



The City of Worcester

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER

Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 27, 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:

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

Zoning Board Members Absent:

Jordan Berg Powers - Chair

Staff Participating:

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

Call to Order:

Mr. Abramoff called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

Requests for Continuances, Extensions, Postponements, and Withdrawals

Continuances/Postponements/Withdrawals

Postponements

- | | | |
|------------------|--|---|
| Item #5 | 318 Park Avenue (ZB-2026-027) | Special Permit & Sign Variance |
| | Request to Postpone to May 18 2026 | |
| | Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to June 9, 2026 | |
| Item #6 | 25 Wabash Avenue (ZB-2026-028) | Special Permit & Variance |
| | Request to Postpone to May 18 2026 | |
| | Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to June 9, 2026 | |
| Item # 12 | 9 Dalton Street (ZB-2026-042) Variance | |
| | Request to Postpone to May 18 2026 | |
| | Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to June 9, 2026 | |

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

Old Business – Public Hearings

1.

149 Plantation Street (ZB-2026-003)
- Special Permit:

To allow a low-rise multi-family dwelling use in the RL-7 zone (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1, Residential Use #11)
- 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:

Ram Hill Avenue Investments & Developments, LLC
- Present Use:

Presently on the premises is a vacant, wooded lot.
- Zone Designation:

RL-7 (Residence, Limited) zoning district.
- Petition Purpose:

The applicant seeks to construct two, 3-story, low-rise multi-family dwellings, each with ±24 units (total of ±48 units), to construct an ±88-space parking facility, and to conduct associated site improvements.
- Exhibits:

Exhibit A:

Application; clerked 2/3/26; prepared by James Tetreault, Engineer

Exhibit B:

Site Plan; dated 11/30/25, revised 2/2/226; revised 3-25-2025; prepared by Expedited Engineering, LLC

Exhibit C:

Architecture Plans; dated 12/22/25; prepared by Stockton Design

Exhibit D:

Survey; dated 4/26/23; prepared by H.S.&T. Group, Inc

Exhibit E:

Drainage Report; dated 11/30/25; prepared by Expedited Engineering, LLC

Exhibit F:

Fire Turning Plan; dated 1/6/26; prepared by Expedited Engineering, LLC

Exhibit G:

Test Pit Memo; dated 10/3/22; prepared by Yankee Engineering and Testing, Inc.

Exhibit H:

Traffic Memo; dated 04/10/26; prepared by AK Associates.

Exhibit I:

Public Comment; dated 04/22/26; submitted by Carol Morocco

Exhibit J:

Public Comment; dated 02/22/26; submitted by Jack Morocco.
- Public Hearing Deadline:

3/16/2026

Constructive Grant Deadline:

5/19/2026

James Tetreault of Expedited Engineering presented revised plans following the March 16 meeting and subsequent neighborhood discussions. The proposal reduces units from 48 to 46, adds shared amenity space, and maintains 87 parking spaces. Updates include enhanced landscaping, a pergola, and minor grading changes. He noted no expected light impact on abutters due to elevation differences and minimal traffic impact (2.7% increase).

Michelle Smith, Planning Division, reminded the board that the project had been continued to address staff feedback and hold a community meeting. She explained that the application includes two special permits: one for allowing a multifamily low-rise use in an RL7 district, and another for up to a 10% parking reduction, though the applicant has since reduced units and remains close to the required parking ratio.

She noted the applicant did not adopt some design suggestions, such as moving the building closer to the street, but most comments were design related. Updated feedback from the Department of Transportation and Mobility indicated the project would have negligible traffic impact and adequate sightlines, with revised conditions recommended for approval.

Public Comment:

Lennon Chafredo of Worcester thanked the applicant and their attorney for attending a neighborhood meeting to present the project, noting that despite outreach efforts, attendance was limited. He mentioned that the district councilor later notified abutters and encouraged them to share any concerns at the hearing. He acknowledged that approval of the special permit depends on the board's judgment regarding neighborhood character and deferred the decision to the board.

Paul, Samara, a direct abutter, stated he was unaware of the neighborhood meeting due to limited notice and noted that nearby residents were also uninformed. He raised concerns about elevation differences causing vehicle lights to shine into his home, potential impacts from blasting, and increased construction traffic. He argued the project does not fit the predominantly single-family neighborhood and questioned the accuracy and timing of the traffic analysis.

Bernice Bristol Plenty, a Worcester resident on Reed Street, stated she was not informed of the neighborhood meeting and only learned of the project at the hearing. As a direct abutter, she expressed concern about potential impacts and emphasized the need for better communication and opportunity for neighborhood input.

Jay Bonyani, a resident of 155 Plantation Street and abutter to the site, expressed concern about potential impacts from blasting and rock excavation. He noted that his 100-year-old home could be vulnerable to structural damage and, drawing on his construction experience, emphasized the risks such work may pose to older properties.

James Tetreault of Expedited Engineering responded that traffic data used in the report is based on 2025 MassDOT data. He stated that building placement, elevation differences, retaining walls, and proposed vegetation would block vehicle headlights from impacting abutters. Regarding blasting concerns, he emphasized that it is strictly regulated by the fire department, requiring permits, pre-blast surveys of nearby properties, and insurance coverage, with oversight ensuring safety. He also noted the building's placement minimizes the need for additional excavation and blasting.

David Horne, Inspectional Services Department noted that the project must comply with building code requirements to protect adjoining properties and that any concerns, especially related to blasting, would be addressed through inspections and coordination with the fire department.

Carol Morocco, a Worcester resident, expressed concern that while the building was not placed closer to Plantation Street to avoid visual impact, it would instead loom over Orient Street. She also questioned how the proposed access road, given existing ledge near the sidewalk, would not impact traffic and warned the project could negatively change the neighborhood's character, similar to nearby developments.

Board Comment:

Lawrence Abramoff confirmed the applicant had reviewed and accepted staff recommendations. He noted concerns about placing the building closer to the street were addressed by the applicant due to grading and visual impact. Mr. Abramoff commented that the project is significant for the neighborhood but pointed out that nearby apartment developments exist, suggesting the use is not entirely out of context.

George Cortes acknowledged abutter concerns but noted the applicant had adequately addressed issues related to blasting and lighting. He expressed some remaining uncertainty about potential light impacts and requested confirmation on whether an updated truck turning analysis accounted for the proposed landscape island. The applicant responded that the island was designed to stay outside fire truck turning paths and agreed to provide an updated analysis.

Eric Torkornoo agrees with the sentiments that have been shared by the board

Erik Bartenhagen clarified that updated Department of Transportation and Mobility conditions should replace earlier staff conditions, including standard requirements for driveway design, ADA compliance,

bike racks, and construction management. He confirmed the applicant had no objections and discussed required waivers for missing application details. While noting the Planning Board could review the site plan, he emphasized architectural changes may need to be addressed by this board. He expressed concerns about the building's design and density, stating it felt out of place, though acknowledging nearby zones allow similar development, leaving him undecided.

Matthew Sacco stated no comment.

Board members noted the applicant was willing to work with the city to improve the building's design but expressed disappointment that no architectural changes had been made since prior feedback .

Members emphasized concerns about both design and density, suggesting the project felt too intense for the neighborhood. They recommended continuing the proposal to allow revisions, particularly to improve aesthetics and potentially reduce density.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to continue the consideration of 149 Plantation Street to June 8th

Old Business – Public Hearings

2. 2 Northboro Street (ZB-2026-009)

Special Permit: To allow an extension, alteration, or change of a privileged pre-existing nonconforming structure and/or use (Article XVI, Section 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).

Variance: For relief from the minimum front-yard setback requirement in an RL-7 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Variance: For relief from the minimum exterior side-yard setback requirement in an RL-7 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Variance: For relief from the minimum off-street parking requirements (Article IV, Section 7, Table 4.4)

Variance: For relief from the maximum dimensional Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) in the RL-7 zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Petitioner: Rodney Haddad

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a ±2,950 SF building previously used as a dry cleaning business and a surface parking facility with 2-3 spaces.

Zone Designation: RL-7 (Residence, Limited) zoning district

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to operate a food service use and construct a ±3,050 SF second story addition, a ±9-space parking facility and to conduct associated site improvements.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 2/5/26; prepared by Matthew Eckel, Attorney
Exhibit B:	Survey; dated 2/4/2025; prepared by B&R Survey Inc.
Exhibit C:	Site Plan; dated 1/19/2026; revised 2/3/2026; prepared by Graves Engineering, Inc
Exhibit D:	Stormwater Report; dated 12/3/2025; prepared by Graves Engineering, Inc.
Exhibit E:	Architectural Plans; dated 10/3/2013; prepared by J. R. Associates Design Services
Exhibit F:	Revised Operational Plan; provided on 3/31/2026 by Matthew Eckel,

Public Hearing Deadline: 3/16/2026

Constructive Grant Deadline: 5/19/2026

Attorney Matt Eckel, representing the applicant, presented the proposal to convert a former dry cleaner into a deli restaurant with renovations, including a second-story addition and landscaping improvements. He noted ongoing engagement with neighbors, added screening such as fencing and plantings, and reduced operating hours in response to feedback. The applicant agreed to most staff conditions, requested minor adjustments (e.g., removal of wheel stops and flexibility on window placement), and emphasized willingness to continue working with the neighborhood.

Michelle Smith, Planning Division, summarized that the applicant is seeking multiple forms of relief, including setbacks, parking reductions, floor area ratio, and a special permit to change a nonconforming use to a deli. She noted minor updates since the last meeting, mainly reduced operating hours and clarifications to conditions, including no blasting and flexibility on architectural elements. She also highlighted some requested deviations from landscaping requirements and stated that overall changes to the proposal were limited.

Public Comment:

Vicki Cavesis, a Worcester resident and abutter, said she attended the neighborhood meeting but felt no real compromise was reached. She requested reduced hours, closure on Sundays, fewer parking waivers, and a stronger buffer between properties. She also raised concerns about limited street parking, potential congestion, and the overall impact of a larger restaurant in the neighborhood.

Lennon Chafredo noted the applicant attended a neighborhood meeting and engaged in discussion but said several reasonable requests, such as supporting resident-only parking, limiting employee parking, and adding a stronger buffer, were not fully addressed. He acknowledged reduced operating hours but urged the board to include additional conditions, including improved buffering and prohibiting any residential use on the property.

Gary Olson, a resident of Northboro Street, raised concerns about parking and deliveries, warning that delivery drivers may park illegally on nearby streets due to limited on-site parking. He emphasized this could create congestion and access issues, especially if customer vehicles occupy the lot.

Board Comment:

Lawrence Abramoff raised concerns about parking, deliveries, and long-term viability of the project, noting he had approved similar proposals in the past. The applicant responded that staff could park off-site or walk, and deliveries would be scheduled and managed to avoid issues. He emphasized his long-standing experience operating a similar business and commitment to the project, stating past delays were due to litigation that has since been resolved. The applicant also described planned screening, including a slope, landscaping, and a six-foot solid fence to buffer neighboring properties. Mr. Abramoff expressed his support for this project overall.

George Cortes asked the applicant to respond to specific abutter recommendations that had not been fully addressed. The applicant confirmed agreement with key items, including no residential use and reduced hours, and expressed openness to others like resident-only parking. After clarifications on employee parking and fencing, Mr. Cortes stated his concerns were resolved.

Eric Torkornoo stated no additional comment.

Erik Bartenhagen expressed general support for the project, noting that compromises had been made, especially reduced hours, and that earlier concerns had been addressed. He clarified that Sunday operations would still be allowed, with the applicant explaining they would mainly involve catering and limited pickup activity rather than full service.

Matthew Sacco stated no additional comment.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, 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

4. 123 Hamilton Street (ZB-2026-079)

Lot 3A:

Variance: For relief from the minimum frontage requirement for a three-family detached dwelling use in a BL-1.0 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2).

Variance: For relief from the minimum side yard setback requirement for a three-family detached dwelling use in a BL-1.0 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)

Lot 3B:

Variance: For relief from the minimum frontage requirement for a three-family detached dwelling use in a BL-1.0 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: S&N Builders, LLC.

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

Zone Designation: Located partially within the RG-5 (Residence, General), the BL-1.0 (Business, Limited), and RS-7 (Residence, Single-Family) zoning districts

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to divide the parcel and construct a three-family detached dwelling, ±5 parking spaces, and associated site improvements on the newly created lot as well as reconfigure the parking on the existing lot.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 4/6/2026; prepared by Donald J O'Neil, Attorney
Exhibit B:	Survey; dated 1/12/2026, revised 3/24/2026; prepared by B&R Survey Inc.
Exhibit C:	Architectural Plans; hand drawn
Exhibit D:	Rendering Photo
Exhibit E:	Soil Test Pit Report; dated 3/22/2026; prepared by M. A. Elbag Engineering, Inc.
Exhibit F:	Roof Water Runoff/Infiltration Calculations; dated 4/6/2026; prepared by M. A. Elbag Engineering, Inc

Public Hearing Deadline: 6/10/2026

Constructive Grant Deadline: 7/15/2026

Donald O'Neal, representing S&N Builders LLC, presented a proposal for 123 Hamilton Street involving two three-family dwellings on a split-zoned lot . He explained the need for frontage and setback relief due

to zoning differences and outlined revisions made with staff input, including a shared driveway and rear parking. The plan provides 10 parking spaces and seeks minor relief for layout and design requirements. He stated the applicant agrees with staff recommendations and requested approval of the necessary waivers.

Amy Beth Laythe, Planning Division, clarified the specific relief requested, including frontage and setback variances, reduced parking spaces, and dimensional modifications for both lots. She also noted several staff concerns, including missing walkways, need for additional landscaping, lack of a grading and stormwater plan, and potential groundwater issues. Staff recommended further site analysis, improved drainage mitigation, and consistency between architectural and civil plans before approval.

Donald O'Neal responded that the architectural plans should control over minor survey inconsistencies and explained that a slab foundation is proposed due to high groundwater. He noted infiltration is not feasible, so the design includes a stone apron to manage roof runoff. He stated the applicant is willing to comply with staff conditions, including additional testing and stormwater documentation, though he believes groundwater conditions are consistent across the site.

Public Comment:

No Public Comment.

Board Comment:

Lawrence Abramoff expressed general support for the project, noting the three-decker design fits the neighborhood, but raised concerns about groundwater and stormwater management. Staff emphasized the need to follow recommended conditions, including infiltration and stormwater review, and clarified this would be the only approval stage for the project. The applicant acknowledged the conditions but noted limitations due to site constraints and high groundwater, requesting flexibility while agreeing to comply as much as possible.

George Cortes expressed his support for the project.

Eric Torkornoo expressed his support but highlighted his concerns about the unresolved stormwater issues.

Erik Bartenhagen stated no comment.

Matthew Sacco expressed strong support for the project, noting that three-family developments are rare and appropriate for the area, but raised concern about unresolved stormwater issues. He suggested contacting the engineer to clarify details and avoid imposing unfair conditions, while acknowledging this issue could delay approval.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to continue the application to May 18th

New Business – Public Hearings

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 7. | 58 Osceola Avenue (ZB-2026-036) |
| Special Permit: | To allow a single-family attached dwelling use in an RL-7 zone (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1) |
| 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: | Real Estate Alternatives, Inc |
| Present Use: | Presently on the premises is a vacant lot. |

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

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to construct a single-family attached dwelling with 3-units, parking and associated site improvements.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Application; clerked 4/6/26; prepared by Donald J. O’Neil, Esq.

Exhibit B: Plan; dated 04/01/2026; undated revision received 4/22/2026; HS&T Group, Inc.

Exhibit C: Architectural Plan; dated 3/16/2026; prepared by J.R. Associates Design Services

Public Hearing Deadline: 6/10/2026 Constructive Grant Deadline: TBD

Donald O’Neal presented a proposal for a three-unit attached structure on a compliant RL-7 lot, noting only minor relief was needed, primarily for driveway setback and design constraints . He highlighted added screening with fencing and trees, willingness to include stormwater infiltration if feasible, and openness to conditions such as restricting future ADUs. He also requested a modification to increase driveway width from 10 to 12 feet for practicality.

Michelle Smith, Planning Division, explained that the proposal is for a three-unit attached townhouse-style development in an RL-7 zone and groundwater protection district, requiring a special permit for the use and for a zero-lot-line driveway on the middle unit . She noted staff recommended reducing driveway width to 10 feet to eliminate the need for that relief and decrease impervious surface. She also outlined alternative layout options, such as shared driveways, that could avoid some variances. Additionally, she emphasized groundwater protection concerns, the need for infiltration where possible, and noted that certain restrictions like prohibiting ADUs may be difficult to enforce under state law.

Public Comment:

Joyce, a Worcester resident and nearby property owner, expressed concern that the proposed three-unit attached development is similar to another recent project and does not fit the character of surrounding homes, which are smaller duplexes and single-family houses. She urged the board to consider neighborhood consistency when evaluating the requested relief.

Board Comment:

Lawrence Abramoff asked the applicant to address staff’s request to reduce driveway width to 10 feet. Attorney Donald O’Neal explained that maintaining 12-foot driveways is necessary for practical access, given garage dimensions, and that narrowing them would create usability issues. He also emphasized that separate driveways support individual homeownership rather than requiring a shared driveway and condominium structure. Mr. Abramoff indicated support for the project, noting it aligns with nearby housing patterns and promotes homeownership.

George Cortes expressed his support for this project

Eric Torkornoo stated no additional comment.

Erik Bartenhagen noted differences between this proposal and a similar project, stating he was more inclined to support it due to the larger lot size and the fact that a by-right alternative could allow even more units. He acknowledged some neighborhood concerns but found the design more acceptable, supported the 12-foot driveway width, and recommended a condition requiring vinyl fencing while preserving existing trees where possible

Matthew Sacco expressed his support for this project

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, 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

8. 4 Brandt Lane & o Grafton Street (ZB-2026-037)

Amendment to:

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)

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 16.9 acres of land historically used as a landfill/dumping ground.

Zone Designation: Partially located in the BG-2.0 (Business, General) zoning district and the RL-7 (Residence, Limited) zoning district

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to amend prior approvals (ZB-2024-098) to modify the design of the mixed-use 4-story building and associated site improvements on Lot 4, reducing the number of units to ±69, and to reduce the number of parking spaces on Lot 4 to ±160.

Exhibits:

- Exhibit A: Application; clerked 04/06/2026; prepared by Attorney Stephen Madaus
- Exhibit B: Site Plans; revised 3/17/2026; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc.
- Exhibit C: Redline Overlay of Building 4; dated 3/17/2026; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc.
- Exhibit C: Architectural Plans; issued 03/17/2026; prepared by Mangel Destefano Architects
- Exhibit D: Stormwater Report; revised 03/11/2026; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc.

Public Hearing Deadline: 6/10/2026 **Constructive Grant Deadline:** 7/15/2026

Steve Madaus, representing the project at Brandt Lane and Grafton Street, explained amendments to a previously approved multi-building residential development, including a reduction in building size, units, and parking, particularly on a constrained lot with environmental challenges . He noted the need for minor relief related to driveway width and turning radii, explaining that wider areas are necessary to accommodate truck access, including moving vehicles. He expressed willingness to comply with most staff conditions but requested flexibility on drive aisle width, proposing allowances where needed for emergency or truck access, and also requested approval of certain technical waivers.

Michelle Smith, Planning Division, clarified that the current amendments stem from earlier approvals but reflect reductions in building size, units, and parking due to environmental constraints, particularly wetlands on the site . She explained that new relief is needed for narrower drive aisles and expanded turning areas, with the applicant proposing up to ±34 feet in some locations. Staff expressed concern about excessive impervious surface and unclear vehicle assumptions, recommending tighter designs unless larger turning radii are clearly justified for emergency or truck access. She also emphasized

incorporating updated DPW comments and ensuring final conditions reflect accurate, coordinated design standards.

Public Comment:

Donna Dickey, an abutter to the property, expressed concern about how the project may impact O’Hara Brook, existing water flow, and drainage issues in the surrounding low-lying area. She questioned whether planned reconstruction of the waterway would continue or be altered and emphasized the need to protect nearby properties from flooding. She also noted a minor error in the agenda regarding the property’s classification.

Board Comment:

Lawrence Abramoff acknowledged the drainage explanation and indicated the project had already been largely approved, with remaining discussion focused on technical condition language. He supported restoring the original requirement that drive aisles not exceed 30 feet, suggesting this change would allow the project to move forward.

George Cortes stated no additional comment.

Eric Torkornoo stated no additional comment.

Erik Bartenhagen clarified that reinstating the 30-foot maximum drive aisle width would require modifications to the plan, particularly in the area between buildings three and four. Staff confirmed adjustments would be needed unless a turning analysis justified the current design. The applicant agreed to revise the plan accordingly, and staff advised that updated findings of fact should be formally included in the board’s motion.

Matthew Sacco stated no additional comment.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, 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

9.

120 Washington Street (Lot 3C) (ZB-2026-038)
- Extension of Time:
- Variance:

For relief from the minimum front yard setback requirement for uses with ground-floor residences in the CCOD-D. (Article IX, Section 8.A)
- Petitioner:

Rossi Development, LLC
- Present Use:

Presently on the premises is a vacant lot.
- Zone Designation:

BG-6.0 (Business, General) zoning district, within the CCOD-D (Commercial Corridors Overlay District - Downtown Subarea) and within the DSOD (Downtown/Blackstone Canal Sign Overlay District)
- Petition Purpose:

The applicant seeks an extension of time of the previously approved relief (ZB-2025-022) to construct a 5-story mixed-use building with ±38 apartments, approximately ±1,770 SF ground floor commercial and/or retail unit and to conduct associated site work.
- Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Application; clerked 4/1/26; prepared by Mark Borenstein, Attorney
Exhibit B: Survey; dated 12/11/2024; prepared by Control Point Associates Inc..

Rich Mazzocchi, representing Boston Capital Development and Rossi Development, presented a request for a six-month extension of a previously approved variance for Lot 3C . He explained the project is a 42-unit mixed-use development with ground-floor commercial space that received ZBA approval in March 2025 and a Planning Board extension through January 2028.

Amy Beth Laythe, Planning Division, clarified the details for both projects. For Lot 3C at 120 Washington Street, she confirmed the approved plan is for a five-story mixed-use building with 38 units (not 42) and ground-floor commercial space, and the request is for a six-month extension of the front yard setback variance .

Public Comment:

No Public Comment.

Board Comment:

Lawrence Abramoff expressed his support

George Cortes expressed his support

Eric Torkornoo stated no comment.

Erik Bartenhagen expressed his support

Matthew Sacco stated no comment.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, 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 extension with a a deadline of September 24th, 2026

New Business – Public Hearings

10. 120 Washington Street (Lot 3D) (ZB-2026-039)

Extension of Time:

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

Petitioner: Rossi Development, LLC

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

Zone Designation: BG-6.0 (Business, General) zoning district, within the CCOD-D (Commercial Corridors Overlay District - Downtown Subarea) and within the DSOD (Downtown/Blackstone Canal Sign Overlay District)

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks an extension of time of the previously approved relief (ZB-2025-016) to modify an existing non-conforming retaining wall located within 5 FT of the property line as part of a proposal to construct a 5-story mixed-use building with ±36 studio residential units and two commercial/retail spaces.

Exhibits: Exhibit A: Application; clerked 4/1/26; prepared by Mark Borenstein, Attorney
Exhibit B: Survey; dated 12/11/2024; prepared by Control Point Associates Inc..

Rich Mazzocchi, representing Boston Capital Development and Rossi Development, explained that Lot 3D is a 36-unit multifamily project with ground-floor commercial space that received ZBA approval in March 2025 and a Planning Board extension through January 2028. He stated the project involves a special permit for work on a nonconforming retaining wall and requested a two-year extension of that special permit.

Amy Beth Laythe, Planning Division, explained the project includes a five-story mixed-use building with 36 units and a special permit related to modifying a nonconforming retaining wall. While the applicant requested a two-year extension, she noted the board can grant only a one-year extension, with the possibility of a second year through the building commissioner once construction begins.

Public Comment:

No Public Comment.

Board Comment:

Lawrence Abramoff expressed his support

George Cortes expressed his support

Eric Torkornoo stated no comment.

Erik Bartenhagen expressed his support

Matthew Sacco stated no comment.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, 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 extension of time of one year with a new deadline of March 24th 2027 for the Special Permit.

New Business – Public Hearings

11. 1075 Grafton Street (fka 1059 Grafton Street) (ZB-2026-040)

Amendment To:

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

Petitioner: 1059 Grafton Street, LLC

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a nearly constructed car wash.

Zone Designation: The property is split zoned between the BL-1.0 (Business, Limited) and the RL-7 (Residence, Limited) zoning districts

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to amend the conditions of a prior approval (ZB-2023-016) to construct and operate a ±4,000 SF car wash facility.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Application; clerked 4/6/26; prepared by Donald J. O'Neil, Attorney

Exhibit B: Open Space Buffer Plan, Assessor's Map 38 Block 35 Lot 2A, 1075 Grafton Street, Worcester, MA; dated April 2026; prepared by Crossman Engineering

Donald O'Neal, representing 1059 Grafton Street LLC, requested a modification to a prior approval for a car wash project, proposing to replace a planned conservation easement with a condition that the rear portion of the property remain permanently undeveloped as a natural buffer for nearby residential areas. He explained that attempts to transfer the land to conservation organizations were unsuccessful due to lack of access and feasibility issues and emphasized that no other aspects of the project or prior conditions would change.

Michelle Smith, Planning Division, explained that the request is to amend the existing special permit for the car wash by replacing the originally proposed conservation restriction with a perpetual condition requiring the rear portion of the site to remain undeveloped open space. She noted this change avoids a lengthy state approval process while still ensuring the land serves as a permanent buffer, with no future development or stormwater use allowed in that area. Staff supported the modification and outlined updates to the conditions and findings of fact to reflect this change.

Public Comment:

Donna Dickey, an abutter, expressed confusion about the project description, believing it involved a repair garage rather than a car wash. Staff clarified that under zoning, a car wash is categorized as a "motor vehicle service" use, which explains the wording in the notice. She also asked about impacts to the wetland area and was informed that the rear portion of the site will remain permanently undeveloped as a natural buffer with no future use.

A resident of 4B Street stated that neighborhood concerns were largely due to confusion over the project description, as residents initially believed a repair garage was proposed. He acknowledged that it is actually a car wash, expressed relief that noise and related impacts would be less than expected, and noted ongoing concerns about disruption from overall development in the area.

Board Comment:

Lawrence Abramoff stated no comment.

George Cortes stated no comment.

Eric Torkornoo stated no comment.

Erik Bartenhagen stated no comment.

Matthew Sacco stated no comment.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen 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

13. 625 Franklin Street (ZB-2026-045)

Variance: For relief from the minimum frontage requirement for a multi-family low-rise dwelling use in a BL-1.0 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

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)

Variance:: For relief from the maximum Floor Area Ratio requirement for a residential use in a BL-1.0 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: Mr Capitalx LLC

Present Use: Presently on the premises is an auto repair garage.

Zone Designation: BL-1.0 (Business, Limited) zoning district

Petition Purpose: The applicant is seeking to demolish the existing structure and construct a 3-story, ±28,712 SF multi-family low-rise dwelling with ±28 units, ±27 parking spaces and associated site improvements.

Exhibits:

- Exhibit A: Application; clerked 4/7/2026; prepared by Mark Borenstein, Esq.
- Exhibit B: Site Plan; dated 3/16/2026; prepared by Spruhan Engineering, P.C.
- Exhibit C: Architectural Plans; dated 3/23/2026; prepared by Integrity Modular Design & Construction
- Exhibit D: Survey; dated 11/17/2025; prepared by Spruhan Engineering, P.C.
- Exhibit E: Transportation Management Plan; dated 04/13/2026; prepared by Creighton Manning.

Public Hearing Deadline: 6/11/2026 **Constructive Grant Deadline:** 7/16/2026

Attorney Mark Borenstein, representing the applicant, presented a proposal to redevelop 625 Franklin Street by demolishing an existing auto repair garage and constructing a three-story, 28-unit multifamily building . The project includes studios and one-bedroom units, parking, bike storage, and outdoor amenities, along with streetscape improvements. The applicant is seeking multiple forms of relief, including reduced parking, buffer and driveway width adjustments, and variances for frontage, floor area ratio, and setbacks, while emphasizing that the design will complement nearby development and enhance the neighborhood.

Michelle Smith, Planning Division, outlined that the proposal is for a three-story, 28-unit multifamily building at 625 Franklin Street with 27 parking spaces, requiring both variances and a special permit. She detailed key relief requests, including reduced frontage, significant parking reduction, driveway width deviations, reduced landscape buffers, retaining wall setbacks, and a slight excess in floor area ratio. Staff noted that while the plan is feasible, alternatives exist such as reducing unit count, adjusting layout, or securing off-site parking to lessen the need for relief. She also highlighted design-related recommendations, including improving the building’s front entrance visibility, adding windows for better street presence, incorporating outlets for e-bike charging, and clarifying interior amenities like recreation and laundry space. Overall, staff provided conditions aimed at improving design quality, functionality, and compliance while leaving the final decision to the board.

Mr. Borenstein stated the applicant is willing to accept most staff conditions but requested a minor modification to the architectural requirement, asking to remove the need for additional design features at the top of the front gable to remain consistent with the adjacent building . He confirmed the project will include enhanced entry features, in-unit laundry for all apartments (eliminating the shared laundry room), e-bike charging outlets, and clarified that interior amenities will include a game/study area, fitness space, and lounge.

Public Comment:

Leonard Chafredo, representing the Brown Square Neighborhood Association, praised the developer’s prior work but raised concerns about insufficient parking for the proposed project. He argued that providing less than one parking space per unit could lead to overflow parking on nearby streets and set

a precedent for future developments with similarly reduced parking, urging the board to reconsider the parking plan.

Mr. Borenstein responded to parking concerns by explaining that a transportation management plan found the project's 28 units would require 26 parking spaces under ITE standards, while 27 spaces are being provided. He noted that although nearby properties owned by the developer could offer occasional overflow parking, it would not be formalized and emphasized that tenant demand and proximity to transit would help manage parking needs.

Board Comment:

Lawrence Abramoff asked a few questions to clarify points around the Transportation Management Plan and the location of public transportation. He asked for statistics on how many apartments have been approved in the past five years for perspective.

George Cortes is familiar with the area expressed concern that parking is already very tight, especially in winter, and questioned assumptions that residents would not need cars. He suggested reducing the number of units to better align with available parking. In response, attorney Mark Borenstein stated that the applicant is willing to eliminate one studio unit to address these concerns, which the board member agreed was a positive adjustment for the neighborhood.

Eric Torkornoo stated no comment.

Erik Bartenhagen acknowledged the parking gap but felt the unit reduction, smaller unit types, and potential off-site flexibility made the proposal workable. Final clarifications confirmed the presence of an awning and that the roof design includes proper drainage.

Matthew Sacco expressed his support for this project.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, 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.

14. 30 Richmond Avenue (ZB-2026-046)

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

Variance: For relief from the minimum frontage requirement for a three-family detached dwelling use in a RL-7 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Variance: For relief from the minimum front yard setback requirement for a three-family detached dwelling use in a RL-7 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Variance: For relief from the minimum exterior side yard setback requirement for a three-family detached dwelling use in a RL-7 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

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

Special Permit: To allow a three-family detached dwelling in an RL-7 zone (Article IV, Section 2, Table 4.1, Residential Use #16)

Petitioner: Thirty Richmond Avenue Worcester Realty Trust

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a two-family dwelling.

Zone Designation: RL-7 (Residence, Limited) zoning district

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to convert the existing structure to a three-family dwelling by adding a story.

Exhibits: Exhibit A: Application; clerked 4/6/2026; prepared by Adam Gaval
Exhibit B: Site Plan; dated 3/16/2026, revised 4/2/2026; prepared by New England Environmental Design, LLC.
Exhibit C: Architectural Plans; dated 3/16/2026; prepared by Alves Drafting & Consultation

Public Hearing Deadline: 6/10/2026 Constructive Grant Deadline: 7/15/2026

Ryan Gauvin from New England Environmental Design representing the applicant for 30 Richmond Avenue, presented a proposal to convert an existing two-family home into a three-family by adding a third-story unit. He outlined required relief, including insufficient lot size, reduced frontage, and setbacks, while noting the site will provide six parking spaces, including tandem arrangements. The project involves minimal exterior changes aside from added landscaping and minor pavement reduction, and the applicant agreed to all staff conditions and waivers.

Michelle Smith, Planning Division, explained that the proposal involves converting an existing two-family home into a three-family by adding a full third story, which intensifies existing nonconformities related to setbacks and frontage. She noted the need for both variances and special permits, particularly due to the split zoning and the expansion of use into a more intensive residential configuration. Staff supported the parking layout with conditions, including maintaining designated tandem spaces and removing pavement near the sidewalk to prevent improper parking. Regarding design, staff recommended preserving the existing stone foundation, enhancing architectural consistency, and incorporating shake-style siding on the upper level to better match the structure's character. The applicant agreed to most conditions and proposed using contrasting shake-style siding on vertical sections of the upper floors to create visual distinction, which staff found acceptable as long as there is continuity in the design.

Public Comment:

No Public Comment.

Board Comment:

Lawrence Abramoff expressed his support for this project.

George Cortes stated no comment.

Eric Torkornoo stated no comment.

Erik Bartenhagen asked the applicant to revise the architectural plans to ensure consistency in materials and design. Specifically, he requested maintaining the stucco on the first floor and incorporating shake or imitation shake siding on the upper-level bump-outs to improve visual continuity. He also clarified and confirmed agreement on this condition before proceeding.

Matthew Sacco expressed his support for this project.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, 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.

Other Business

14. Communications

15. Discussion of Board Policies and Procedures

Availability for the summer meetings

16. Approval of Minutes 4/6/2026, 4/16/2026

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 9:32pm