



The City of Worcester

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER

Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 8, 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
Lawrence Abramoff - Vice Chair
George Cortes
Angie Muharremi
Eric Torkornoo
Erik Bartenhagen – Alternate
Matthew Sacco – Alternate

Zoning Board Members Absent:

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 5:37 PM.

Requests for Continuances, Extensions, Postponements, and Withdrawals

Continuances/Postponements/Withdrawals

Continuances

Item #1 149 Plantation Street (ZB-2026-003) Special Permit

Request to Continue to June 28, 2026

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to July 21, 2026

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

Postponements

Item #2 ROW Adj to 7 Paul Clancy Way (ZB-2026-019) Special Permit

Request to Postpone to June 29, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to July 21, 2026

Item #3 256 Sunderland Road (ZB-2026-022) Special Permit & Variance

Request to Postpone to June 29, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to July 21, 2026

Item #5 1 Jackson Street (ZB-2026-031) Variance

Request to Postpone to June 29, 2026
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to July 21, 2026

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

New Business – Public Hearings

4. 318 Park Avenue (ZB-2026-027)

Variance: For relief from the minimum setback requirement for a permanent accessory freestanding sign in the BG-3.0 zoning district (Article IV, Section 6, Table 4.3.1.)

Special Permit: To allow dimensional relief for accessory signs (Article IV, Section 6.J.1.a)

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

Petitioner: Sean McGlone

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a restaurant with associated parking and a sign pole.

Zone Designation: BG-3.0 (Business, General) zoning district and within the Commercial Corridors Overlay District - Elsewhere (CCOD-E)

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to construct a restaurant sign on a pole.

Exhibits: Exhibit A: Special Permit Application; clerked 4/7/2026; prepared by Sean McGlone

Exhibit B: Sign Special Permit and Variance Application; clerked 4/7/2026; prepared by Sean McGlone

Exhibit C: Property Survey; dated 12/10/2019; prepared by B&R Survey, Inc

Exhibit D: Sign Post Survey; dated 4/10/2026; prepared by B&R Survey, Inc

Exhibit E: 1964 Photo of sign

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

Sean McGlone gave an overview of the project.

Amy Beth Laythe from the Planning Division explained that the 318 Park Avenue's present use in a restaurant with associated parking and a sign pole. It is in the BG 3.0 (Business, General) zoning district and within the Commercial Corridors Overlay District – Elsewhere (CCOD-E). The applicant seeks to construct a permanent accessory sign on the existing pole on the southeast corner of the lot near Park Avenue in support of advertising for the 540 square foot restaurant located at 318 Park Avenue.

She continued that the relief that is requested is a variance for 4.6 feet from the 5 foot minimum setback requirement for a permanent accessory freestanding sign in the BG-3.0 (Business General) zoning district. As stated by the applicant, they are proposing a 0.4 foot setback from Park Avenue to enable the existing pole to be maintained. They are looking for a special permit to allow dimensional relief for an accessory sign. The permanent accessory sign and the freestanding pole have a total proposed height of 23 feet, where only 20 feet is permitted. They also request a special permit to extend, alter or change a privileged pre-existing non-conforming structure or use. The existing pole is non-conforming with respect to the required 5-foot pole setback. Also, the sign overhangs onto the abutting public way of Park Avenue. Both those non-conformities existed previously, and the applicant is looking to maintain those non-conformities with an increase in height and an increase in extension over the public way.

The proposed sign is 73.5 square feet per side and has a total height of 23 feet. The 23-foot sign is mounted on a 14-ft. pole above the sidewalk. The prior sign was smaller, but she noted that the old sign was just the sign part. The old sign was 6.4 feet in height and 5.75 feet into the right of way. The new sign is 9 feet in height and 8.2 ft. wide.

The applicant, as part of staff conditions of approval, will need to have an agreement with the City to overhang into the right of way. Ms. Laythe asked the applicant if they considered a sign that complied with the ordinance of 20-ft in height.

Chair Berg Powers directed the applicant to answer the question from Ms. Laythe about the sign height.

Mr. McGlone noted that they did consider having the sign that would comply with the ordinance, but that the customer was trying to maximize the square footage that was allowed for the sign. He noted that there was some confusion in the application process where he was informed that the maximum height was 40 feet, but it was really only 20 feet. He was already through the application process. So, the relief of 23 feet and trying to maximize the sign square footage was the goal. Mr. Berg Powers thanked him for the explanation and asked for public comment in person and also online.

Public Comment:

No individuals appeared in person or online for public comment.

Board Comment:

Mr. Berg Powers noted that he is generally okay with the application but curious about the ability to scale back the size of the sign. He is not concerned with the sign's height but how much it intrudes into the right of way.

Mr. McGlone responded that the previous BT sign was the actual size of the existing sign's cabinet and it also had a marquee style arrow mounted off the side. Ms. Laythe noted through the Chair that she used the dimensions on the plan submitted when the previous sign was installed that included the arrow.

Mr. Berg Powers noted that the color of the pole should be the same color as the building so that it blends into profile of the building. Mr. McGlone noted that the new pole color would be black.

Mr. Cortez said that he is in favor of the height request because the previous sign was an obstruction to the traffic lights at the corner. Regarding the size, he agrees with the Chair and keeping the sign as the previous square sign would be great.

Mr. Bartenhagen had no problem having a sign there, even though it is a non-conforming use because they are continuing a non-conforming use. He shares the concerns over the increase in size over the previous sign.

Ms. Muharremi had no additional comments.

Mr. Sacco agreed with the Chair and said it's a great sign but wished it was a little bit smaller.

Mr. Torkornoo had no comment.

Mr. Berg Powers asked staff if the Board needs to agree on the item as written. Michelle Smith responded that the Zoning Board of Appeals can ask the applicant if they could make some adjustments to the size of the sign and specify those adjustments if enough of the Board agrees.

Mr. McGlone noted that he can definitely go back to his client and redesign the sign to a smaller scale. Mr. Berg Powers noted that the sign does not have to be smaller but definitely needs to be setback from Park Avenue to lessen the impact a little. Mr. McGlone asked for clarification—same size and shape as the prior sign instead of the current proposal. Mr. Berg Powers noted that the applicant needs to request a Continuance. Mr. McGlone requested a continuance to the June 29, 2026 Board of Appeals meeting. Ms. Laythe noted through the Chair that Planning needs new drawings submitted. The constructive deadline would be July 21, 2026.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 to continue this application for 318 Park Avenue to June 29th and a construction deadline date of July 21st.

New Business – Public Hearings

6. 35 & 37 State Road (aka 1200 West Boylston Street) (ZB-2026-033)

Amendment to ZB-2024-055:

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

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

And for the following additional relief:

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 front yard setback 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 side yard setback 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 rear yard setback requirement for a multi-family low-rise dwelling use in an RL-7 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: SAL, LLC

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a commercial building and a 12-unit multi-family low-rise dwelling.

Zone Designation: 35 State Road is located in the BL-1.0 (Business, Limited) zoning district and 37 State Road is located in the RL-7 (Residence, Limited) zoning district

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to raze the commercial building and construct an ±8-unit multi-family low-rise dwelling with ±16 parking spaces and associated site improvements.

Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 5/18/26; prepared by Donald J. O’Neil, Esq.
	Exhibit B:	Survey, Existing Conditions; dated 5/21/2026; prepared by Cornerstone Engineering, Inc
	Exhibit C:	Survey, Proposed Conditions; dated 3/13/2026; prepared by Cornerstone Engineering, Inc
	Exhibit D:	Architecture Plans; dated 4/23/2007, revised 4/23/2026; prepared by Dimensions Architecture and Design
	Exhibit E:	Wetland Boarder Report; dated 10/24/2025; prepared by Goddard Consulting

Public Hearing Deadline: 7/22/2026 Constructive Grant Deadline: 8/26/2026

Donald O’Neil, a lawyer in Worcester, on behalf of applicant Sal LLC gave an overview of the project. The applicant would like to demolish the existing commercial structure which is a house that was used for commercial purposes. It is underutilized in its current condition. It is an unusual lot that is recorded by the assessors as two separate parcels. It is a split lot with the front zoned as BL and the back zoned as RL. There is a significant wetlands area located where the two parcels join. In 2004, the Zoning Board did give permission to allow for a 12-unit building to be built in the back which is accessed off Magnolia Avenue which is in West Boylston. The only Worcester frontage for the property is actually on West Boylston Street in front of the commercial building. With this filing, there was a re-examination of the old approval and noted that the side yard is actually a rear yard (because the front edge is on West Boylston Street). He stated that City Planning Staff has recommended the applicant get the lot into compliance through requesting addition variance relief for the existing structure. There are two setback variances that are requested to bring the property into compliance. Another condition of the approval was limited to the construction of 12 apartments on the property. We have the 12 and are proposing 8 additional apartments, so the total on the property would be 20 apartments. The additional eight units would be built on the West Boylston St. side.

He continued that for the proposed building, there is a request for north boundary relief. Secondly, the other frontage request at the closest setback is the corner of the parking lot which is related to the wetlands, and also the shape of the lot which has a sharp angle and pushes the parking closer to the street. West Boylston Street has a wide layout so that it does not appear to be all that close to the street. Because the lot is in the BL, you need up to 40 feet of frontage per dwelling unit up to a total of 200 feet. The lot currently measures at 185 or 186 feet and the applicant is requesting 13.69 feet of relief. The last relief is for the layout and design of the parking. He noted that the land to the back of the property is state-owned land that has a fair amount of wetlands.

O’Neil noted that he reviewed the Staff memo and requests the two waivers that are identified. For the most part, the conditions are acceptable but there are items that he brought to the board’s attention.

Item 1C talks about installation of a 4-foot fence to help screen headlights. Mr. O’Neil spoke with his client who prefers to install a reflective one-way glazing on the sliders that would shield the occupants from headlights of moving vehicles. He noted that this project also requires site plan approval. He noted that this alternative is a cleaner appearance for the property.

Item K: Mr. O’Neil noted that his client would prefer not to have a bike-rack because of issues with the tenants and the possibility of bikes being stolen. If the Board prefers to have a bike-rack installed, we would like to shift the location to the side yard, close to the entrance but not directly in front of the building.

Item M: Mr. O’Neil noted that his client is fine with the bench on the proposed walkway. He noted that the request for a picnic table is right on West Boylston Street. We would prefer to move the picnic table to the rear of the building near the wetlands area.

Amy Beth Laythe, Planning Division, noted that this is 35 and 37 State Road, aka 1200 West Boylston Street. The present use is a commercial building at 35 State Road and a 12-unit multi-family low-rise dwelling at 37 State Road. Each has its own associated parking. 35 State Road is located in the BL-1.0 zoning district and 37 State Road is located in the RL-7 zoning district. The applicant seeks to raze the existing commercial building at 35 State Road and construct an eight unit multi-family low-rise dwelling with 16 parking spaces and associated site improvements located in the BL-1.0 with no changes proposed to the existing 12-unit multi-family at 37 State Road.

She reviewed the relief from the 2004 decision for the existing 12-unit structure. At that time, the relief for the side yard setback was 5 feet. With the new survey, that side yard setback was 4.1 feet. They are seeking a variance of relief of 5.9 feet from the 10-ft. minimum side yard setback for the multi-family low-rise to cure that relief request. They are seeking an amendment for the special permit to allow a low-rise dwelling in the RL-7 as the previous decision stipulated that it would be for 12 units and now would like to add 8 additional units. Additional new relief requested by the applicant is a variance for 9.3 ft. from the 20 ft. minimum setback and noted that the setback is the rear yard of the property now. They also seek relief from the 200 foot minimum frontage requirement for a multi-family low-rise dwelling in the BL-1.0 zone, the parcel has 186.31 feet of frontage, and in the BL-1.0, frontage is capped at 200 feet. A variance of relief of 1.5 feet from the 10-ft minimum front yard setback requirement for the multi-family low-rise in the BL. Their front yard setback proposal is 8.5 feet and a variance for relief of 3.1 ft from the 10-ft. minimum side yard setback requirement for the multi-family low-rise dwelling. The applicant is proposing 6.9 ft. on the northern side yard for the proposed building. And staff wanted to note the architectural plan does show balconies. If those balconies are proposed, they might encroach into the side-yard setback and change the relief needed. The applicant is also seeking a special permit to modify the layout and/or landscaping requirements, loading requirements and/or the number of required parking spaces. Under that special permit, they are looking for relief of the parking buffer as described at the southern end of the side of the driveway. There is less than a 5-ft buffer. As described, it is a wooded area at that end of the parcel.

Ms. Laythe then reported Staff Comments and Suggestions to the Board. For the driveway, the applicant wants to use the existing curb cut into State road for entrance into the parking lot. For the drive aisle, there is a requirement that it be 24 feet as a maximum. So, when you enter the proposed driveway, it is sweeping and exceeds the 30 foot maximum. Staff is questioning if that is needed and whether the applicant has considered reducing that impervious area. Additionally, for new construction in a BL-1.0 zone, there is a requirement for 10% of the lot area to be recreation space. That has not been explicitly identified on the plan and questioned what that recreation space might be.

The units are all one-bedroom units with 16 parking spaces which would be compliant with parking requirements. Staff is questioning how the parking will be managed and if any of the spaces are being earmarked for guest parking because there is no street parking in this area since it's a state road.

Staff have the architectural renderings of the new buildings and noted that there is no direct entry onto West Boylston Street. The building is facing the parking area. Staff is looking for the façade facing West Boylston Street to be more activated/have more glazing/interact with the street.

Staff would like to see bike racks and encouraged the Board to discuss the best solution for the location of the bike racks. She noted there was another rendering that showed HVAC systems on the side of the building and another rendering that did not have the HVAC units. Staff would like to verify that there will be HVAC units and what they look like. The preferred HVAC units would be covered and not visible to the occupants. She added the applicant has not provided a photometric plan, a storm water report or soil testing report. Those reports will be needed when they go to site plan.

Mr. O'Neil responded that there are no balconies proposed on the northerly boundary line which does not encroach on the side yard setback. Mr. O'Neil noted that the reduction of the driveway entrance to 24 feet is agreeable as well as the reduction of the parking area from 35 plus or minus feet to 30 feet.

Mr. O'Neil addressed staff comments on the building elevations. The last plan is the intended plan. He is not certain about that HVAC units. He knows that the Planning Board would review this when the site plan is submitted.

Mr. O'Neil noted that the recreational space would be the picnic table at the rear of the property. The applicant is aware that he needs to designate at least 10% of the lot area for passive recreational space, possibly where the bench area has been designed. The applicant has no objection to modifying plans to show additional recreational space for the tenants. Ms. Laythe clarified that staff is requesting the driveway be 24 feet, not 30 feet. Mr. O'Neil noted that this is agreeable.

Public Comment:

No individuals appeared in person or online for public comment.

Board Comment:

Mr. Berg Powers summarized that the applicant is asking for relief to fix the strange shape of the parcel. He also noted that the lot sits in two zones (BL-1 and RL-7). He feels that this is a good project and the staff comments are very helpful. There is plenty of parking on the parcel and he is prepared to vote YES.

Mr. Cortez asked Mr. O'Neil about how big the recreational space would be. Mr. O'Neil noted the recreational space should be based on the portion of the lot that is in the BL. Mr. Cortez suggested that the condition says recreational space as legally required and to work out with staff whether it's the BL or the whole lot. Mr. Cortez noted that locating the bike rack to the side is more accessible to thievery but noted that he thinks a bike rack is an important accessory. Mr. O'Neil agreed that the bike rack would be placed in a location suggested by Staff.

The Board then discussed Staff's recommendation to have a fence and that the screening material on the sliders to block headlights on the sliders is a cleaner solution.

Mr. Cortez asked Mr. O'Neil if the wetlands are part of the property. Mr. O'Neil said some wetlands are located on the parcel, and some are on the state property. Mr. Cortez wanted to clarify if the fence would prevent children from running towards the wetlands. Mr. O'Neil clarified that the fence would have been located on the West Boylston side of the property. He noted that the wetlands have no water and they are just a vegetated wetland. Mr. Cortez agreed with the applicant's plan to move the bike racks to the side and also have a picnic table in the rear of the property.

Mr. Bartenhagen noted that he thinks this is a good project. He is okay with all the changes.

Mr. Torkornoo, Mr. Sacco and Ms. Muharremi had 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 amended conditions and recommendations and conditions set out in the staff memo.

New Business – Public Hearings

7. 72 Arlington Street (ZB-2026-043)

Lot 1R:

Variance: For relief from the minimum frontage requirement for a single-family semi-detached dwelling in the RG-5 zoning district (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2.)

Lot 1L:

Variance: For relief from the minimum frontage requirement for a single-family semi-detached dwelling in the RG-5 zoning district (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Petitioner: Assad Challab

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

Zone Designation:	RG-5 (Residence, General) zoning district		
Petition Purpose:	The applicant seeks to construct a single-family semi-detached dwelling and associated site improvements.		
Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 5/18/2026; prepared by Paul Mourad, Attorney	
	Exhibit B:	Survey; dated 4/2/2026; prepared by HS&T Group Inc	
	Exhibit C:	Site Plan; dated 4/2/2026; prepared by Alpha Omega Engineering Inc	
	Exhibit D:	Architectural Plans; dated 4/2/2026; prepared by AA Design Services LLC	
Public Hearing Deadline:	7/22/2026	Constructive Grant Deadline:	8/26/2026

Attorney Paul Mourad was present representing petitioner Assad Challab. They submitted an application for 72 Arlington Street, which has two lots, Lot 1R and Lot 1L. He said they are seeking relief for 3.5 feet from the 30 ft. minimum frontage requirement for a single-family semi-detached dwelling. Each specific lot currently has 26.5 feet to meet the specific requirements.

Amy Beth Laythe, DPRS, described the project. Presently on the premises of 72 Arlington Street is a vacant lot in the RG-5 Zoning District. The applicant seeks to construct a single-family semi-detached dwelling and make associated site improvements.

Staff had some questions and comments. This lot has a grade in the rear that is greater than 15%. The applicant is proposing a dry well within that slope. The applicant proposes to regrade a small portion of the rear of the southern lot at the rear of the proposed structure. This regrading will result in a change of approximately 4 feet and the plans do not indicate how the applicant intends to stabilize the slope. Staff recommend that this information be updated because this information will be needed for when the applicant applies for site plan for approval. The architecture plans show that the proposed structure will have decks and stairs at the rear of each dwelling. The decks and stairs are not reflected on the civil plans. Staff recommends the planting of extra trees in the rear of the yard.

Public Comment:

Earl Turner, 76 Arlington Street of Worcester, MA stated he was concerned about whether any study has been done on the traffic. During the winter season, the City of Worcester uses 72 Arlington Street to store plowed snow because there is no place to park. Mr. Turner also asked if the owner of 72 Arlington plans to tie into the sewer system that was originally there that was dead-ended. The sewer system is a private sewer system which he owns with his neighbor. It dumps out on Winthrop Street which means everything coming out of the new house will be going through the existing yards. The system is a clay pipe for the majority of the system. The City told Mr. Turner many years ago that the system belongs to him and his neighbor. When there was a problem, he replaced 29 feet with a schedule 80 green pipe. The second time there was a problem, the City said it was his problem to fix. The third time, a woman named Deb Davis (he believes is her name) said he could not work on the system because it ties into the City. He contested her statement. The City sent him a cease and desist. He contested it and took it in front of Judge Martin. He won the judgment with Judge Martin.

Mr. Berg Powers explained that the parking will be provided on the site of the property with a driveway into a parking garage, there will be no on street parking. He asked Planning Staff to address Mr. Turner's second question about the private sewer system. Michelle Smith noted that utility related matters would be something DPW would typically comment on during the site plan review process. Related to public infrastructure, if there's a connection between public infrastructure, that is something that DPW permits. If there is private ownership, the specifics of private ownership will dictate how the connection would occur.

Mr. Berg Powers noted that if the project moves past the Zoning Board of Appeals, it would be reviewed by the Planning Division who would have DPW look at the sewer connection. Mr. Berg Powers noted to the applicant that if this is a private connection, you should work with the persons involved in the neighborhood to know the expectations before you come to the Planning Board. Mr. Berg Powers

recommended getting City Staff contact information so that Mr. Turner could be kept up to date on the project's review process.

Mr. Mourad said that he communicated with his client. The plans do dictate that a new sewer system will be constructed. There is a manhole in front of the property that will be used to connect to the City's sewer. Mr. Mourad and his client defer to DPW to see whether it would actually interfere or not.

Mr. Berg Powers asked the applicant if they were requesting waivers for 72 Arlington Street which are 3 of 5 of the Staff memo. Attorney Mourad requested the waivers.

Board Comment:

Mr. Berg Powers summarized that the project seems very straightforward. It's an empty lot with an existing curb cut and parking will be provided on the site. Under the Zoning Board of Appeals prevue, Berg Powers plans to vote yes and approve the project. He also praised the applicant for their plans to install a drywell which is fantastic. He added to make sure moving forward, include plans to stabilize the drywell for the site plan filing.

Mr. Abramoff asked the applicant if he was OK with the conditions of approval in the staff memo. Attorney Mourad said that is perfectly okay. Mr. Abramoff has no problem with this project.

Mr. Cortez noted the request for variances and for the permit is very small, so he has no problem with it. He noted that the abutter's concerns with the sewer connection would be taken up by DPW, so he is ready to vote his approval of the project.

Mr. Bartenhagen had no additional comments.

Mr. Torkornoo had no comment.

Mr. Sacco had no comment.

Ms. Muharremi had 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 on 72 Arlington Street with the conditions of approval set out in the staff memo on page 3 of 5 and the waivers as requested by the applicant.

New Business – Public Hearings

8.	680 Grafton Street (ZB-2026-047)
Variance:	For relief from the minimum frontage requirement for a two-family dwelling 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:	Renfrew Street, LLC
Present Use:	Presently on the premises is a partially constructed two-family dwelling.
Zone Designation:	BL-1.0 (Business, Limited) zoning district
Petition Purpose:	The applicant seeks to redraw the property lines between the parcels and to construct a driveway leading to 680 Grafton Street.

Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 5/19/2026; prepared by Mark Borenstein, Attorney
	Exhibit B:	Survey; dated 4/17/2026; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc
	Exhibit C:	Existing Conditions Plan; dated 5/15/2026; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc.
	Exhibit D:	Proposed Conditions Plan; dated 5/5/2026; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc.
Public Hearing Deadline:	7/1/2026	Constructive Grant Deadline: 8/5/2026

Attorney Mark Borenstein from Prince Lobel in Worcester represented the petitioner was joined by his co-counsel Don O'Neill who represents the property owner. They are seeking certain types of relief for two properties: 680 Grafton Street and 1 & 7 Renfrew Street in connection with a definitive frontage subdivision approval and also to cure some existing nonconformities on the site. He reviewed the slide deck and also noted that Patrick Healy, the engineer from Thompson Liston was present at the hearing.

Mr. Borenstein said 680 Grafton Street has a partially constructed two-family residence that is near completion. 7-11 Renfrew has three attached dwelling units, with driveway parking spaces. He then showed the board there are two driveways and said that the northerly driveway will be incorporated into the property at 680 Grafton Street and that the southerly driveway will be closed. Mr. Borenstein noted that the purpose of these applications is to merge the northerly portion of 680 Grafton Street (approximately 3,870 square feet), with the Renfrew Street property. This will allow for a more developable portion of the property along Grafton Street. They will take the 1,021 square foot lot, a portion of the property, from 7-11 Renfrew Street and add it to 680 Grafton Street. Access to the property would be along the northerly driveway.

Michelle Smith from the City's Planning Division explained to the Board that tonight we are hearing two different cases: the application for 680 Grafton Street, also known as Lot A, and the application for 1 through 11, also known as 7-11 Renfrew Street which is Lot E on the plans. With two different applications, you will need to take two different motions should you move to a vote. However, since it's a combined project, Planning Staff has provided one comment memorandum that addresses both cases.

Ms. Smith summarized that there are four requests for variances and two different special permit requests across the two different properties. At 680 Grafton Street, which is the rear lot and the blue lot on the plan. The frontage is accessed over Grafton Street. The structure is under construction, so the actual site access has not been fully configured but has been for construction through Renfrew Street. The applicant is hoping to formalize that with a change to the lot lines. They propose three different lots with a remnant lot that is essentially the intersection of Renfrew and Grafton Streets. They are seeking a special permit for both lots relative to the landscape requirements. The setback for the driveway, which requires 3 feet which they don't have where the lot lines are proposed. They are essentially bisecting the existing driveway to the north, which is proposed to be reallocated from the existing structure in the front to the existing structure that is under construction in the back to create a new driveway to serve that structure that is under construction. With respect to the special permit for the Renfrew Street lot they are seeking that special permit to reduce the parking requirements by one parking space. That existing driveway to the north has parking in it and as they eliminate that and reallocate that to the other side, they are short one parking stall. There are five different garage bays for each of the units on Renfrew Street. The residents cannot park in the front yard because they would be blocking the street's sidewalk in this area, so parking is not allowed in this location.

For dimensional purposes, both lots are seeking relief for frontage. This reallocation is requiring frontage relief: 60 feet is being sought for relief for 680 Grafton Street. They are also seeking relief of about 10 1/2 feet for 7-11 Renfrew (Lot E) with respect to frontage. For the same lot, they are seeking relief for the rear set back for the existing structures and decks. They seek 13.8 ft. of relief at the nearest point of the deck that encroaches furthest into that setback. And then for the side yard, which is the north side of the property, where they are introducing that lot line between the blue lot and the yellow/orange lot, that's 7.7 feet of relief. So practically speaking, that's a 2.3 ft. setback on that side. The retroactive relief for the

decks, the applicant's option is to essentially remove or alter the decks in a way that would comply with the zoning requirements. Otherwise, the driveway issues that were noted are existing nonconformities that are not proposed to be changed through the proposal.

Staff has recommendations for conditions of approval on pages 7 and 8 of the Staff Memo. They are structured for each application. There are two waivers that are noted that are required for both applications. The conditions, although they have overlap, there are some nuances between them. The applicant indicated that they have some requests for modifications. The applicant did indicate specifically that at the moment, because of the common ownership of the property, they request that under Lot A, items 3 and 4 and under Lot E, items 3 and 4 get shifted to "prior to conveyance" and provide evidence of that recorded easement. Ms. Smith noted the applicant will require frontage subdivision, if the Board does approve this to allow the actual lot lines to be reconfigured because it is just a concept at this point. The Planning Board would have to review this, and Staff will re-address the properties as part of this reconfiguration.

Mr. Borenstein respectfully requested the waivers as recommended by staff. He appreciated Ms. Smith's explanation of the easements and making them prior to any conveyance of the property. The other conditions that the Board take under consideration striking Condition 5 on both applications. These are existing buildings. 7-11 Renfrew has been fully constructed. 680 Grafton Street is nearly fully constructed. The applicant is only seeking to modify the existing lot lines and add this driveway. They ask if the Board sees fit to strike that requirement to provide an "as built" plan. It is an added expense for the developer/property owner. He noted that with respect to Condition 7, no parking is allowed in the front yard. They recognize that the driveway is short and that folks are currently parking there. Despite garages, folks park there periodically. The applicant is seeking a special permit and asking that relief be applied to the extent that it is permissible under the ordinance.

Mr. Berg Powers noted that the Board is reviewing Item 8 and Item 13, 1 and 7 Renfrew Street but in reality, it is 1-11 Renfrew Street. Ms. Smith noted that Staff are comfortable striking the requirement for the as-built for the existing structure at 7-11 Renfrew Street, but an as-built is required as part of the closeout of the building permit for the active construction. Staff recommend that the board retain conditions 5 under Lot A as that is required. Mr. Borenstein responded that that is acceptable to the applicant.

Mr. Borenstein asked to review condition 7 for Lot E. Mr. Borenstein added that there are vehicles parking in the front of the property in those driveway areas. They will likely continue to park there, so the applicant is seeking a special permit and ask that the relief they are seeking for the special permit be applied to parking in the front yard.

Public Comment:

Laurie and Michael Venincasa, 4 McGrath Road, Millbury, MA were present in person. The Venincasas are the property owners and noted that Michael is in favor of the project.

Board Comment:

Mr. Berg Powers summarized that this project involves already built properties and just moving some property lines and making more housing accessible through the process. He is amenable to moving this forward. He is amenable to striking Number 5 on 7,9,11 Renfrew Street. He does not need the "as built". He would like to keep the "as built" for Lot A, aka 680 Grafton Street. He is comfortable striking Number 7 "in perpetual" since that is practically what is happening. Happy to move this forward.

Mr. Abramoff stated that he has no problem with this project and allowing parking. Mr. Abramoff asked if there are currently three lots under common ownership, why doesn't the City of Worcester treat it as one lot. Mr. Borenstein said that staff and his applicant explored that. He noted that this relief provides flexibility to the property owners that if in the future they decided to convey out the property, they can do that. The applicant is seeking the flexibility now to establish those lots going forward. Mr. Abramoff inquired if the Assessor's office treats them as separate lots and Mr. Borenstein confirmed this.

Donald O'Neil noted that the lots as currently configured are conforming. It is where you have a merger situation when the lots do not conform and existing structures on the lots.

Mr. Borenstein noted that 4B, 41 and 7 Renfrew Street, it says "the existing single family building meets the minimum off-street parking requirements." It will meet the minimum off-street parking requirements once the special permit has been granted. He wanted to make sure that's reflected and the findings are accurate.

Mr. Cortez noted that he would be in favor of allowing parking in the front.

Mr. Bartenhagen commented he has a couple of questions for Staff. He does not have a problem with striking "perpetual" in number 7, but he just wanted to make sure that the Staff does not have any additional thoughts on the parking situation. Michelle Smith responded. That the City of Worcester does not allow any parking in the front yard and the City is not enforcing this. There is no way for the City to allow parking in the front yard or the front yard setback (whichever is less) from a Zoning perspective because it is a prohibition on the use. Mr. Bartenhagen then noted that he would not be against striking "perpetual" in number 7 because it does not make a difference one way or the other and this way, when that gets transferred to a new owner, this will be in the permit and might give some clarity. He believes the board should keep perpetual in number 7. He noted that items 3 and 4 are wanting to be moved to prior to any conveyance of the property and right now it's under the "prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy." He wanted to understand if that was a separate section. Michelle Smith noted that they have to create new sections for that. It's unusual and typically that is not what you see with a given property. She added if it would be helpful for the applicant, it can say "pursuant to Table 4.4 Note C-1," or clarify the specific prohibition in the zoning ordinance. Mr. Bartenhagen noted that he is fine with striking Condition 5 for Lot E.

Mr. Torkornoo had no comment.

Mr. Sacco had no additional comment.

Ms. Muharremi had no comment.

Mr. Berg Powers liked the change to 7 as stated by Michelle Smith, which is a good compromise to state that it is restating the law.

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 of 680 Grafton Street (Lot A) with conditions, recommendations, and waivers.

New Business – Public Hearings

9. 22 Huron Avenue (ZB-2026-051)

Variance: For relief from the minimum frontage requirement for a single-family dwelling in an RS-7 Zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Petitioner: Happy Hen Properties LLC

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

Zone Designation: RS-7 (Residence, Single Family) zoning district and is within the Water Resources Protection Overlay (GP-3)

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to divide the parcel and construct a single-family dwelling on Lot 1.

Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 4/27/2026; prepared by Donald J. O’Neil, Attorney		
	Exhibit B:	Survey; dated 4/7/2025; prepared by B&R Survey Inc		
	Exhibit C:	Site Plan; dated 12/20/2024, revised 1/23/2025; prepared by M.A. Elbag Engineering		
	Exhibit D:	Architectural Plans; dated 2/28/2024; prepared by Laura’s Home Drafting and Design		
Public Hearing Deadline:	7/1/2026	Constructive Grant Deadline:	8/5/2026	

Donald O’Neil, a lawyer from Worcester, appeared in person on behalf of the applicant/owner, Happy Hen Properties, LLC. Last year, they applied for relief for this project and a variance decision was issued in March 2025. There was a delay in completing the site plan review process which was required because of the existing slope on the lot. It expired before they could get that approval. They are applying to renew that variance relief that was previously granted. He noted that Huron Avenue goes all the way down to Pasadena Parkway, but the last bit of Huron is basically impassable. To summarize, they are looking for the relief they had last year, and staff have noted that there is an additional tree that is required which is acceptable. The other conditions were agreed to previously. He requested the two waivers that are on page 3 of 6 of the staff memo.

Michelle Smith of the Planning Division, noted a request for a variance of 35 ft. and change from the 65 ft minimum frontage requirement. The Board heard this a year ago and voted favorably to issue the relief. The applicant has just over 29 ft. of frontage on the street. The proposal in front of the Board will require site plan approval from the Planning Board, as well as a definitive frontage subdivision, if the applicant wishes to reconfigure the lots with this other potential lot to be conveyed to a neighbor or built upon in the future at some point. Staff had asked the applicant to consider reducing the driveway to be no wider than 18 ft, which did not end up being a condition of approval but there is no record of an answer from the owner. Ms. Smith noted that they don’t have an updated topographical plan which needs to be provided as part of the site plan review process. Ms. Smith noted that handling the soil and management of the storm water would also be part of the site plan review process. Through the Planning Board process, they could apply for a Chapter 12 Section 12 approval to bring the road up to standards.

Public Comment:

No individuals appeared in person or online for public comment.

Board Comment:

Mr. Berg Powers noted that the Board approved this last year and he is happy to approve it this year.

Mr. Cortez asked if the lot was going to be divided. Mr. O’Neil responded that they plan to divide the lot, but this would be reviewed by the Planning Board. Mr. Cortez asked if the new house would be built on Lot 1 and what would happen to Lot 2. Mr. O’Neil said that Lot 2 could be sold to an abutter or be sold to the company that would rebuild Huron Avenue and the additional construction could occur by right. It would be a Planning Board matter to separate the property into two lots.

Mr. Berg Powers asked Michelle Smith if the lot is split into two lots, whether the City would review the grading of Lot 2 which would not be a buildable lot. Ms. Smith noted that through the Site Plan Review process, the City would review alterations, grading of the vacant lot. Mr. O’Neil reiterated that the vacant lot would be stabilized.

Mr. Bartenhagen asked whether the limitation of the driveway width of 18 feet should be a condition that should be added. Michelle Smith responded that this should be added as a new condition 1D, “to reduce the driveway to 18 feet wide.”. Mr. Bartenhagen said it is fine with him.

Mr. Torkornoo had no comment.

Mr. Sacco had no comment.
Ms. Muharremi had 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 of 22 Huron Avenue with the amended conditions and the waivers as requested by the applicant.

New Business – Public Hearings

10.	125 Grandview Avenue (ZB-2026-052)		
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:	Brandon Halig		
Present Use:	Presently on the premises is a single-family dwelling with an ADU under construction.		
Zone Designation:	RL-7 (Residence, Limited) zoning district		
Petition Purpose:	The applicant seeks to construct an additional curb cut and driveway to serve the ADU.		
Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 4/27/26; prepared by Brandon Halig	
	Exhibit B:	Survey (Existing), dated 8/11/2026; prepared by HS&T Group, Inc	
	Exhibit C:	Survey (Proposed); dated 4/21/2026, revised 5/12/2026; prepared by HS&T Group, Inc.	
	Exhibit D:	Driveway Diagram; dated 5/30/2025; prepared by Asphalt Engineering.	
	Exhibit E:	Architectural Plans; dated 6/11/2025; prepared by Acropolis Design Consultants.	
Public Hearing Deadline:	7/1/2026	Constructive Grant Deadline:	TBD

Brandon Halig, the owner of 125 Grandview Avenue, requested variances related to parking for a new driveway for an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) at this address. The new driveway will allow two parking spaces outside and one more parking space in the garage, so there will be three total parking spaces. He showed the Board some photographs of the property and the location of the driveway. He noted that there is a catch basin in front of the planned driveway and they would work with DPW to move the catch basin. The proposed driveway plan is a 22 foot entrance leading up to an 18-ft wide driveway. The entrance is wider for safety because Grandview is a narrow one-way street. He is proposing to leave the driveway entrances and the neighbor’s extrusion just the way they are. He concluded that there was no need to follow the City recommendation to change the parking on the existing lot. He noted that his neighbor’s driveway is in front of the doorway, literally five feet away from his house.

Michelle Smith, of the Planning Division, explained that this is Mr. Halig’s request is not codified through Zoning, but would be a DPW concern. Ms. Smith noted that the applicant has applied for a special permit to allow for modification of parking. loading, landscaping, etc. for the driveway and its relationship to the property line as well as the size of it. The applicant requested to install a third driveway on this property. By right, they can have two driveways based on frontage. This lot has frontage of 82 feet, but it does not have enough to have a third driveway, it would need over 120 feet. The City does consider part of the neighbor’s driveway which spans part of the property as one of the driveways being counted.

She said one option would be to close up the portion of the curb cut on the subject property and then that would not be something that would be considered. Then the applicant could add a second driveway without special permission but at this point, they are not proposing to change that. Ms. Smith reviewed the plans and noted that there is a driveway that was installed to serve the main structure. That driveway as it was installed violates the requirement for a 5-ft setback from the northern property line. Staff's understanding is that the neighboring driveway is fully on the neighboring property and any relationship to this lot line is a violation that exists on that property and is likely privileged and predates the zoning requirements that the City has now. The main driveway serving the existing single-family home was recently installed and requires compliance with zoning requirements. Staff would prefer to see a portion of the driveway eliminated since the driveway and the pedestrian pathway are blended. That section of the driveway is about 36 feet wide, so it has room for four cars wide which is well in excess of the zoning requirements. ADU's do not require any parking, and it is good that the applicant wants to install a driveway for his ADU. Ms. Smith reviewed Condition 1A which is requesting a reduction of that wider driveway, that section we call "parking area" based on its condition. There's a 5-ft setback requirement and we ask that they cut that back to comply. If the Board does not want to request that, they would need to relieve that through a special permit that the applicant has not applied for. The applicant is eligible to add this special permit request this evening if the Board is willing to entertain that. If you want to strike that recommendation, our recommendation is to require a 5-ft setback which would widen the little grass strip to be a full 5-ft in width for storm water management, as well as a physical buffer between the two different spaces.

Secondly, Ms. Smith wanted to clarify that there is a curb cut width on the plan that shows 30 ft. The plans that were provided to DPW showed that it would be 20 feet, and what seems to have been physically constructed appears to be closer to 15 ft. The plans show a 30 ft. curb cut which is a violation as well. The City limits curb cuts such as this to a maximum of 22 ft. Staff is seeking to get some clarity from the applicant about what the intended size of the curb cut to appropriately advise the Board if they would be seeking relief, or if the applicant can adjust the plans to show that the driveway width is zoning compliant. The zoning limitation is 22 feet, and the plans show the width to be 30 ft. These are two different avenues that need to be resolved through the process this evening or a future meeting. As you know, there was a prior special permit granted by the Planning Board to allow the ADU because it's in excess of the 900-SF threshold and the ADU is under construction now. There is a building permit for the structure of the ADU and there were prior curb cut permits where there has been some confusion about what is intended. Hoping the applicant can provide some clarity on what is intended regarding the curb cut.

Mr. Halig responded and first spoke about the driveway and said that it is definitely not a four-car parking space, it will only fit three cars. He feels any shortening of the driveway would make the space unsafe. He wants to request a variance on the 5-ft setback requirement for having a parking space next to the neighbor's lot line. He requested a driveway from a company called Asphalt Engineering who planned and applied for the permit. They did not tell him that there would be any problems with the five-foot zoning. He would like to keep the existing parking spaces as is.

Secondly, he responded to the question about the 34 ft. driveway entrance. He applied with Asphalt Engineering, which provided him with a plan, a quote and he paid for it. Then he asked Asphalt what kind of driveways he is allowed to have. He had just moved to this address and requested that they expand the driveway entrance to what they thought they were allowed on this street. He was never informed that the vendor did not apply for permits. He found out a year later when he applied for the new driveway permits for the ADU with DPW. He noted that if he has to shorten the driveway to 22 ft, he would have to shorten the north and south sides by about 4 ft. near each tree and he could do that. This would be an additional expense, and he said that it is a safety concern since backing out onto Grandview Street is nearly impossible.

Ms. Smith responded that if the applicant would like to amend their application to seek additional relief though the special permit to modify the requirements to provide for a 5-ft. setback by providing the minimum amount that is there, Staff will need to measure because it is not demarcated on the plan and they will need a surveyor to confirm. The applicant is requesting a 30-ft driveway and the maximum for use like this is 22 feet wide. If the Board does not want to do that, they can leave Condition A which addressed the 5-ft setback. The Board needs to add Condition D to require the applicant to reduce the 30-ft curb cut to not exceed 22 feet, or specify an alternate dimension. The existing driveway is 15.6 ft.

so the Board could parallel that. Another option would be to eliminate the driveway that they are proposing for the ADU and consolidate the access to the ADU into a larger central driveway that provides access to both units.

Public Comment:

Francis Shingaris of Worcester, was present. He was born in the house across the street at 132 Grandview. It is a good neighborhood with historical three-deckers. They treasure every inch of their driveways, every inch of their yards. The applicant bought one plot of land and extended that curb cut, which he believes is 30 ft. He built another house there and it was assumed that they would share that driveway. He is proposing 18 feet for a second driveway. Mr. Shingaris noted that he has a 9-ft driveway like his neighbors and room for only one car. The applicant had one driveway, then two driveways and now wants to add a third driveway. He proposes that the applicant scale back his driveways to 9-ft wide like everyone else on the street.

Axelis Guzman of 132 Grandview in Worcester, noted that the applicant pointed out in one of the photos a black car blocking the view. That car belongs to their upstairs neighbor. She noted that she has a small-width driveway at 132 Grandview. She owns a 2009 Honda CRV and she makes the driveway work to the best of her ability. They have four cars and two motorcycles, and they park five vehicles on the property. She does not think the large curb cut is necessary. She is able to pull her big car in and out of the driveway with no issue. The applicant does not need three parking spaces for that house when he already has an existing large driveway. He is inconveniencing all of the neighbors on the street.

Abram Santorum of 123 Grandview of Worcester was present. He had a concern about the parking spaces and noted that the Winter Bans are terrible. There are lot of three-families and there are less parking spaces now than before. The applicant's first construction took three parking spaces away. The second construction will take more spaces. That is my only concern. Thank you.

Board Comment:

Mr. Berg Powers said that they had two separate things to address. First, he noted that the applicant needs to work with DPW on outstanding issues. Mr. Berg Powers then noted that it would behoove us to allow the ADU to have some parking. He added that what is currently there is excessive of what is allowed and what the structures actually needs. He stated that the City of Worcester tends to treat people who build ADUs the same as they treat developers who have loads of money. They are not the same. Mr. Berg Powers thinks that 30 ft is excessive. He visited the property and would like the driveway to go back to the 22 ft which is legally in line and the applicant gets closer to the 40% of impervious surface in the front yard. The difference of like 45 feet vs. 63 ft. of frontage for parking. His vote is to allow the third driveway, allow the ADU to have parking, to reduce the main driveway back to what is legally allowable and to reduce the side yard setback to 5 ft, otherwise the applicant would have to reapply for a variance again.

Mr. Abramoff asked if the width of the new driveway is 18 ft. as proposed. The applicant responded that 18 feet proposed with a 22 or 21 curb cut. Mr. Abramoff noted that the applicant did not seem amenable to compromise. The applicant said that he would like to come to a compromise with his neighbors. He noted that he has a weird, windy driveway and he is in an unfortunate situation where his side of the street is dedicated to parking. He feels that the driveway provides safe access to the street for three cars in his driveway. It was unfortunate that Asphalt Engineering gave incorrect information when he applied for his permit. Otherwise, he would have done everything in the original plan to meet that 22-feet. Mr. Abramoff responded that it's a lot of asphalt and he has a hard time supporting that much asphalt and noted for what the applicant has proposed, he does not have his vote. He would support the new driveway if there was some compromise on making the old one smaller. Mr. Abramoff explained that the applicant needs 4 votes out of 5 voting members for his proposal to pass. A 3/2 majority is a denial. The applicant then said that he would be willing to compromise.

Mr. Cortez said that the applicant was misinformed at the beginning of his project and did not really know what was right or what was wrong. He said that the property needs to have 160 feet to install a second driveway, and he only has 84 feet. Cortez said that he would not be able to support the plan because it requires a third curb cut which is not possible because of the footage he does not have. He suggested that he redraw the plans to meet what is allowed. He suggested requesting a continuance for his project.

Mr. Berg Powers asked Staff for clarification on the proposed driveway changes. Michelle Smith responded that the applicant could reduce the driveway width for the proposed curb cut for the ADU. They could end up with a one-car wide driveway which would allow the curbing to be extended to the north which will create more on-street parking spaces and reconfigure the main driveway so that it's a little less swooping. The area that is non-compliant where Staff requested landscaping to be removed is in order to create the 5-ft buffer. There are three issues: the number of curb cuts, which it sounds like the board is not necessarily totally opposed, the total amount of impervious surface which the applicant can comply with the 40% threshold that staff has for the impervious surface in the front yard and finally, the 5-ft. setback on that northern property line if the board wants to ask the applicant to saw cut the pavement or allow for a special permit for the driveway to stay where it is to the north.

Mr. Abramoff agreed with Mr. Cortez to request a continuance.

Mr. Bartenhagen asked a question of Staff about the third driveway on the neighbor's lot - if it was actually conforming and did not encroach on this lot, would the applicant still need to be before the Board. Michelle Smith responded that he would have to appear before the Board if he wanted to keep the 30 ft. wide curb cut and keep the parking in the 5-ft setback. Mr. Bartenhagen noted that he would be inclined to have a 5-ft. buffer to reduce the impervious surfaces and does not think the applicant should keep a 30-ft driveway which is too wide.

Mr. Torkornoo noted that the applicant is amenable so he will wait until he comes back.

Mr. Sacco had no comment.

Ms. Muharremi asked a question about the driveway access to the garage. The applicant responded that the Planning Board proposed a new tree which made access to the driveway difficult. Michelle Smith added that the best solution would be to reduce that driveway to be one car width, aligned with the garage bay. Michelle Smith then asked the Board what date they would prefer to have the continuance.

Mr. Berg Powers said that there is problem with the City's parking requirements. If the applicant put parking on the street for his ADU, he actually would not have triggered the review of this project. So trying to keep parking off the street with his driveway has actually caused this problem. Mr. Berg Powers believes that there is a solution that can work for everyone. He asked the Board to recognize that the applicant tried to keep parking of the street, which is what the Board asks everyone to do.

Mr. Berg Powers asked if the applicant would like to come back for the continuance on June 29th and that he plan to meet with staff in reformulating his plans.

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, the Board voted 5-0 for a continuance on the June 29, 2026 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting with a Constructive Grant Deadline of July 21, 2026.

11. 28 Trent Road (ZB-2026-056)

Variance:	For relief from the minimum lot area requirement for a single-family dwelling in the RS-7 zoning district (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2).		
Variance:	For relief from the minimum frontage requirement for a single-family dwelling in the RS-7 zoning district (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)		
Petitioner:	Joseph P. and Candice F. Carlson		
Present Use:	Presently on the premises is a vacant lot.		
Zone Designation:	RS-7 (Residence, Single Family) zoning district		
Petition Purpose:	The applicant seeks to construct a single-family dwelling and associated site improvements.		
Exhibits:	Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 5/18/2026; prepared by Mark Borenstein, Attorney	
	Exhibit B:	Proposes Conditions Survey; dated 4/20/2026, revised 5/18/2026; prepared by Robert D. O'Neil, Professional Land Surveyor	
	Exhibit C:	Architectural Plans; dated 3/24/2026; prepared by Bourque Design	
Public Hearing Deadline:	7/4/2026	Constructive Grant Deadline:	8/8/2026

Mark Borenstein, Attorney, spoke on behalf of the applicants on the application for variances associated with an existing lot at 28 Trent Road. It is a vacant existing lot in a primarily single-family neighborhood which is in the RS-7 Zoning District. In RS-7, lots require a minimum of 7,000 square feet for a single family dwelling and unfortunately, the lot is 4,050 sq. ft. Mr. Borenstein referred to a Map of 1919 and noted that all of the lots are 4,050 square feet. Unfortunately, this lot was never developed and statutorily it was not protected given that the statute requires 5,000 square feet to be a buildable single-family lot.

He continued that the applicant is proposing a single-family house on the property with related site improvements, driveway, & deck. The applicant is seeking 2,950 square feet of relief frontage. It is a narrow lot in that it has an existing 45 ft. of frontage required, and they seek 20 feet of relief to create a buildable lot. Showing a map, Borenstein noted that there are two single family homes built on undersized lots: 15 Thorn Road (4,050 sq. ft) and 35 Benedict Road which are also occupied by a single-family house. The applicant is seeking to build a home consistent with the neighborhood. The applicant cannot acquire land on the adjacent properties because they are occupied by existing single-family houses. The applicant is seeking the relief and respectfully request the waivers recommended by staff, all the conditions of approval, and would be happy to answer any questions.

Michelle Smith, City Planning Division summarized the project. The Board has in front of them a request for two variances for this property at 28 Trent Road. This is an RS-7 zoning district, which is a house single-family by right. In this case, while the use is allowed by right, the lot itself is undersized and does not afford any form of development on the property. Staff comments included a few questions that were posed to the applicant related to stormwater runoff and what the proposal would be for any form of mitigation of that, questions about the installation of walkways or landing associated with the stairs to connect the entrance to either an abutting street or to the driveway. Also, there is a large birch tree that is off-site on the neighboring property. Given the size of the tree and the dripline, Staff wanted to ensure that it would be protected during construction and recommends that the applicant add some notes to assure protection of the tree. Ms. Smith noted that Staff has recommendations for conditions of approval, should the Board move to a vote. Back in December 2016, the Board denied the requested variances for essentially the same relief, to construct a single-family dwelling.

Public Comment:

John Spaziano of 35 Trent Road, one lot down from 28 Trent Road, gave photographs to Mr. Berg Powers for the record. Mr. Spaziano noted that Trent Road used to be a private street and the neighborhood petitioned to have it paved because it was half public and half-private. He noted that everyone lived on the opposite streets. They managed to have the paving approved, and so the City assessed the street for all the plumbing. All the lots up there were not buildable. He noted that there is no sewage that runs from his house at 35 Trent Road and up. Mr. Spaziano noted that there is no sewage for 28 Trent Road and the only line that goes up the street is Water because they had a dead-end line. If this gets approved, who would pay for the sewage line going up the street? Would that be the owners? Mr. Berg Powers responded, "Yes." Mr. Spaziano noted that there was a petition not too long ago for a variance. Somebody wanted to build and the Carlsons (owners of 28 Trent) helped them fight the guy. They alleged that it was not a buildable lot and it was thrown out. This guy was unable to build and ended up selling the land to the Carlsons. Mr. Spaziano noted that the Carlsons knew they were buying a non-buildable lot. Mr. Spaziano explained that the photos he gave Mr. Berg Powers show a 40-foot wide street, but in reality, the street is only 26-feet wide. With two cars parked on both sides of the street, a fire apparatus or ambulance through there. The parked cars are from Benedict Road which is an overflow to this rental's property. In the wintertime, if a house is built at 28 Trent, the street will be non-passable because the street loses about 2 feet every time snow is plowed. The street is only 26 feet wide and parking, snow removal and access to emergency vehicles are going to be a problem. There are two petitions which were denied previously to build homes on Trent Road.

Leonard Ciuffredo of Worcester, MA appeared in person to support the project. He does not live in the neighborhood, but his sister resides on the adjacent street Benedict Road. He lives a couple of streets down. He notes that he has observed the City of Worcester pass out dimensional relief and special permits for large, high-density housing. I think we should strive to support projects that afford some home ownership to somebody. He prefers encouraging single-family homes on small lots over giant apartment buildings any day. I support the project and hope the Board will see fit to support the project as well.

Gary Richardson from Worcester, MA appeared in person. He and his wife live across from the lot that is requesting a variance. First, he noted that it is not a buildable lot. Many years ago, he considered buying the lot when it was for sale. He was told that the most he could do with the lot was to make a garden. Secondly, someone else requested a variance for that lot, and the Carlsons who did not live on Trent Road, fought against it and that variance was denied. How can you justify approving this variance? You can't.

Lois Giuffrida, 38 Benedict Road of Worcester appeared in person to support the project. It would make the neighborhood complete if a small smarter house or senior house was built on the lot. It would benefit everybody.

Kate Toomey of Worcester appeared in person. She supports the zoning change to allow a single family home to be built on this lot. This proposal represents a reasonable use of the property. It's consistent with the character of the surrounding residential development and will help provide additional housing opportunities in the community. Over the past few years, she has supported expansion of housing stock and allowing construction of well-designed single-family home on this lot is an appropriate and beneficial use of the land. Parking would not be an issue since a driveway is planned for two or three cars. TShe hopes that the Board will take this into consideration.

Tom Generelli from Turin Road in Worcester, MA appeared in person. He noted that the lot in question is adjacent to his backyard. He recalled that a few years ago, he made a bid for the property because he wanted to clear the lot and add it to his backyard. He does not support building a house on the lot.

Board Comment:

Mr. Berg Powers thanked everyone for taking the time to come and review the project. From his perspective, he noted that he wants to put single-family homes on lots that can house single-family homes, especially lots that were planned for homes. He noted that some past decisions have led to us to having a housing crisis. Mr. Berg Powers is happy to move this forward and it's straightforward. It's a planned single-family plot that never got built. Mr. Berg Powers has approved many of these applications since he has served on the Board and it's a straightforward request.

Mr. Abramoff commented that he generally agrees with the Chair. He asked to clarify if the staff recommendations and waivers are agreeable to the applicant. Mr. Borenstein said that they are. Also, he asked if the front yard, rear yard and side yard setbacks are all zoning compliant and how large the new house would be. Borenstein replied that the house would be 980 square feet, or a small two-bedroom house. Mr. Abramoff said that he can support the project.

Mr. Cortez commented that he understands the neighbors and abutters may have had different ideas about how the lot should be developed—a garden, grass or a house. He feels that the best option is a single-family house to make the neighborhood look better.

Mr. Bartenhagen commented that there is a downside to the amount of relief that is requested. The proposed home is 40% smaller than the current zoning and back when it was subdivided it was only 5,000 square feet, and you would need only 950 square feet of relief. He takes comfort that all the setbacks are complied with. It is a relatively small house, not out of proportion with some of the other houses in the neighborhood. He noted that other houses have been built on these small lots in the neighborhood. He is generally supportive of the project.

Mr. Torkornoo had no comment.

Mr. Sacco had no comment.

Ms. Muharremi had 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 of 28 Trent Road with the conditions and the waiver as requested by the applicant.

12. 51 Providence Street (ZB-2026-057)

Variance: For relief from the minimum front yard setback requirement for a multi-family high-rise dwelling in the RG-5 zoning district (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Petitioner: 51 Providence Acquisition LLC

Present Use: Presently on the premises is an office building.

Zone Designation: RG-5 (Residence, General) zoning district

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to raze the existing structure and construct a ±50-unit multi-family high-rise dwelling, ±50 parking spaces, and associated site improvements.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A:	Application; clerked 5/18/2026; prepared by Matthew Eckel, Attorney
Exhibit B:	Survey; dated 9/27/23; prepared by Control Point Associates Inc
Exhibit C:	Site Plan; dated 2/12/2026; prepared by Bohler Engineering
Exhibit D:	Architectural Plans; dated 5/5/2026; prepared by Cube 3 Studio LLC

Public Hearing Deadline: 7/4/2026

Constructive Grant Deadline: 8/8/2026

Matt Eckel, an attorney with Fletcher Tilton was present on behalf of the applicant. He resides in Burlington, Massachusetts. With him were Randy Maron from Bohler Engineering, and Luke Beck and Michelle Quinn Littlefield from Cube 3, the project architects. The applicant is seeking to erect a new 5-story residential building with a total of 50 units and 50 parking spaces. 28 of the parking spaces will be interior within a garage and 22 will be exterior. The parking will include accessible spaces, compact spaces and EV spaces. The zoning district is RG-5, so the use is permitted by right. The applicant is seeking relief for a front yard setback. 15 ft. is required and they are proposing a 6-ft setback which will be used for the existing sidewalk, as well as landscaping and planters to help shield that first level garage.

He stated the lot is one of the largest lots in the neighborhood at 36,536 square feet. The project will include an interior bike room and two amenity spaces for future residents as well as a large, common usable open space for the rear of the site. This project was designed to create some much-needed housing, including affordable units. This will be an eligible development, and they will be seeking relief in the form of a special permit as well as site plan approval from the Planning Board, if and when this Board would approve the request tonight. They would have on-site affordability at the level required for this to be an eligible development. The project includes improvements to stormwater management, a decrease in impervious area and landscaping to beautify the site.

He reviewed context pictures of the site and the current building which housed Worcester Academy's alumni office. The request for the front yard variance is related to the lot is unusual and it is driven by the pinch point where Harrison Street meets Providence Street. The 6-ft setback is consistent with the neighborhood where many of the houses are right on the sidewalk and have zero to 5-ft of setback. He then reviewed the floor plans at a high level. Even though it's a five story building, the first floor has the main entrance and lobby, as well as a bike room, which is now positioned right off Providence Street for easy access, as well as the 28 interior parking spaces and mechanical rooms. Half of that floor is fully visible and then it goes below grade. The landscaping will further obscure that from the sidewalk and the street. The second floor will have 11 residential units as well as those two amenity spaces, including a lounge and fitness center. It will have five on-site affordable units at 60% AMI.

He reviewed the staff memo and is amenable to all the recommended conditions of approval and for the record would like to request the two waivers listed on page six of the Board memo. He turned the presentation over to Randy who went into greater detail on the site plan, and then to Luke to explain how the design fits within this request with the setback.

Michelle Smith from Planning summarized that the applicant is requesting a variance for 9-ft of relief from the 15-ft front yard setback. They are proposing to provide a 6-ft front yard setback along Providence Street. This is a similar alignment to what they have across Providence Street, however, from a zoning perspective, the City only considers those that are on this particular side of the street for alignment. Because of the structures along the section, it does not accommodate for this orientation. However, the structure is appropriate urban design and the location in this neighborhood is appropriate. There should be a contextual adjustment to zoning to allow for this setback. Staff have a variety of conditions listed on pages 4, and the two waivers which the applicant has requested. Smith had one adjustment to one of the conditions. The number of units are allowed, as well as parking and some other dimensional and layout aspects through the special permit for inclusionary zoning from the Planning Board they go to after the Zoning Board review. Ms. Smith reviewed a few of the site-design features that the applicant should address.

Mr. Berg Powers asked about the size of the retaining wall and whether it would be larger than six feet. The applicant said there will be two walls. The wall in the rear is going to be greater than 6 ft, probably around 12 feet. The wall along the property line along Providence Street, combined with the fence will be less than 6 feet. Mr. Berg Powers expressed a concern that the project, as it moves through design phases,

should make sure it would not lose any parking spots. Matt Eckel responded that they have been able to maintain the 50 parking spaces with the bike room in its current location and could do this if the bike room was moved to the lobby area.

Public Comment:

Ed Fallon from 82-84 Harrison Street in Worcester said he is the loser on this development because it's a five-story building. His three-decker has solar panels, and everything is going to be shot, as well as his beautiful views of the City of Worcester. Everything is gone. He believes that the Planning Board should require that they install 200 solar panels on the new building.

Board Comment:

Mr. Berg Powers asked the board to focus on the relief is only 9 ft. from the 15-ft. required. This is a minimal request and the use of this property for housing would be a better use than parking. It will be a great view for the people who live there.

Mr. Abramoff noted that if the applicant builds anything similar to the renderings seen tonight, it will be a nice addition to the neighborhood. He also praised City Planning Staff for their detailed analysis of the project, and he can see why it takes so long to get out memos. He asked for clarification on the amount of affordable housing. Mr. Eckel said it was mixed with five affordable units at 60% AMI and the other 45 are market. He will support the request.

Mr. Cortez noted that this building is a complete change to the texture of the neighborhood, which is three-decker buildings. The building will block views of many of the residents in the neighborhood. Cortez has no objections to moving the projects forward, if the applicant meets the staff recommendations. He believes that the building should provide some neighborhood amenities, like a coffee shop with outdoor seating.

Michelle Smith clarified that both retail uses and food service uses are not allowed in this zone, so they would have to change the zoning to allow what Mr. Cortez is suggesting. By right, they can do eight stories and 90 ft. tall, without special permission. Mr. Cortez mentioned that there are some retail businesses nearby and Ms. Smith noted that those uses are non-conforming and pre-dated the current zoning requirements.

Mr. Bartenhagen commented that the building would be a good addition to the neighborhood to replace a parking lot with housing. The historic character of the neighborhood is going to change, and the building's design complements the neighborhood, and he likes the affordability aspect as well. He asked for a clarification on a condition from City Staff. Michelle Smith responded to either leave as is or add "Incorporate wo shade trees between the building and sidewalk along Harrison Street."

Mr. Torkornoo had no comment.

Mr. Sacco was not able to comment because his computer died per City Staff.

Ms. Muharremi wondered where the door exit is located in the Providence Street area and if it was next to the elevators. She asked why it was not within the lobby. The applicant replied that the entry is still being developed and they are working through the programming of the lobby. If the request is that it be closer to the accessible parking space, it has potential to be there anyway.

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 of 51 Providence Street with amended conditions and the waivers as requested by the applicant.

13. 1 & 7 Renfrew Street (ZB-2026-060)

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

Variance: For relief from the minimum rear yard setback requirement for a single-family attached dwelling use in an BL-1.0 zone (Article IV, Section 4, Table 4.2)

Variance: For relief from the minimum side yard setback requirement for a single-family attached 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: Renfrew Street LLC

Present Use: Presently on the premises is a single-family attached dwelling with 3 units.

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

Petition Purpose: The applicant seeks to redraw the property lines between the parcels.

Exhibits: Exhibit A: Application; clerked 5/19/2026; prepared by Mark Borenstein, Attorney
Exhibit B: Survey; dated 4/17/2026; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc.
Exhibit C: Existing Conditions Plan; dated 5/15/2026; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc.
Exhibit D: Proposed Conditions Plan; dated 5/5/2026; prepared by Thompson-Liston Associates, Inc.

Public Hearing Deadline: 7/22/2026 Constructive Grant Deadline: 8/26/2026

THIS ITEM WAS TAKEN AT THE SAME TIME AS 680 GRAFTON STREET

AND VOTED SEPARATELY

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 of 7/9/11 Renfrew Street (Lot E) with conditions, recommendations, and waivers..

Other Business

14. Communications

15. Discussion of Board Policies and Procedures

Welcome to the board Angie!

Michelle Smith re-shared the Board's policies and timeframes for applications to be discussed at a future meeting. She explained the policy is six years old and was established in 2020. It outlines the policy with complete and incomplete applications, and also the revision policy. The revision policy is that the applicant has a 10-day calendar period where staff requires folks to submit revisions. If revisions aren't submitted in that period of time, staff won't commit to updating memos or comments. If comments make the 7-day deadline for board consideration, Staff tries to

send out their comments at the last minute, prioritizing things based on when they are received. There is also a policy about re-advertising and re-notice when things are continued for multiple meetings. If the applicant continues three different times or cycles, Planning will ask the applicant to provide that notification. The policy says that the Board does not allow more than one postponement before a hearing can be opened. Board practice is not to follow that rule as much.

Mr. Abramoff asked if the 10-day period works for staff. Ms. Smith responded that it's a tight deadline, but staff try to honor the reality of folks needing to provide revisions. Mr. Bartenhagen also asked staff to review the policies and let the Board know if there's one rule that could be changed, what it would be. Ms. Smith said she and City Planning would think about this.

Mr. Abramoff complimented City Planning on their great work and Michelle Smith promised to share that with City Planning staff.

16. Approval of Minutes 5/18/2026

Minutes were held until the next meeting.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Bartenhagen, seconded by Mr. Cortes, Board voted 4-0 to adjourn at 9:57pm