

Lowell Zoning Board of Appeals Minutes

July 24, 2023 at 6:30 P.M.

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For further detail, contact the Division of Development Services, 375 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA or refer to video recordings available online at www.LTC.org.

Members Present: Chairman Pech, Vice Chair Callahan, Member McCarthy, Member Briere, Member Procope, Member Hovey, Member Nickerson

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Francesca Cigliano, Senior Planner

The following represents the actions taken by the Zoning Board of Appeals at the 7/24/2023 meeting. This meeting was held in the City Council chambers. Attendees had the ability to participate via Zoom as permitted by Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, signed into law on July 16, 2022.

Chairman Pech called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

- I. Continued Business
- II. New Business

ZBA-2023-21

Petition Type: **Variances**

Applicant: **Renee Turcotte**

Property Located at: **79 New York Street 01850**

Applicable Zoning Bylaws: **Section 5.1**

Petition: **Renee Turcotte has applied to the Lowell Zoning Board of Appeals to construct an addition at 79 New York Street that would exceed the maximum allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The property is located in the Traditional Neighborhood Single Family (TSF) zoning district and requires a variance under Section 5.1 and for any other relief required under the Lowell Zoning Ordinance.**

On Behalf:

Ian Ainslie, Applicant's Engineer
Renee Turcotte, the Applicant

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

J. Nickerson said no questions.

T. Hovey said there was an opposition letter submitted late this afternoon. There is a hardship because the lot is smaller than others in the neighborhood. Other nearby properties are also 2 stories.

S. Callahan said looking at this home and the other ones he isn't sure if it fits in the neighborhood. Concerned about FAR seeking relief for.

D. McCarthy noted that the addition only goes vertical. Why do they need so much room on the second floor? 3 bedrooms plus a closet that could potentially be used as a bedroom.

R. Turcotte said that her son lives with her and roommate. Works from home. Needs dedicated office.

G. Procope said that he would support it. Hardship exists. Keeping landscape the way it is. Asked if they would add street trees.

R. Turcotte said yes but there is not a lot of space on either side of the building.

V. Pech added that the application has merit.

D. McCarthy said that there's a need for shade trees on the street. Thinks this should be included as a condition.

Motion:

D. McCarthy motioned to approve the application and G. Procope seconded the motion with the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall submit a revised site plan showing one added shade tree prior to applying for a building permit.

The motion passed unanimously, (5-0).

ZBA-2023-22

Petition Type: **Special Permit**

Applicant: **Jessica Kolakowski**

Property Located at: **900 Chelmsford Street 01852**

Applicable Zoning Bylaws: **Section 6.3**

Petition: **Sign Design Inc. Has applied to the Lowell Zoning Board of Appeals to install an internally illuminated wall sign at 900 Chelmsford Street. The property is located in the High Rise Commercial (HRC) zoning district and requires a Special Permit under Section 6.3 and for any other relief required under the Lowell Zoning Ordinance.**

On Behalf:

Marie Mercier, Applicant's Representative

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

T. Hovey asked about hours sign would be lit.

S. Callahan added this is straightforward. Businesses located far from street. Bringing attention to the availability of childcare services would be beneficial.

D. McCarthy asked if current sign was illuminated. MM said no. DM said this would be a vast improvement.

V. Pech said no comments or concerns.

Motion:

D. McCarthy motioned to approve the Special Permit with the condition that hours of operation for illumination is 1 hr before sunrise to 1 hr after closing or 8pm. The motion was seconded by George Procope and passed unanimously, (5-0).

ZBA-2023-23

Petition Type:

Applicant: **Donna Drakoulakos**

Property Located at: **20 Starbird Street 01854**

Applicable Zoning Bylaws: **Section 5.1; Section 6.1**

Petition: **Donna Drakoulakos has applied to the Lowell Zoning Board of Appeals seeking Variance approval to construct a new single-family home at 20 Starbird Street. The lot previously had a single-family home, but it has been demolished. The subject property is located in the Traditional Single-Family (TSF) zoning district. The project requires Variance approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals per Section 5.1 for relief from the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requirement, per Section 6.1 for relief from the maximum curb cut requirement, and any other relief required under the Lowell Zoning Ordinance.**

On Behalf:

Donna Drakoulakos, the Applicant

Bond Worthington, Applicant's Architect

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

S. Callahan asked about existing sheds. D. Drakoulakos said they would be removed.

D. McCarthy thinks that it is a great story, being able to stay in that location. Should do all we can to support it. Loves the house design. Great massing. Preserve look of previous house. Nods to existing structure but recognizes the need for covered parking. Nicely done. Lacking in the site plan. Need to condition approval on a few things. Updating the site plan for the curb cut. In addition, also need site plan updated for handicapped ramp. Like to see a shade tree provided along the street and added to the site plan. Adding one on the front left.

M. Briere stated this was easy, he supports the application.

J. Nickerson added that this project is a great idea. Working with neighbors is great.

T. Hovey said a gravel driveway is shown. B. Worthington said some kind of paving would be there, not completely designed yet.

D. McCarthy noted that the proposed driveway may not be dimensionally compliant. B. Worthington said it makes it possible for relatives to stay. D. McCarthy said an additional variance would be needed.

Motion:

D. McCarthy motioned to approve the application with the following conditions:

- 1) The site plan shall be revised to show:
 - a) Shade tree(s);
 - b) Remove shed;
 - c) Show handicapped ramp access to the sidewalk; and
 - d) Curb cut measurements .

The motion was seconded by S. Callahan and passed unanimously, (5-0).

III. Other Business

Minutes for Approval:

6/26/2023 meeting minutes

D. McCarthy motioned to APPROVE the meeting minutes from the 6/26 ZBA meeting. G. Procope seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, (5-0).

IV. Adjournment

D. McCarthy motioned and S. Callahan seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, (5-0).

The time was 7:37PM.