Mr. Healy said the project meets the minimum ADA accessibility requirements. Mr. Cortes asked about a lighting plan. Mr. Healy said a lighting plan was provided and light won't spill on neighboring properties. Mr. Cortes asked about a snow removal plan. Mr. Healy said snow will be removed from the site after storms. Mr. Berg Powers said there is a complex off of Massasoit Road that had 1.5 spaces per apartment and when he drove by at night, there were plenty of parking spaces available.

Mr. Torkornoo had no comment.

Mr. Bartenhagen said for the number of delivery/loading spaces he would be ok with no more than 7 spaces. He asked about what kind of traffic and cut through traffic is projected into the development from the entryway from Pine Hill Road. Mr. Madaus said he doesn't see much benefit for residents to

use this driveway as a cut through. William Scully, traffic engineer, said the driveway does offer opportunity for folks who live there, however, per the Department of Transportation and Mobility all pedestrian crossings will be raised to slow drivers down. Mr. Healy said the driveway is configured as an "S" turn and there is a difference in grade. Mr. Bartenhagen said in an ideal world it would be nice to have the sidewalk continue along Pine Hill Road for those that attend the school in the neighborhood and asked how much of a burden it would be on the developer to continue the sidewalk. Mr. Madaus said he would have to defer to others as the question is to what standard the sidewalk be improved. He said if it's not to the city standard, then it would cost less. Mr. Healy said there are some street structure issues on Pine Hill Road that complicate the question as well and the applicant would prefer not to exacerbate those problems. He added that the applicant plans to improve the Grafton Street side of the property creating more safety on a busier road.

Mr. Berg Powers said he was not sure where the board stands, so he was looking for final thoughts. He suggested setting a floor and ceiling on the number of loading spaces then the applicant can work to improve the landscaping and if people walk on the grass where a sidewalk would be, then it is ok to leave as is.

Mr. Cortes said he is in favor of no more than 7 loading spaces. Mr. Abramoff said he feels loading spaces are a management issue and that the applicant needs to have at least 5 but he is ok with up to 9. He said he would rather give the leeway, so the applicant doesn't have to come back to the board. Ms. Campaniello said she is comfortable with having between 5 and 9 loading spaces and would like to see the sidewalk extended but won't hinder the project moving forward. Mr. Abramoff agreed with Ms. Campaniello that he would like to see the sidewalk expanded but didn't think about drainage on the road. Mr. Bartenhagen said he was ok with between 5 and 9 loading spaces. He said he feels safer not adding the sidewalk extension as a condition of approval not knowing the consequences for the road infrastructure. Mr. Panak said the Planning Board could also review the sidewalk condition. Mr. Berg Powers said he would like to charge the applicant to look at the possibility of the sidewalk between now and the Planning Board review. Mr. Bartenhagen said he appreciated the traffic work done by the applicant. Mr. Torkornoo said he was comfortable with a floor of 5 loading space and a ceiling of 9 and he also would like to see the sidewalk extended be is ok with waiting for the project to be before the Planning Board.

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

On a motion by Ms. Campaniello, seconded by Mr. Cortes, Board voted 5-0 to approve the application with conditions as amended, recommendations, and waivers.

New Business – Public Hearings

4. 623 Chandler Street (ZB-2025-022)

Special Permit: To allow a Food service (includes consumption/sale or alcoholic beverages) and/or providing dancing or entertainment use in a BL-1.0 zone (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1, Business Use 8)

Petitioner: Gyro & Souvlaki LLC

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a food service establishment that excludes the consumption/sale of alcohol.

Zone Designation: BL-1.0 (Business, Limited) zoning district with a small portion in the RS-7 (Residence, Limited) zoning district.

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks a special permit to expand the food service use to include the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages.

Exhibits: Exhibit A: Application; clerked 3/3/25; prepared by Joshua Lee Smith, Bowditch & Dewey

Exhibit B: Building Floor Plans dated 1/21/24

Exhibit C: Cover Letter dated 2/18/25; prepared by Joseph Duquette,
Bowditch & Dewey

Public Hearing Deadline: 5/7/2025

Constructive Grant Deadline: TBD

Heard first for the night out of order.

Joseph Duquette, attorney on behalf of the applicant, gave an overview of the project. The owner was also present.

Amy Beth Laythe, Planning Division, gave an overview of the project on behalf of the city.

Public Comment:

Fred Nathan, Worcester, asked if the applicant planned to have outdoor entertainment on-site. Mr. Duquette said no outdoor entertainment, just dining.

Board Comment:

Mr. Abramoff said he was in favor and comfortable with the establishment being open until 10pm. He said he supports just beer and wine. He asked the applicant if they were flexible on a 1am closing time. Mr. Duquette said the Irish pub across the street is open until 2am and the applicant would like to be competitive. Mr. Abramoff said he was uncomfortable with a 1am closing time. Mr. Berg-Powers said the applicant could have a license for outdoors until a certain time and indoors for a different time. Mr. Abramoff said that would be hard to enforce. Mr. Duquette said the applicant is open to Friday/Saturday with extended hours.

Ms. Campaniello said she looked up the Irish pub's hours and added that it is on a different piece of land. She said she is amenable to the establishment being open Friday/Saturday later hours but, maybe not until 1am. Mr. Cortes said he is very comfortable with everything especially with no outdoor entertainment. He said that the close time should be 10pm to keep the hours consistent. Mr. Torkornoo said he was comfortable with the proposal as presented by the applicant. He said he encourages new businesses, and the pub is open late. He added that there is lots of mixed use in the area, it is not a high crime area, and the establishment won't be playing music.

Mr. Bartenhagen said he lives up the street but hasn't been to this location yet. He said Irish pub open late and there is another pub further up the street that is also open late. He said he doesn't see an issue with being open til 1am. Mr. Abramoff said he would hate to get in the way of business. He said he is flexible to the time, but no outdoor music. Mr. Duquette said there is no plan for outdoor music. Mr. Bartenhagen said the hours were stipulated because those were the hours previously and said the pub is a very similar use and their hours are midnight Wednesday through Saturday and other days 10pm. He suggested instead of 1am maybe close at midnight. Mr. Berg Powers reviewed the hours as discussed by the board.

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

On a motion by Ms. Campaniello, seconded by Mr. Cortes, Board voted 5-0 to approve the application with conditions as amended, recommendations, and waivers.

Other Business:

5. Communications

[b. Liberty Farm Historic District Survey](#)

- Available through 4/4

[b. Housing Production Plan Draft Available](#)

- Public Comment through 3/14
- Comment at Planning Board 4/9

[c. Worcester Urban Forest Master Plan](#)

- Now Available!

[d. Nominations for Preservation Worcester Awards](#)

- Available through 4/18

6. Discussion of Board Policies and Procedures

7. Approval of Minutes – 2/10/25, 3/3/25

On a motion by Ms. Campaniello, seconded by Mr. Cortes, Board voted 5-0 to approve the minutes for 2/10/25 and 3/3/25.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Ms. Campaniello, seconded by Mr. Cortes, Board voted 5-0 to adjourn at 7:05 PM.