



The City of Worcester

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER

Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 6, 2026

Worcester City Hall – Levi Lincoln Chamber,

with remote participation options available via Zoom online at:

**<https://worcesterma.zoomgov.com/j/1604564634> and
call-in number 1-669-254-5252 (Access Code: 160 456 4634#).**

Attendance:

Zoning Board Members Present:

Jordan Berg Powers - Chair
George Cortes
Eric Torkornoo
Erik Bartenhagen – Alternate

Zoning Board Members Absent:

Lawrence Abramoff - Vice Chair
Matthew Sacco – Alternate

Staff Participating:

Michelle Smith, DPRS
Amy Beth Laythe, DPRS
David Horne, Inspectional Services Department

Call to Order:

Mr. Berg Powers called the meeting to order at 5:42 PM.

Requests for Continuances, Extensions, Postponements, and Withdrawals

Continuances/Postponements/Withdrawals

Continuances

Item #1 2 Northboro Street (ZB-2026-009) Special Permit & Variance

Request to Continue to April 27, 2026

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to May 19, 2026

Postponements

Item #2 417 Cambridge Street (ZB-2026-015) Special Permit & Variance

Request to Postpone to April 15, 2026

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to April 28, 2026

Item #3 421 Cambridge Street (ZB-2026-016) Special Permit & Variance

Request to Postpone to April 15, 2026

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to April 28, 2026

Item #5 114 Lincoln Street (ZB-2026-021) Special Permit & Variance

Request to Postpone to April 15, 2026

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to April 28, 2026

Planning & Regulatory Services Division

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- Item #6 256 Sunderland Road (ZB-2026-022) Special Permit & Variance**
Request to Postpone to April 15, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to April 28, 2026
- Item #7 465 & 467 Lake Avenue (ZB-2026-025) Special Permit**
Request to Postpone to April 15, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to April 28, 2026
- Item #9 0, 2 Tyson Road & 0 Burncoat Street (ZB-2026-029) Special Permit**
Request to Postpone to April 15, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to April 28, 2026
- Item # 10 59 Pocasset Avenue (fka 55 Pocasset Ave) (ZB-2026-030) Variance**
Request to Postpone to April 15, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to April 28, 2026

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Continuance.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Postponements.

New Business – Public Hearings

- 4. 142 Highland Street (aka 142B Highland Street) (ZB-2026-018)**
- Special Permit:** To allow a food service (includes consumption/sale of 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: Tanuj Neupane
- Present Use: Presently on the premises is a 3-story, mixed-use building with two commercial tenants on the ground floor and one residential unit on the upper floors. The applicant presently operates a food service establishment in one of the commercial spaces (known as 142 B Highland Street) which excludes the consumption/sale of alcohol (Business Use #7).
- Zone Designation: BL-1.0 (Business, Limited) zoning district, and within the Commercial Corridors Overlay District - Elsewhere (CCOD-E).
- Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks a special permit to allow for the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages as part of the existing food service use (Business Use #8).
- Exhibits: Exhibit A: Application; clerked 2/3/26; prepared by Tanuj Neupane
Exhibit B: Floor Plans; dated 4/22/2026; prepared by J.R. Associates Design Services.
- Public Hearing Deadline: 4/6/2026 Constructive Grant Deadline: 4/28/2026

Tenuj Neupane, who lives in Paxton, Massachusetts, appeared before the board to request a Special Permit to serve alcohol at the already established restaurant located on Highland Street. He explained that the purpose of the request is to enhance the dining experience for customers by offering alcohol service. He also added that Momo Palace would remain a food-focused, family-friendly restaurant.

Amy Beth Laythe, Planning Division, gave an overview of this item for the City. Presently this restaurant does not serve alcohol but would like to. The address is located in the BL-1.0 zone and within the CCOD-E. Because the business is located in the CCOD and currently has less than 20 parking spaces, the

minimum parking requirements are waived, provided that all existing parking remains. Ms. Laythe asked the applicant to discuss how parking is currently managed and if any changes will be made in order to serve alcohol.

Mr. Neupane provided additional details regarding operations at Momo Palace. He stated that the trash area is located behind the building and is already managed by a trash company. Trash is currently removed every 15 days, though he noted they would consider increasing pickup to every week depending on business needs. Regarding parking, he explained that the restaurant has four dedicated parking spaces. In addition, the building owner controls much of the surrounding property and is willing to provide additional parking behind the building for customers if necessary. The applicant also confirmed that no physical changes would be made to the building and that the restaurant would remain at its current capacity of 18 seats to keep operations simple.

When asked about alcohol service hours, City staff suggested limiting alcohol sales to no later than 10:00 p.m. The applicant responded that the restaurant's current hours of operation are 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and that there are no plans to extend those hours

Public Comment:

Fred Nathan, Worcester, stated that he had no vested interest in the matter but was curious about the proposal because he enjoys trying new restaurants. He asked whether the applicant was seeking a full liquor license or only permission to serve beer and wine. The board then repeated the question to clarify whether the request was for a full liquor license or limited to beer and wine service.

Mr. Neupane responded that they plan to request a full liquor license. The board acknowledged the response and noted that the specific liquor license determination was not directly within their purview, but agreed it was an important question to clarify for the record.

Board Comment:

Jordan Berg Powers explained that certain submission materials normally required for the application had not been provided. He noted that these requirements could be waived, but only if the applicant formally requested those waivers. After the explanation was repeated for clarification, the applicant confirmed that he was requesting the necessary waivers.

George Cortes asked whether there would be any music or dancing at the establishment. The applicant responded that there would be no music and no dancing.

Eric Torkornoo stated no comment.

Erik Bartenhagen stated no comment.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 4-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the application with conditions, recommendations, and waivers.

New Business – Public Hearings

8. 12 Greenbriar Lane (ZB-2026-026)

Special Permit: To extend, alter or change a privileged pre-existing, nonconforming structure and/or use (Article XVI, Section 4).)

Petitioner: Eugene F. and Penelope S. Kaczyk

Present Use: Presently the premises is a single-family detached dwelling..

Zone Designation: RS-10 (Residence Single Family) zoning district.

Petition Purpose:	The applicant seeks construct a ±918 SF addition consisting of additional living space and a one-car garage and to conduct associated site improvements..		
Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 3/16/2026; prepared by Michael Hally, Architect	
	Exhibit B:	Existing Conditions Survey; dated 3/12/0226; prepared by Finlay Engineering Services	
	Exhibit C:	Site Plan; dated 3/12/2026; prepared by Finlay Engineering Services	
	Exhibit D:	Architectural Plans; dated 1/30/2026; prepared by Michael Hally Design, Inc	
Public Hearing Deadline:	5/20/2026	Constructive Grant Deadline:	TBD

Gene Kacyk, 12 Greenbriar Lane, addressed the board regarding a proposed first-floor addition to the home he shares with his wife, Penny. He explained that they have lived in the residence for over 40 years, love their home and neighborhood, and wish to remain there. However, as they age, accessing the second-floor bathroom and primary bedroom, as well as the basement laundry, has become increasingly difficult. He stated that the proposed first-floor addition would allow them to age in place and remain in their longtime home. He expressed confidence that the proposed addition would fit the character and density of the neighborhood and thanked the board for its consideration, offering to answer any questions.

Michael Hally of Michael Hally Design in Westborough, Massachusetts, presented the proposal for 12 Greenbriar Lane. He explained that the lot is long and narrow, making it difficult to meet setback requirements, but stated the addition would fit the character of the surrounding neighborhood. The plan includes removing the existing garage and adding a first-floor bedroom, bathroom, expanded kitchen, mudroom, storage area, and a new one-car garage, while leaving the second floor unchanged. He added that the design would reflect the style of the existing home, preserve sunlight, maintain the backyard garden, and include additional trees. He also formally requested the necessary waivers for the project

Michelle Smith, Planning Division, reviewed the application for a Special Permit at 12 Greenbriar Lane to expand and alter an existing nonconforming single-family home. She explained that the proposal includes a little over 900 square feet of additional living space. The home is currently nonconforming because it sits too close to both the street and the rear lot line, and the requested permit would address those conditions. She noted that the project preserves the existing front façade while extending the structure toward the intersection, without increasing encroachment into the side setback. Staff recommended conditions including replacement of any mature trees damaged during construction, planting one additional tree, and using walkway materials distinct from the driveway. She added that the surrounding area is predominantly single-family homes and confirmed that the applicants had requested three waivers associated with the proposal.

Public Comment:

No Public Comment.

Board Comment:

Jordan Berg Powers stated that the home is already a beautiful property and expressed support for the proposal, noting that the project would help the homeowners age in place while maintaining an attractive design. He added that they had no concerns and were prepared to vote in favor.

George Cortes also voiced support, stating that the proposed changes looked very nice and would further improve the appearance of the neighborhood. He indicated that he was in favor of the application as well.

Eric Torkornoo stated no comments.

Erik Bartenhagen stated he had no comments on the proposal. Board Member Bartenhagen then asked whether the applicant agreed to the staff conditions requiring differentiated walkway materials and the planting of one additional tree.

The applicant confirmed acceptance of both conditions, noting that the existing walkways and driveway are currently paved with pavers and that they would continue that treatment. Board Member Bartenhagen then stated he had nothing further to add.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 4-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the application with conditions, recommendations, and waivers.

New Business – Public Hearings

11.	18-24 Oxford Street (ZB-2026-034)		
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:	Autism Allies, Inc		
Present Use:	Presently on the premises is a 2-story building, operated as a daycare and an accessory parking facility for ±8 cars..		
Zone Designation:	RG-5 (Residence, General) zoning district and within the Crown Hill Local Historic District.		
Petition Purpose:	The applicant proposes to improve and re-stripe the existing parking area, to expand the rear of the property to add ±10 spaces (total of ±15 spaces), and to conduct associated site improvements including landscaping, lighting and stormwater mitigation.		
Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 3/17/2026; prepared by Patrick Healy, P.E. Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc	
	Exhibit B:	Project Description; revised 3/3/2026; prepared by Patrick Healy, P.E. Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc.	
	Exhibit C:	Site Plan, Survey, & Photometric Plan; dated 1/19/226, revised 3/23/226; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc	
	Exhibit D:	Stormwater Report; Dated 1/12/226; prepared by Patrick Healy, P.E. Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc.	
Public Hearing Deadline:	5/21/2026	Constructive Grant Deadline:	TBD

Victor Wahome, a resident of Millbury, Massachusetts, introduced a proposal alongside Patrick Healey, who was participating remotely. He explained that the purpose of the project is to expand parking in order to provide a safer and more reliable parking area for employees. He noted that the current rear parking area is grass, which becomes unusable during the winter months. The proposal would pave that area so employees can continue to park there safely year-round, including during snow and icy conditions.

Patrick Healy, Engineer, civil engineer with Thompson-Liston Associates in Boylston, presented plans to add 10 parking spaces behind the existing fence for the daycare property. He explained the project is intended to meet parking needs for additional staff while minimizing impacts to buffer areas. The applicants requested waivers for reduced parking aisle and access drive widths, along with two additional plan-related waivers identified by staff.

He also noted the site is within the Crown Hill Historic District, so visible changes require Historic Commission review. The proposal includes landscaping, one accessible parking space, and low-scale decorative LED lighting designed to fit the historic character of the area.

Michelle Smith, Planning Division, reviewed the request for a Special Permit to expand the daycare parking lot. She explained the proposal would add parking in the rear yard and requires relief for a reduced 22-foot drive aisle where 24 feet is normally required, as well as a 14-foot connection where 20 feet is required. These changes were intended to preserve landscaping and limit the visual impact of parking within the historic district. Staff recommended conditions including additional trees and shrubs, updated stormwater materials, safer on-site traffic circulation, and notice to staff and visitors about parking patterns. She also noted the applicant needed two additional waivers identified by staff.

Public Comment:

No Public Comment.

Board Comment:

Jordan Berg Powers stated that the site appears to have been functioning well since the prior approval and noted that the lack of public opposition suggested parking operations had improved. He expressed support for the proposal, saying the added employee parking would help reduce on-street parking demand. He then asked whether the applicant agreed to staff recommendations for angled parking and additional landscaping.

The applicant responded that they were generally agreeable but wanted to remain consistent with requirements of the Historic Commission, which had previously asked that the front driveway remain unchanged. Staff member Michelle Smith explained that alternative parking markers or striping could be considered and that landscaping would help screen the lot. She agreed to add language making the conditions contingent on Historic Commission approval.

George Cortes asked about staff's recommendation for a walkway connecting the expanded parking area directly to the building. Michelle Smith clarified that staff had suggested a dedicated pedestrian path but did not include it as a formal condition, noting it was a tradeoff between pedestrian access and limiting additional impervious surface.

The applicant explained that the driveway aisle had already been widened from 10 feet to 14 feet to reduce conflicts between entering vehicles and employees walking to the entrance, creating space for pedestrians to walk safely. Mr. Cortes responded that he was satisfied as long as pedestrian safety was maintained.

Eric Torkornoo stated no comment.

Erik Bartenhagen asked whether the one-way traffic pattern should be reversed so drivers could more easily access the new rear parking area. Staff member Michelle Smith said either direction had advantages and noted staff did not have a strong preference. The applicant's engineer responded that the existing pattern works well for drop-off and pickup traffic, and keeping exiting vehicles moving straight out from the rear lot was preferable.

After discussion, the board agreed not to impose a specific traffic direction as a condition. Staff recommended revising the language of the approval to require general one-way traffic flow rather than specifying a clockwise pattern, allowing the applicant flexibility to finalize signage and striping before returning to the Historic Commission.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 4-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the application with conditions, recommendations, and waivers.

Other Business:

13. Communications

14. Discussion of Board Policies and Procedures

15. Approval of Minutes

The 3.16.2026 minutes were tabled until the next meeting.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, Board voted 4-0 to adjourn at 6:45pm