



The City of Worcester

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 15, 2026 - Special Meeting

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
Lawrence Abramoff - Vice Chair
George Cortes
Erik Bartenhagen – Alternate
Matthew Sacco – Alternate

Zoning Board Members Absent:

Eric Torkornoo

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 5:32 PM.

Requests for Continuances, Extensions, Postponements, and Withdrawals

Continuances/Postponements/Withdrawals

Postponements

Item #3 114 Lincoln Street (SP&V) (ZB-2026-021)

Request to Postpone the Public Hearing to May 18, 2026

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to June 9, 2026

Item #4 256 Sunderland Road (SP&V) (ZB-2026-022)

Request to Postpone the Public Hearing to May 18, 2026

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to June 9, 2026

On a motion by Mr. Abramoff, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Postponements.

Planning & Regulatory Services Division

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New Business – Public Hearings

1. 417 Cambridge Street (ZB-2026-015)			
Variance:	For relief from the minimum frontage requirement for a three-family detached dwelling use in an RG-5 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2).		
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:	Gold Star Builders, Inc.		
Present Use:	Presently on the premises is a single-family detached dwelling.		
Zone Designation:	RG-5 (Residence, General) zoning district		
Petition Purpose:	The applicant seeks to construct an addition by adding two floors atop the existing structure to convert it to a three-family detached dwelling, to construct a ±9-space shared parking facility and to conduct associated site improvements.		
Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application – 417 Cambridge Street; clerked 2/25/2026; prepared by Donald J. O’Neil, Attorney	
	Exhibit B:	Application – 421 Cambridge Street; clerked 2/25/2026; prepared by Donald J. O’Neil, Attorney	
	Exhibit C:	Site Plan; dated 1/8/2026, revised 3/17/2026; prepared by Level Design Group.	
	Exhibit D:	Architectural Plans; dated 1/30/2026; prepared by Goldstar Design Builders Inc	
	Exhibit E:	Survey; dated 1/8/2016; prepared by B&R Survey, Inc	
Public Hearing Deadline:	4/15/2026	Constructive Grant Deadline:	4/28/2026

Attorney Donald O’Neil spoke on behalf of Gold Star Builders regarding a proposal for 417 and 421 Cambridge Street. The applicant requested zoning relief related to frontage, parking, parking in the front-yard, landscaping, and setback requirements. The project would add two floors to each existing one-story building, creating four additional dwelling units and bringing the total to six units. A shared parking lot with 10 spaces was proposed, although 12 spaces would normally be required. The applicant argued that the new layout would improve safety by reducing two separate driveways to one curb cut and allowing vehicles to turn around instead of backing into Cambridge Street.

The applicant also noted that both lots exceed the minimum area requirement for a three-family dwelling and explained that frontage issues were largely due to the current lot line configuration. Landscaping improvements were proposed for areas under the applicant’s control, and it was stated that the development would not encroach on the neighboring condominium open space. Overall, the project was presented as more consistent with surrounding properties while also adding needed three-bedroom housing units to the area.

Michelle Smith, Planning Division, presented staff comments on the applications for 417 and 421 Cambridge Street, explaining that the board would need to vote on two separate but related cases. For 417 Cambridge Street, the applicant requested 10 feet of frontage relief and several parking modifications. For 421 Cambridge Street, the applicant requested relief from two required parking spaces along with similar parking-related waivers. Staff noted that the proposed three-family use on each lot is allowed in the RG-5 zone, and the requests only involve dimensional and parking relief. Across both properties, 10 parking spaces were proposed, with one lot meeting its parking requirement and the other needing relief.

Staff recommended conditions for both lots, including additional trees, differentiated walkways, and proper snow removal so parking spaces remain usable. Planning staff explained that some requested relief involved technical setbacks for parking stalls, parking located too close to the street, and excess impervious surface coverage on one lot. They also noted that the site is in a managed growth area near

transit where added density is encouraged by the city's long-range plan. Staff raised questions about long-term parking management and trash collection while also informing the board that public comments had been received.

Jordan Berg Powers asked clarifying questions about the site layout, parking area, and whether the project would also require Planning Board approval. Staff explained the unusual lot configuration, access easements, and confirmed that additional review would be needed.

Attorney Donald O'Neil explained that the two properties would be jointly owned and managed, with parking spaces assigned to tenants rather than used on a first-come, first-served basis. He said the arrangement would remain flexible depending on how many vehicles each household has, allowing unused spaces to be reassigned if needed. He also noted that although the lots must be treated as separate properties, easements could be used in the future if ownership changes. O'Neil added that trash service would be handled through regular city pickup.

Public Comment:

Adam Kurth, Attorney, spoke on behalf of the Gold Star Condominium Board in opposition to the proposal. He stated that the requested variance and special permit criteria had not been met, citing concerns about increased traffic, visibility, pedestrian safety, construction impacts, privacy, and enjoyment of neighboring open space. Mr. Kurth also stated that the applicant had not demonstrated a true hardship, noting that other by-right development options existed. He said that maximizing the property's value or profit is not a legal basis for zoning relief and asked the board to deny the application.

Brandon Flynn, a Worcester resident, spoke in opposition to the project and echoed concerns previously raised by the condominium board. He emphasized existing traffic congestion on Cambridge Street, stating that residents already face long waits and difficult conditions when trying to exit onto the road. Mr. Flynn also raised concerns about construction logistics, including where materials would be stored, potential loss of guest parking access, and added noise and disruption for nearby residents. He concluded by stating that the project did not have the support of many condominium owners.

Attorney Donald O'Neil responded to public concerns by stating that the project would still require site plan approval, which includes a detailed construction management plan covering material deliveries, vehicle parking, and project logistics. He stated that these issues would be reviewed through that process as well as by the Zoning Board.

Mr. O'Neil also explained the traffic and parking design, in that the proposal would remove one driveway, reduce curb cuts to a single entrance, and provide a turnaround area so residents could exit safely without backing onto Cambridge Street. He maintained that the street could handle the added units and reaffirmed his support for the proposal.

Board Comment:

Jordan Berg Powers stated that the site had sufficient space for the proposal and that the requested relief was limited to frontage and parking issues. He emphasized the city's need for additional housing and said the location was appropriate for greater density. He added that many concerns raised by neighbors, such as traffic, bus stops, and public safety, were outside the Zoning Board's authority and should be addressed through City officials or the Planning Board. Based on those factors, Powers announced his support for approving the Variance and Special Permit requests.

Lawrence Abramoff asked staff to clarify the by-right development options for the property, specifically whether the applicant could build two-family homes with accessory dwelling units or retain a single-family home with an ADU. His question focused on understanding what level of development could occur without needing zoning relief.

Ms. Smith clarified that under current zoning rules, a single-family home could add one accessory dwelling unit (ADU) up to 900 square feet by right. She also explained that each lot could support two units plus an ADU, meaning three units per lot could already be possible without special relief depending on the configuration. She noted that the applicant's proposed units were larger three- or four-bedroom homes, so they would not qualify as ADUs, but the overall density could still be similar under by-right alternatives.

Mr. Abramoff stated that, based on staff's explanation, similar overall density could likely be achieved through by-right alternatives with a different unit configuration. He agreed with the Chair that the Planning Board would review traffic and related concerns in more detail and said the additional units would not create a significant impact. Mr. Abramoff expressed his support for the proposal.

George Cortes said the proposal appeared to be a well-planned development that would help address the local housing shortage by adding more housing availability. He asked questions about how the parking would function, specifically whether residents from one building could use spaces assigned to the other and whether there would be safe pedestrian access between areas. Staff and the applicant clarified that the site would operate as one shared parking lot with assigned but flexible spaces, maintained as a single paved area. Staff also explained that walkways would connect parking spaces to both buildings. After receiving that explanation, Cortes said his concerns were resolved.

Erik Bartenhagen said he understood neighbors' traffic concerns after visiting the site, but agreed those issues were outside the Zoning Board's authority and better addressed by the Planning Board or City Council. He also asked how the unusual lot shape was created and learned it resulted from the earlier condominium development. He said the key factor in his support was that similar density and a comparable number of units could be built by right without board approval. He added that granting relief would allow the city to impose conditions such as landscaping and other improvements, leading him to support the proposal.

Matthew Sacco had no additional comments.

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

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

New Business – Public Hearings

2.	421 Cambridge Street (ZB-2026-016)
Variance:	For relief from the minimum parking requirements for a three-family dwelling (Article IV, Section 7, Table 4.4).
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:	Gold Star Builders, Inc.
Present Use:	Presently on the premises is a single-family detached dwelling.
Zone Designation:	RG-5 (Residence, General) zoning district
Petition Purpose:	The applicant seeks to construct an addition by adding two floors atop the existing structure to convert it to a three-family detached dwelling, to construct a ±9-space shared parking facility and to conduct associated site improvements.

Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application – 417 Cambridge Street; clerked 2/25/2026; prepared by Donald J. O’Neil, Attorney
	Exhibit B:	Application – 421 Cambridge Street; clerked 2/25/2026; prepared by Donald J. O’Neil, Attorney
	Exhibit C:	Site Plan; dated 1/8/2026, revised 3/17/2026; prepared by Level Design Group.
	Exhibit D:	Architectural Plans; dated 1/30/2026; prepared by Goldstar Design Builders Inc
	Exhibit E:	Survey; dated 1/8/2016; prepared by B&R Survey, Inc
Public Hearing Deadline:	4/15/2026	Constructive Grant Deadline: 4/28/2026

Taken at the same time as item #1 for testimony, voted separately by the board.

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

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

New Business – Public Hearings

5.	465 & 467 Lake Avenue (ZB-2026-025)	
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:	Charles F. & Kathleen Trainor	
Present Use:	Presently on the premises are two, privileged, non-conforming single-family detached dwellings on one lot.	
Zone Designation:	RS-7 (Residence, Single Family) zoning district	
Petition Purpose:	The applicant seeks approval to raze the existing primary structure known as 465 Lake Avenue and construct a new, conforming single-family detached dwelling and conduct associated site improvements.	
Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 2/25/2026; prepared by Donald J. O’Neil, Attorney
	Exhibit B:	Existing Conditions Survey; dated 6/22/2024; prepared by Jarvis Land Survey, Inc
	Exhibit C:	Site Plan; dated 2/2/2026, revised 2/13/2026; prepared by Graves Engineering, Inc
	Exhibit D:	Architecture Plans; dated 2/2/2026; prepared by BB&R Design-Build
Public Hearing Deadline:	5/1/2026	Constructive Grant Deadline: TBD

Attorney Donald O’Neil presented an application for 465 and 467 Lake Avenue on behalf of Kathleen and Charles Trainer. He explained that the lot contains two houses, and the proposal would replace the existing house at 465 with a new code-compliant home set farther back from the street while reclassifying 467 as an accessory dwelling unit for the family’s adult children. He noted that the Planning Board had already approved the site plan and ADU status. Mr. O’Neil said the only remaining relief requested was a Special Permit for the parking layout, including a horseshoe-shaped driveway and

two curb cuts. He said the design was practical given the site constraints, similar to existing conditions, and the best way to provide necessary parking access.

Amy Beth Laythe, Planning Division, explained that the property currently contains two nonconforming single-family homes on one lot in the RS7 district. The proposal would replace the house at 465 Lake Avenue with a new zoning-compliant primary residence, while 467 Lake Avenue would remain as an accessory dwelling unit. She said the requested Special Permit relates to the U-shaped driveway, which does not fully meet setback and layout rules and could allow more vehicles in the front yard buffer area than normally permitted. Staff noted that the plan would remove existing parking from the public right-of-way, resurface current gravel parking areas, and add landscaping between the driveway and the street

Public Comment:

No Public Comments.

Board Comment:

Jordan Berg Powers expressed his support for the project.

Lawrence Abramoff expressed his support for the project.

George Cortes expressed his support for the project.

Erik Bartenhagen expressed his support for the project.

Matthew Sacco had no additional comments.

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

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

New Business – Public Hearings

6.	o, 2 Tyson Road & o Burncoat Street (ZB-2026-029)	
Special Permit:	To allow a single-family attached dwelling use in an RL-7 zone (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1, Residential Use #12).	
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:	M. McDermott Construction Company, LLC	
Present Use:	Presently on the premises is a vacant lot.	
Zone Designation:	RL-7 (Residence, Limited) zoning district	
Petition Purpose:	The applicant seeks to construct a single-family attached dwelling (townhouse) with three units, associated parking and to conduct associated site improvements.	
Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Special Permit Application; clerked 3/13/2026; prepared by Donald J. O’Neil, Attorney for Applicant
	Exhibit B:	Survey; revised 01/22/2025; prepared by B&R Survey, Inc
	Exhibit C:	Architectural Plans; dated January 2026; revised March 2026 (plans undated) prepared by Shane Structures

Exhibit D: Civil Plans; dated February 25, 2026, revised March 9, 2026; prepared by McCarty Engineering, Inc.

Exhibit E: Stormwater Memo; dated March 5, 2026; prepared by McCarty Engineering, Inc.

Public Hearing Deadline: 5/17/2026

Constructive Grant Deadline: TBD

Attorney Donald O'Neil presented an application for 0/2 Tyson Road on behalf of M. McDermott Construction Company LLC. He explained the request was for a three-unit attached single-family structure in the RL-7 zone, along with relief for driveway setbacks that do not meet the three-foot property line requirement. He noted the project had previously been approved, but the permits expired before being exercised. Mr. O'Neil said the Planning Board had since reapproved the site plan and that the lots meet frontage and area requirements. He added that the applicant revised the design to include more windows, discussed landscaping and tree preservation, and stated that city transportation officials had no concerns about traffic or driveway access at the Tyson and Burncoat intersection.

Michelle Smith, Planning Division, explained that the board had previously approved the same project in 2025, but the approval expired and the applicant later reapplied. She noted the applicant has since received site plan approval and reconfigured the property into three lots. The current request is for a Special Permit to allow a three-unit attached structure, since only two units are allowed by right in the zoning district. She also explained that relief is needed because parts of the driveway do not meet the required three-foot setback. Staff comments focused on preserving or replacing mature trees, improving architectural design on the corner-facing side of the building, and confirmed that transportation officials had no concerns about traffic or driveway access.

Public Comment:

Ms. Hutchins, a Worcester resident and resident on Tyson Road, spoke in opposition to the proposal. She said that adding three attached units was inconsistent with the single-family character of the neighborhood and raised concerns that the project conflicted with the intent of local zoning. She also expressed worries about increased traffic, child and pedestrian safety, snow removal, and emergency vehicle access. Ms. Hutchins questioned whether the request was based on a true hardship or simply an effort to overdevelop the site, and said she believed the proposal created foreseeable safety risks.

Attorney Donald O'Neil responded that he had no objection to adding the Fire Department's sprinkler recommendation as a condition of approval. He also said that the surrounding area already includes duplexes and nearby condominium buildings, making the proposed housing consistent with neighborhood development patterns. Mr. O'Neil stated that the lot meets area and frontage requirements and said the project was an appropriate use of the site that would add housing without overloading the property.

Junea Margaret Dougal Hutchkins, Tyson Road, raised concerns about the proposal's traffic impacts on Tyson Road. She noted that the street had previously been converted to one-way traffic with limited parking to reduce congestion and questioned adding three new driveways that would exit onto Tyson Road rather than Burncoat Street. She also expressed concerns about emergency vehicle access, especially due to family medical needs, and said increased traffic could worsen safety conditions. She further discussed winter snow removal problems that already narrow the street and argued the project could make those issues worse. Ms. Hutchins also commented on the condition of the mature trees near the site, saying they may need removal for safety reasons rather than preservation. Ms. Hutchins said she was still confused about the zoning rules and questioned why three attached units were being proposed in an area she believed was intended for detached single-family homes. She clarified that she was not necessarily opposed to housing on the site, but wanted to better understand why three units were needed.

Staff explained that the RL-7 district is not a single-family-only zone. It allows up to two units by right, such as duplexes or two-family homes, while additional units may be allowed through a Special Permit if the Zoning Board determines the proposal is appropriate for the area.

Geneia Margaret Dougal Hutchkins asked for clarification about who residents should contact if parking or roadway rules are violated after the project is built. Board members confirmed that residents could use the City of Worcester's 311 service, including the phone number or mobile app, to report issues and seek assistance. She also confirmed that the existing left-turn lane and no-parking restrictions would remain in place. Ms. Hutchkins noted a recent parking violation in that area and said she wanted to understand what resources would be available if similar problems continue in the future.

Jordan Berg Powers noted that residents could report future issues through the City of Worcester's 311 app, phone service, or by contacting the Planning Division, adding that the City is generally responsive. He then thanked neighbors for their thoughtful comments and questions during the hearing.

Board Comment:

Mr. Powers said the site could likely support similar or greater density through by-right alternatives, meaning additional units could be built with less Board oversight. Because the request involved special permits rather than variances, and both this Board and Planning Board could impose conditions, he stated he was comfortable supporting the proposal.

Lawrence Abramoff said he supported the proposal and had no issue removing condition E. He suggested adding one new tree along Burncoat Street now and requiring replacement trees if any existing mature trees are removed or damaged during construction. After discussion, he agreed the new planting did not need to be a pine tree but should be a tree that helps screen and improve the edge of the property.

George Cortes thanked the abutters for their comments and said the project would improve an empty lot that has experienced illegal dumping, making the area cleaner and more productive. He also supported removing item E from the conditions.

Erik Bartenhagen said he also supported removing item E and favored adding one additional tree along the Burncoat Street side of the property. He stated that if any existing trees are removed, fall, or are damaged, they should be replaced. He added that the added landscaping would help create a better visual buffer and offset concerns about limited architectural detail on that side of the building.

Matthew Sacco had no additional comments.

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

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

New Business – Public Hearings

7. 59 Pocasset Avenue (fka 55 Pocasset Avenue) (ZB-2026-030)

Lot 2L

Variance: For relief from the minimum lot area requirement for a single-family semi-detached dwelling in the RL-7 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2).

Lot 2R

Variance: For relief from the minimum lot area requirement for a single-family semi-detached dwelling in the RL-7 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Petitioner: Real Estate Alternative, Inc

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a vacant lot.

Zone Designation: RL-7 (Residence, Limited) zoning district and within the Water Resources Protection Overlay District (WRP(GP-3))

Petition Purpose:	The applicant seeks to construct a semi-detached single-family dwelling and to conduct associated site improvements.		
Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 3/18/2026; prepared by Donald J. O'Neil, Attorney	
	Exhibit B:	Survey; dated 2/25/2026; prepared by HS&T Group Inc	
	Exhibit C:	ANR Plan; dated 1/23/2026; prepared by Real Map Info LLC	
	Exhibit D:	Architectural Plans; dated 2/24/2026; prepared by Residential Design Inc	
Public Hearing Deadline:	5/22/2026	Constructive Grant Deadline:	6/26/2026

Attorney Donald O'Neil presented the application for 59 Pocasset Avenue on behalf of Real Estate Alternatives. He explained the request was for area relief of 500 square feet per dwelling unit to allow construction of a semi-detached two-family structure. He stated the proposal meets frontage, setback, height, and parking requirements, with the only needed relief relating to lot area. Mr. O'Neil said the lot's dimensions stem from an older subdivision pattern and noted that two-family homes already exist nearby on Pocasset Avenue. He said the proposed building would remain under the 35-foot height limit, fit within the zoning district, and comply with staff recommendations and requested waivers

Amy Beth Laythe, Planning Division, explained that the property is currently a vacant lot and the applicant is proposing a semi-detached dwelling. The request seeks 500 square feet of lot area relief for each side, as both proposed lots would contain 3,500 square feet instead of the required 4,000 square feet. She noted that the parcel was previously divided through an ANR process and is compliant for a single-family home. Staff also requested clarification on walkway connections from the porches to the driveway or street, and said existing substantial landscaping on the site should be preserved or replaced with new landscaping during construction

Public Comment:

Peter Leo, a neighbor from across the street, spoke in opposition to the request and asked the board to deny the variance. He argued there was no hardship because the vacant lot could still be developed with a single-family home without needing relief. Mr. Leo acknowledged that duplexes exist farther down Pocasset Avenue but said the immediate end of the street has a different single-family character. He added that financial gain alone is not a valid reason for a Variance and said the proposal would negatively change the neighborhood.

Peter Yablonsky, speaking on behalf of a family member at 63 Pocasset Avenue, opposed the proposal and said the project was trying to overbuild the lot. He raised concerns that the slope and building design would require retaining walls, remove existing landscaping and a mature maple tree, and create drainage, access, and construction challenges. He also said the proposed duplex would be out of scale with the surrounding single-family homes at that end of the street and would harm the neighborhood's character. Mr. Yablonsky stated the lot should be developed more responsibly rather than maximizing size for profit

Michael Mattson, an abutting resident at 62 Osceola Avenue, spoke in opposition to the project. He said he and his wife chose the neighborhood for its quiet and peaceful character and feared that construction activity would significantly disrupt their quality of life. He described concerns about constant noise, vibration from heavy equipment, and the financial burden of needing to keep windows closed and run air conditioning during construction. Mr. Mattson asked the board to deny the proposal, saying it would create a major hardship and negative impact on nearby residents.

Peter Leo added that neighbors had hoped to purchase the property themselves to preserve the open lot and mature trees but said it was instead sold to a builder seeking profit. He stated the proposal was focused on maximizing financial return rather than community needs. Mr. Leo acknowledged the city needs more housing but said the priority should be affordable housing. He expressed concern that the proposed homes would be priced around \$500,000 to \$700,000 and would not address affordability in the neighborhood.

Staff noted that no engineered topographic plan had been submitted, only a survey, and suggested the board could require that information to better understand the site's slope. Several members agreed they wanted formal topography details before making a final decision, especially to avoid future construction or permitting issues if the lot exceeded slope thresholds.

Attorney Donald O'Neil and the applicant responded that the lot was not as steep as it appeared in the renderings, estimating about a seven-foot grade change over 100 feet. They argued the proposal could accommodate a walkout basement without major retaining walls and said they were willing to provide a topographic plan for further review.

Board Comment:

Jordan Berg Powers said some development will occur on the vacant lot regardless, so the Board's role is to determine what type and scale of project is appropriate rather than whether construction happens at all. He also rejected claims that the project would lower surrounding property values, arguing that values generally continue to rise. Mr. Berg Powers said his main concern was whether the proposal was too large or intense for this section of the neighborhood. He noted he still had questions about topography, retaining walls, and the overall fit of the project, and said more formal information would help him evaluate those issues

Lawrence Abramoff stated that while by-right development could allow a single-family home with an ADU, the current proposal gives the Board an opportunity to review and impose conditions. He said he was not yet comfortable approving the project without more information. He specifically requested a topographical plan and a detailed landscaping plan to better understand grading, retaining walls, and how the project would fit into the neighborhood. Mr. Abramoff recommended continuing the application to allow for further review and due diligence

George Cortes said that after hearing neighbors and reviewing the proposal, he believed the project as presented was too large for the lot and would change the character of the neighborhood. He stated that while some development will occur on the site, he did not think this specific design was the right fit. Mr. Cortes said the plans should be revised so the board can better determine what type of project is appropriate for the property while preserving the existing neighborhood character.

Erik Bartenhagen said that even before hearing public comments, he felt the proposal appeared out of scale and out of character with the surrounding single-family homes. He stated that a single-family home with an ADU would likely fit the neighborhood better than the proposed duplex and warned the project could stand out in a negative way. Mr. Bartenhagen added that before any decision is made, the board should receive more information, especially a topographical plan and detailed landscaping plan, to better understand the project's visual and physical impact. The applicant then agreed to continue the matter and return with additional materials for further review.

Matthew Sacco had no additional comments

On a motion by Mr. Abramoff, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to continue the application for 59 Pocasset Avenue to May 18, 2026, with a constructive grant deadline of June 9, 2026.

Other Business:

8. Communications

9. Discussion of Board Policies and Procedures

10. Approval of Minutes – 3/2/2026, 3/23/2026

On a motion by Mr. Abramoff, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 4-0-1 to approve the minutes of March 2, 2026, with Mr. Bartenhagen abstaining.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of March 16, 2026.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, Board voted 5-0 to adjourn at 8:02PM