



The City of Worcester

Planning Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Worcester City Hall – Levi Lincoln Chamber,
with remote participation options available via Zoom online at
“<https://worcesterma.zoomgov/j/1617314979>” and call-in
number 1-669-254-5252 (Access Code: 161 731 4979 #).

Attendance:

Board Members Present: Albert LaValley, Chair
Conor McCormack, Vice-Chair (*Participated Remotely*)
Stephen Toomey
Brandon King (*Participated Remotely*)
Anthony Dell’Aera (*Participated Remotely*)

Board Members Absent:

Staff Present: Michelle Smith, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Stephen Cary, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Todd Miller, ISD (*Participated Remotely*)
Leslie Rodriguez, DPW (*Participated Remotely*)
Kobe Boaten, LAW

Call to Order:

Board Chair Albert LaValley called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Mr. LaValley read requests for continuances, postponements, and withdrawals into the record.

Item 1: 0 Chester Street (PB-2025-048) – Definitive Site Plan

Request to Continue the Public Meeting & Hearing to April 22, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to May 14, 2026

Item 2: 28 Harrington Way (PB-2025-093) – Special Permit

Request to Postpone the Public Meeting to April 22, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to May 14, 2026

Item 3: 1103 Millbury Street (PB-2026-008) – Definitive Site Plan

Request to Postpone the Public Meeting to April 22, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to May 14, 2026

Item 5: 12 Malden Street (PB-2026-019) – Definitive Site Plan & More Than One Building on a Lot Plan

Request to Postpone the Public Meeting & Hearing to April 22, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to May 14, 2026

Item 6: 17 Pearl Street (PB-2026-027) – Definitive Site Plan & Special Permit EOT

Request to Postpone the Public Meeting to April 22, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to May 14, 2026

Item 9: 25 West Chester Street (ZA-2026-002)

Request to Postpone the Public Hearing to April 22, 2026

On a motion by Mr. McCormack, seconded by Mr. King, the Board voted 5-0 to grant the postponements and withdrawals.

New Business:

Item 4: 3 Dundee Court (PB-2026-018)

- a. Public Hearing – Special Permit (ADU) to modify the dimensional requirements for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (Article IV, Section 8.G.5)

Michelle Smith, DPRS, presented an application regarding a property located at 3 Dundee Court within the RS-7 zoning district. She stated the property is currently a single-family home, and the applicant is proposing to convert a portion of the existing structure into an accessory dwelling unit (ADU). She explained the proposal includes enclosing an existing front garage bay and connecting it internally to the space above, along with the addition of a small front entry where the garage door is currently located. She outlined the recommended conditions of approval with relatively minor conditions listed in the staff memo, including input from the Department of Public Works related to utilities, parking layout, curb cuts, and proper driveway dimensioning to ensure compliance with zoning requirements. She stated the applicant has also requested waivers for certain plan requirements, such as topographical details. Ms. Smith explained the proposed ADU would be approximately 1,152 square feet, exceeding the by-right limit of 900 square feet by about 252 square feet (roughly a 20% increase), requiring dimensional relief through a special permit. She concluded, stating the project involves an internal conversion of the existing structure and is located in a managed growth area where increased residential density is encouraged, particularly in areas with access to transit.

Chandra Ghimerey, applicant for the proposal, asked about the utility requirements and the locations of parking required to be shown on the plan as requested by staff.

Ms. Smith asked the applicant to clarify the location of existing parking.

Mr. Ghimerey stated there are three parking spaces within the driveway and no changes are proposed to the driveway.

Leslie Rodriguez, DPW, clarified the request to show water and sewer lines in front of the house on the plan as well as the width of the driveway. Ms. Rodriguez stated that this information will be required at the time of building permit.

Public Comment:

Carl Zalauskas, abutter to the property, expressed concern with the narrow width of the street and where residents and visitors will park due to the constraining conditions on the street, noting he does not want his driveway to get blocked; Mr. LaValley noted there is no parking requirement for ADUs and that the matter is out of the Board's purview but encouraged Mr. Zalauskas to work with the neighbor should issues with parking arise.

Board Discussion:

Albert LaValley expressed his support.

Conor McCormack stated this proposal was a reasonable request and expressed his support for the project.

Stephen Toomey stated no additional comment.

Brandon King expressed his support

Anthony Dell'Aera stated no additional comments.

On the motion, by Mr. McCormack, seconded by Mr. King the Board voted 5–0 to close the public hearing

On a motion by Mr. McCormack, seconded by Mr. King, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Special Permit subject to staff recommended conditions of approval.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Special Permit Application; clerked 3/6/2026; prepared by Chandra Ghimerey

Exhibit B: Survey; dated 2/23/2026; prepared by JG Land Services LLC

Exhibit C: Existing Architectural Plans; dated 10/20/2021; prepared by Eng Arch Design

Exhibit D: Proposed Architectural Plans; no date; prepared by Creative Home Plan LLC

Item 7. 540 West Boylston Street (PB-2026-028)

a. Public Meeting – Parking Plan

Adam Balderelli from Fletcher Tilton presented on behalf of Town Fair Tire, joined by Bruce Ringwall (GPR Engineering) and John Wchowowski, stating the applicant is seeking parking plan approval for a new Town Fair Tire location at 540 West Boylston Street. He stated the project involves renovating a portion of an existing 20,000 sq ft building into a 12,000 sq ft tire retail and installation facility (9,000 sq ft retail, 3,000 sq ft service). He described the site improvements which include reducing parking from 92 to 58 spaces to decrease impervious surface, improve circulation, and add green space (approx. 5,600 sq ft increase). He noted additional upgrades include accessibility improvements and new landscaping.

Bruce Ringwall from GPR Engineering presented site and engineering updates for the project, stating the proposal maintains existing curb cuts while reducing aisle widths and parking to improve circulation. He confirmed additional landscaping will be incorporated in coordination with staff. Mr. Ringwall stated grading will be adjusted to improve ADA accessibility, including relocating ramps that currently interfere with traffic flow and ensuring proper access to ADA parking spaces. He described that on the south side, the parking lot will be raised to allow vehicle access to six service bays for tire installation. He stated the plan accommodates delivery truck circulation and ensures fire department access, with turning movements reviewed and approved by staff and fire officials. He concluded, stating stormwater improvements include relocating and retrofitting catch basins with treatment systems to reduce runoff pollutants, along with overall reduction in impervious surface.

Michelle Smith, DPRS, clarified that the board is reviewing only the parking plan, not the building. She noted the applicant previously received three special permits from the Zoning Board due to the site's split zoning and nonconforming use. Ms. Smith described the proposal, noting the reduction to the parking lot size, addition of green space, trees, and landscaping in line with ZBA conditions. She stated remaining staff conditions relate to retaining walls, stormwater compliance, erosion control

preferences, and a note ensuring any future lighting meets current standards. She confirmed access and curb cuts remain largely unchanged, with a required right-turn exit onto Francis Street.

Ms. Smith noted a staff question regarding evaluation of a storm drain inlet was addressed by the applicant, who confirmed it will remain in place, be inspected, adjusted if necessary, and retrofitted with a stormwater treatment system.

Public Comment:

No Public Comments.

Board Discussion:

Albert LaValley expressed his support.

Conor McCormack expressed no concerns with the proposed plan and voiced support for the project. He noted that the reduction in parking spaces, increase in impervious/open space, and added landscaping are positive improvements.

Stephen Toomey asked whether the stormwater treatment system requires regular maintenance; Mr. Ringwall confirmed that ongoing maintenance will be the responsibility of the property owner.

Brandon King expressed his support

Anthony Dell'Aera expressed his support

On a motion by Mr. McCormack, seconded by Mr. King, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Parking Plan subject to staff recommended conditions of approval.

List of Exhibits:

- Exhibit A: Parking Plan (Accessory Parking Lot) Application; submitted 3/11/2026; prepared by Matthew Eckel, Fletcher Tilton PC
- Exhibit B: Survey & Site Plans; revised 3/3/2026; prepared by Goldsmith, Preset & Ringwall, Inc
- Exhibit C: Landscape Plan; dated 1/23/2026; prepared by Fisher Design Group
- Exhibit D: Stormwater Report; dated 1/2026; prepared by Goldsmith, Preset & Ringwall, Inc

Item 8. o, 2 Tyson Road & o Burncoat Street (PB-2026-029)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Donald O'Neil, representing McDermott LLC, presented a request for site plan approval, noting a correction that the entity is an LLC (not Inc.). He stated the application is required due to site grades exceeding 15% and stormwater management includes proposed infiltration chambers, with a report submitted to staff. He stated the applicant requested a waiver for tree-related requirements and generally agreed with staff conditions, except for one regarding additional architectural details. Mr. O'Neil stated that four windows have already been added to the side elevation (exceeding the original request), and no further modifications are feasible or consistent with the farmhouse-style design. He requested removal of that condition.

Michelle Smith, DPRS, clarified that the application is for site plan approval of a single-family attached (three-unit) dwelling. She explained the applicant previously received ZBA approval, which has lapsed, and will return to the ZBA to reestablish authorization and that an ANR plan has configured the property into three separate lots. Ms. Smith noted prior architectural comments, including added windows, and stated that the board should determine whether the design is sufficient, especially given the prominent corner location. She noted additional design elements could be considered, though final architectural concerns may also be addressed by the ZBA. She stated other staff conditions include

labeling impervious surfaces, specifying walkway materials, and ensuring compliant tree species with remaining conditions being standard.

Mr. LaValley asked for clarification regarding existing trees along Burncoat Street, noting they appear to be large, mature pine trees on Google Street View.; Mr. O'Neil confirmed these are the same trees and stated they will be maintained, consistent with prior ZBA discussions.

Mr. LaValley acknowledged that the trees significantly screen the building from the street, which helps address concerns about the architectural appearance on that side.

Public Comment:

Junea Hutchins, owner of 7 Tyson Road and co-owner of 4 Tyson Road, expressed concerns about the proposed development, including clarification on the location and number of new units. She raised concerns about traffic and safety, particularly related to new driveways accessing Tyson Road, which is now a one-way street. She noted existing congestion, visibility challenges due to mature trees, winter snow impacts, and general neighborhood safety, especially given frequent emergency vehicle activity. She emphasized broader concerns about increased density, traffic, and neighborhood character, while acknowledging the likelihood of project approval.

Mr. LaValley thanked the abutter for her comments and acknowledged the challenges in balancing public safety, housing demand, and property rights. He noted that zoning permits this type of development and described the proposal as relatively low impact, with the construction period likely being the most disruptive phase. Mr. LaValley clarified that the current review is for site plan approval only, focusing on design elements such as grading, drainage, and layout, not zoning changes.

Ms. Smith explained that the applicant previously received ZBA approval for three units, which has since lapsed. She stated the applicant will return to the Zoning Board to reestablish approval for the third unit, as only two units are allowed by right and emphasized that concerns about density and use (e.g., number of units, traffic) are addressed by the ZBA, while the Planning Board's role is limited to site design. She encouraged the abutter to attend the upcoming ZBA meeting to share concerns.

Ms. Hutchins raised safety concerns regarding the proposal, particularly the addition of three separate driveways on Tyson Road. She noted that multiple curb cuts could increase vehicle conflict points and worsen existing traffic and safety issues in the area. Ms. Hutchins emphasized concerns about pedestrian safety, including children, families, and pets, citing past incidents and crashes along Tyson Road. She urged the board to consider the impact on neighborhood safety and requested denial of the proposal.

Board Discussion:

Albert LaValley expressed his support.

Conor McCormack expressed support for the site plan, stating no concerns with the layout. He acknowledged public safety concerns but noted that the expected increase in traffic is minimal and reasonable given the location near a major road. He emphasized that the board's role is limited to site plan review, not approval of the use itself. He also expressed support in retaining the staff condition requiring additional architectural detail on the Burncoat Street-facing elevation, noting it would enhance the building's appearance.

Stephen Toomey expressed his support for this project.

Brandon King expressed support for the project and agreed with retaining the condition requiring additional architectural detail. He acknowledged abutter concerns about traffic and driveway access but

noted the design is consistent with similar developments in Worcester and should function adequately with proper controls in place.

Anthony Dell'Aera expressed his support for this project.

Mr. LaValley discussed the practicality and enforceability of such a vague condition for architectural enhancements, noting it often results in minimal or unclear outcomes.

Ms. Smith suggested adding shingles or material variation were considered, though some questioned the value given limited visibility due to existing trees.

After discussion and consideration of value added given limited visibility due to existing trees, the Board reached a general consensus to strike the architectural condition, with informal encouragement for the applicant to enhance the facade where feasible.

On a motion by Mr. McCormack, seconded by Mr. King, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan subject to staff recommended conditions of approval, striking condition 1d as described in the discussion.

List of Exhibits:

- Exhibit A: Definitive Site Plan; filed February 26, 2026; prepared by Donald O'Neil, Esq.
- Exhibit B: Site Plans; dated February 25, 2026; revised March 9, 2026; prepared by McCarty Engineering, Inc.
- Exhibit C: Architectural Plans; dated January 2026; revised March 27, 2026; prepared by Shane Structures
- Exhibit D: Stormwater Memo; dated March 5, 2026; prepared by McCarty Engineering, Inc.
- Exhibit E: Existing Conditions Survey; dated July 21, 2024; revised January 22, 2025; prepared by B&R Survey, Inc.
- Exhibit F: Project Impact Statement; dated March 16, 2026; prepared by McCarty Engineering, Inc.
- Exhibit G: ANR Plan; dated September 14, 2023; recorded September 5, 2025; prepared by B&R Survey, Inc.

10. Portions of the Belmont Street/Plantation Street Corridor/Green Hill Area (ZA-2026-005)

a. Public Hearing – Zoning Map Amendment

Peter Dunn, Chief Development Officer, introduced a proposed zoning map amendment for an approximately 150-acre area along the Belmont and Plantation Street corridors. He stated the proposal aims to replace a legacy manufacturing zoning district with BG-3.0 to better reflect existing uses (e.g., lab, office, hotel) and align with nearby development such as the Reactory. He stated it also includes downzoning protected open space to RS-7 to preserve recreation and environmental areas and ensure consistency with nearby Green Hill Park. Mr. Dunn noted the recommendation supports goals from the Worcester Now | Next plan by promoting balanced economic development while preserving open space. He acknowledged a request to meet with the Shrewsbury Street Neighborhood Association before final action and expressed openness to continuing the item for further engagement.

Michelle Smith, DPRS, provided additional details on the proposed zoning map amendment, noting corrections to errors in the staff memo and confirming the updated map reflects the accurate proposal.

She stated the proposal would replace a legacy manufacturing district with BG-3.0 zoning to better align with existing uses and allow greater density (increasing floor area ratio and height limits), supporting more compact development and reducing excess surface parking. She continued, stating it also introduces residential zoning in protected open space areas to limit future development and preserve environmental and recreational land. Ms. Smith emphasized that the changes aim to create zoning consistency, reduce nonconforming uses, and support the Worcester Now | Next plan by enabling mixed-use, life sciences growth while balancing open space preservation. She noted adjustments and flexibility in setbacks and density are intended to encourage redevelopment while maintaining environmental protections.

Mr. Dunn suggested continuing the zoning map amendment item to allow staff to address noted revisions and ensure a complete, accurate package before making a recommendation. He emphasized that the proposal is proactive and not tied to a specific development, so there is no urgency. He concluded, clarifying that the intent is to refine the materials and return with a finalized version for the Planning Board to review and vote on before forwarding to the Economic Development Committee.

Public Comment:

Gloria Caprioli, a neighborhood resident and member of the Shrewsbury Street Neighborhood Association, requested that the Board delay action on the zoning amendment to allow the association to participate in the discussion.

Board Discussion:

Albert LaValley expressed his support.

Conor McCormack expressed his support for this project.

Stephen Toomey asked whether the zoning change is intended to redevelop existing buildings or utilize undeveloped land; Mr. Dunn clarified that no specific development is currently proposed and the effort is proactive, aligned with long-term planning goals.

Mr. Dunn noted that while existing development is generally low-density, the proposed zoning would allow for future flexibility, including potential infill or redevelopment. He stated increased density could enable more efficient land use, allowing buildings to grow vertically while preserving open space.

Brandon King expressed his support.

Anthony Dell'Aera expressed his support.

On the motion, by Mr. McCormack, seconded by Mr. King the Board voted 5–0 to continue the hearing to the April 22nd Planning Board meeting.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Petition – City Manager; referred to Planning Board on 3/11/2026.

Exhibit B: Proposed Rezoning Maps; dated 3/2/2026

Other Business (Public Meeting)

11. Approval Not Required (ANR) Plans

- a. AN-2025-008 – 3 Sherer Trail (Private)
- b. AN-2026-010 – 14 Beverly Cove (Public) & 24 Saybrook Road (Public)
- c. AN-2026-012 – 1429 & 1439 Main Street (Public) & 48, 52 & 54 Bauer Street (Public)
- d. AN-2026-014 – 507-515, 523-525 Southbridge Street (Public), 0 & 3 Southgate Place (Private), 1 & 3 Congdon Street (Private) and 8 Gladstone Street (Private)

- e. AN-2026-015 – 340 Tacoma Street (Public)
- f. AN-2026-016 – 27 Wakefield Street (Public) & Selden Street (Private)
- g. AN-2026-017 – 29 Dominion Road (Public) & Ansonia Road (Private)
- h. AN-2026-018 – 188.5 Norfolk Street (Public)

Stephen Cary, DPRS, described ANR items 11b-h to the Board. He stated item 11a is not properly before the Board.

On a motion by Mr. McCormack, seconded by Mr. King, the Board voted 5-0 to endorse ANR plans 11b-h.

12. Communications

No discussion.

11. Board Policy and Procedures

No discussion.

12. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. McCormack, seconded by Mr. King, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the minutes from the 1/28/2026, 2/18/2026, & 3/11/2026 meetings.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. McCormack, seconded by Mr. King, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:44pm.