



The City of Worcester

Planning Board

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 16, 2026

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

Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Albert LaValley, Chair
Stephen Toomey
Brandon King (*Participated Remotely*)
Carlos Rosende, Alternate

Conor McCormack, Vice-Chair
Anthony Dell'Aera

Board Members Absent:

Staff Present:

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

Call to Order:

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

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

CONTINUANCES, POSTPONEMENTS, & WITHDRAWALS

Item 1: 6 Woburn Street (PB-2026-024) – Definitive Site Plan

Request to postpone the Public Hearing to October 7, 2026

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to October 29, 2026

Item 4: 256 & 262 Sunderland Road (PB-2026-065) – Definitive Site Plan

Request to postpone the Public Hearing to October 28, 2026

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to November 19, 2026

On a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 3-0 to grant the postponements.

New Business:

Item 7: 1 & 3 Suburban Road (PB-2026-073)

- a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan
- b. Public Hearing – More Than One Building on a Lot Plan

Chair LaValley announced this item would be taken first and provided a procedural overview of how the Board will handle this item. He asked the Board to authorize peer review for this development so that staff can send this out for peer review.

No comments from the Board.

Mr. LaValley made a motion for the peer review.

Pursuant to MGL Ch. 44, Section 53G and Article 2, Section 8.F. of the Planning Board's Rules & Regulations for Site Plan and Section 8, A. of the Planning Board's Subdivision Regulations, on motion by Mr. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 3-0 to require a peer review for the Definitive Site Plan and More Than One Building on a Lot applications for 1-3 Suburban Road due to the size, scale and complexity of the proposed project and potential related impacts for the following general scope of work:

Review of the proposed stormwater management system design and related O&M, existing and proposed site soil conditions and suitability for infiltration, as well as project development impacts on groundwater for compliance with all relevant laws, ordinances, and regulations including but not limited to Massachusetts Stormwater Standards and Handbook, the City of Worcester Zoning Ordinance, and the Planning Board's Rules & Regulations.

Mr. LaValley noted that public comments have been shared with the Board and the developer and announced public comments would be taken at a later meeting when the project was ready to move forward with its peer review.

Joshua Lee Smith, attorney on behalf of the applicant, stated they were anticipating providing a presentation then continuing with comments from the staff and Board to come later. He stated a lot of folks are present to have a hearing.

Mr. LaValley stated the Board's policy is to not allow items to move forward for a hearing until it is ready to proceed and asked when the project should be continued to.

Mr. Lee Smith stated they would request to continue to the October 28, 2026 meeting and explained why this request is reasonable.

Ms. Smith stated staff will work to develop a scope of work for the peer review and noted the November 18, 2026 meeting would be a more realistic date for continuance. She explained how the peer review timeline typically plays out.

Mr. Lee Smith stated he is hopeful the project will be ready to come before the Board by October 28th.

On a motion by Mr. LaValley, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 3-0 to continue the October 28, 2026 meeting of the Board.

Item 2: 114 Lincoln Street (PB-2026-049)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Donald O'Neil, attorney on behalf of the applicant, Tiffany Nguyen, gave an overview of the project to the Board. He stated the applicant seeks to construct a low-rise multi-family structure with 6 units and 9 parking spaces. He stated he is in agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

Steve Cary, DPRS, described the proposed site development to the board and its location. He described the relief granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals and the recommended conditions of approval.

Public Comment:

No comments.

Board Discussion:

The Board unanimously expressed support for the project.

On a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 3-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan for 114 Lincoln Street subject to staff recommended conditions of approval.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Definitive Site Plan Application; filed June 3, 2026; prepared by Donald J. O'Neil, Esq.
Exhibit B: Definitive Site Plan; revised 08/24/2026; prepared by Joe Graham.
Exhibit C: Architectural Drawings, undated; prepared by Joe Graham.

Item 3: 79 Pullman Street (PB-2026-062)

a. Public Meeting – Parking Plan

Patrick Doherty, engineer on behalf of the applicant, Lacy Topaz LLC, described the proposal to the Board and the area surrounding the site. He described the relief granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals Board. He stated the applicant seeks to construct a restaurant and drive-thru for a Taco Bell and described the site plan to the Board. Mr. Doherty discussed concerns with some of the staff recommended conditions including the ability to provide grasses in between the drive through and parking area and the ability to provide another interior tree. He also discussed the test pit that has been performed at this point and feels an additional test pit should not be required.

Michelle Smith, DPRS, described the proposal to the Board, noting the board has previously reviewed a similar proposal for a Chipotle restaurant in this location. Ms. Smith asked the applicant to summarize how the test pit complies with MA stormwater requirements. She stated the applicant needs to provide the interior tree unless the Board wishes to waive that requirement. Regarding the grasses, Ms. Smith described the intent of the condition and stated it's up to the Board if they feel this condition should remain.

Leslie Rodriguez, DPW, stated no comments.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Board Discussion:

Mr. LaValley asked the Board to comment on the conditions of concern raised by the applicant.

Mr. King raised concerns with folks driving through the buffer in the winter months and isn't opposed to requiring the grasses. He asked staff to clarify where the additional interior tree could be planted.

Ms. Smith described potential locations on site that may accommodate an additional interior tree.

Mr. King stated he is concerned with feasibility and would be fine without the extra interior tree.

Mr. Toomey agreed with Mr. King on the interior tree and noted ornamental grass would be nice in the strip but may be difficult to keep alive and suggested fencing the area in instead.

Mr. Rosende agreed fencing would be a feasible alternate to the grasses.

Mr. LaValley stated he feels there are an adequate number of trees on site and would be willing to grant the waiver.

Ms. Smith suggested revised language for condition 1c and condition 2 and noted condition 1b would be struck.

On a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 3-0 to approve the Parking Plan for 79 Pullman Street subject to staff recommended conditions of approval, as modified during the discussion.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Parking Plan (Accessory Parking Lot) Application; submitted 6/25/2026; prepared by Patrick Doherty, MidPoint Engineering & Consulting, LLC

Exhibit B: Site Plans; revised 8/19/2026; prepared by MidPoint Engineering & Consulting, LLC

Exhibit C: Survey; dated 7/10/2026; prepared by HS&T Group, Inc

Exhibit D: Stormwater Report; revised 4/16/2026; prepared by MidPoint Engineering & Consulting, LLC

Exhibit E: Traffic Impact Study; dated April 2026; prepared by AK Associates

Item 5: 104 Eastern Avenue (PB-2026-071)

a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Mark Borenstein, attorney on behalf of the applicant, described the proposal before the Board. He stated the applicant seeks to construct a three-family dwelling with 6 parking spaces on a site with slopes greater than 15%. He described the relief previously granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Steve Cary, DPRS, described the proposal before the Board and the building's orientation to the street. He also described the ZBA relief and how the building and site were designed to work with site conditions. He described the staff recommended conditions of approval.

Leslie Rodriguez, DPW, stated no comment.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Board Discussion:

The Board unanimously stated no comments.

On a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 3-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan for 104 Eastern Avenue subject to staff recommended conditions of approval.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Definitive Site Plan Application; filed August 5, 2026; prepared by Mark A. Borenstein
Exhibit B: Definitive Site Plan; revised July 31, 2026; prepared by Quinn Engineering, Inc.
Exhibit C: Architectural Drawings, dated October 1, 2025; prepared by Acropolis Design

Item 6: 69 Orient Street (PB-2026-072)

- a. a Public Hearing – Definitive “Frontage” Subdivision Plan

Michael Sowydra, attorney on behalf of the applicant, described the proposal to the board and the relief previously granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals. He stated the applicant ultimately seeks to construct a duplex on the newly created lots. He described the waivers sought from the Board.

Olivia Houle, DPRS, stated the applicant seeks Definitive “Frontage” Subdivision approval in order to allow the existing lot to be divided to create two additional lots. She stated the applicant seeks to construct a duplex on the newly created lots and advised the Board that the duplex will need to come back before the Board for Definitive Site Plan review due to the presence of slopes greater than 15%.

Leslie Rodriguez, DPW, stated no comments.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Board Discussion:

The Board unanimously stated no comments and expressed support.

On a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 3-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 3-0 to approve the Definitive “Frontage” Subdivision Plan for 69 Orient Street subject to staff recommended conditions of approval.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Definitive “Frontage” Subdivision Plan Application; filed 8/12/2026; prepared by Peter, Mitrakas, & LaForce, LLP
Exhibit B: Definitive “Frontage” Subdivision Plan; dated 8/12/2026; prepared by HS&T Group, Inc

Item 8: 114 Austin Street (PB-2026-074)

- a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Joshua Lee Smith, attorney on behalf of the applicant, described the proposal before the Board and noted it was previously approved by the Board but the approval expired. He noted the applicant does not propose any changes since the project was last approved. He described the proposal which is to construct a 5-unit townhouse and associated parking. He gave a history of the project, including a fire that destroyed a historic carriage house and noted they still intend to construct one of the units to replicate the old carriage house.

Michelle Smith, DPRS, stated the Board previously approved and amended this design and now the applicant seeks re-approval since it lapsed. She noted some minor changes since this was last in front of

the Board and described the staff recommended conditions of approval. She recommended adjusting condition 9 to include additional language “or lease agreements” after HOA.

Leslie Rodriguez, DPW, stated no comments.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Board Discussion:

The board expressed unanimous support.

Mr. LaValley asked the applicant to confirm they are amendable to the modified language suggested by Ms. Smith on condition 9.

Mr. Lee Smith confirmed that language is acceptable.

On a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 3-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan for 114 Austin Street subject to staff recommended conditions of approval, as modified during the discussion.

List of Exhibits:

- Exhibit A: Application; received 8/18/2026: prepared by Joshua Lee Smith, Bowdich & Dewey, LLP
- Exhibit B: Site Plan; dated 8/13/2026; prepared by J. M. Grenier Associates Inc. and MP Design Consultants
- Exhibit C: Survey; 8/3/2026; prepared PFS Land Surveying, Inc.
- Exhibit D: Stormwater Report; dated 8/13/2026; prepared by J.M Grener Associates, Inc.
- Exhibit E: Architectural Plans & Elevations; dated 7/1/2026; prepared by Dixon Salo Architects Inc.

Item 9: 216 & 221 Chandler Street (PB-2026-075)

- a. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan
- b. Public Hearing – Special Permit (IZ) for relief from minimum off-street parking and/or loading requirements, parking dimensional requirements, and landscaping requirements (Article VII, Section 6.A.ii)
- c. Public Hearing – Special Permit (CCOD) for relief the maximum number and/or dimensional requirements for off-street parking in the Commercial Corridors Overlay District (Article IX, Section 7.E.)

Joshua Lee Smith, attorney on behalf of the applicant, described the proposal before the Board. He noted the Board previously approved a similar proposal and described how it has changed since then. He confirmed the parking configuration at 221 Chandler Street will remain unchanged, which is an existing parking lot serving a variety of mixed uses, which also remains the same. He stated at 216 Chandler Street, the 6-story building footprint is slightly smaller, and they propose to decrease the commercial space and to increase the number of dwelling units from 21 to 28 units. He stated they do not propose any changes to the number of stories but the development now includes ground floor residential units.

Jesse Hildenberg, architect on behalf of the applicant, described changes to the building and highlighted the increase in glazing. He discussed the façade changes and materials proposed.

Olivia Houle, DPRS, stated the current proposal is similar to what the Board had approved in 2024. She confirmed the applicant seeks to construct a six-story mixed-use building with 28 residential units and 1,020 SF of commercial retail space. She noted the ground floor units that are now proposed require the building to be set back 5 FT from the property line, which the applicant has achieved by shrinking the building footprint. She described the parking proposed at 221 Chandler Street and the specific relief the applicant has applied for through the Special Permits. She described the recommended conditions of approval.

Leslie Rodriguez, DPW, stated no comments.

Public Comment:

Francesco Bivona, Worcester resident, expressed support for the proposed development and appreciated the ground level commercial space and reduction in parking.

Jeff Madison, Worcester resident, expressed concerns regarding the reduction of parking provided. While he appreciated the design of the building, he noted often times people have 2 or more cars and many local businesses use the parking lot at 221 Chandler Street. He also expressed concern with the increase in foot traffic for residents utilizing the parking lot across the street without a crossing signal and the staging of construction vehicles while the building is being constructed.

Board Discussion:

Mr. King expressed support for the project but noted he recalled a pedestrian beacon being discussed in the prior iteration.

Mr. Toomey noted the crosswalk in front of the building should provide a safe crossing if folks use it.

Mr. Rosende noted that the conditions of approval for the Inclusionary Zoning Special permit required a pedestrian beacon to be installed.

Mr. LaValley stated he appreciates the public comments and expressed support for the reduction in parking requirements. He also noted the applicant will be required to submit a construction management plan to minimize disruption on the street during construction.

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

On a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Special Permits for 216 & 221 Chandler Street subject to staff recommended conditions of approval.

On a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 3-0 to approve the Definitive Site Plan for 216 & 221 Chandler Street subject to staff recommended conditions of approval.

List of Exhibits:

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|------------|---|
| Exhibit A: | Definitive Site Plan Application; filed 8/13/2026; prepared by Bowditch & Dewey, LLP |
| Exhibit B: | Special Permit (IZ) Application; filed 8/13/2026; prepared by Bowditch & Dewey, LLP |
| Exhibit C: | Special Permit (CCOD) Application; filed 9/2/2026; prepared by Bowditch & Dewey, LLP |
| Exhibit D: | Site Plans; dated 8/13/2026, revised 8/21/2026; prepared by J.M. Grenier Associates, Inc. & MP Design Consultants |

- Exhibit E: Architectural Plans and Renderings; dated 8/17/2026; prepared by Dixon Salo Architects
- Exhibit F: Project Impact Statement; prepared by Bowditch & Dewey, LLP
- Exhibit G: CCOD Admin Parking Reduction Letter; dated 1/2/25; prepared by the Worcester Inspectional Services Department
- Exhibit H: Transportation Demand Management Plan; undated
- Exhibit I: Transportation Impact Assessment; dated 11/19/2024; prepared by Vanasse & Associates, Inc.
- Exhibit J: Stormwater Management Report; dated 8/21/2026; prepared by J.M. Grenier Associates Inc.

Other Business (Public Meeting)

Item 10: Approval Not Required (ANR) Plans

- a. AN-2026-034 – 240 Moreland Street (Public)
- b. AN-2026-036 – 52 Butler Street (Public & Private)
- c. AN-2026-044 – 129 Blackstone River Road (Public)
- d. AN-2026-047 - 26 Milton Street (Private)
- e. AN-2026-048 - 28 Chequesset Road (Private)

Stephen Cary, DPRS, described the ANR items a, d, & e to the Board.

On a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board voted 3-0 to endorse ANR plans 10 a, d, & e.

13. Communications

14. Board Policy and Procedures

16. Approval of Minutes – 6/3/2026; 6/24/2026; 7/15/2026; 8/5/2026; 8/26/2026

No discussion.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Toomey, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:56pm.