



CITY OF WATERTOWN
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
WATERTOWN ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
149 MAIN STREET
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Melissa M. SantucciRozzi, Chairperson
David Ferris, Clerk
Christopher H. Heep, Member
Alexander Dale, Member
Sarah Baker, Member
Gregory Girard, Alternate
Samuel Odamah, Alternate

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MINUTES

On Wednesday evening, October 22, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber of the Administration Building, the Zoning Board of Appeals held a public hearing. The meeting and public hearing were conducted in a 'hybrid' format with options for public participation both in-person and via remote means, in accordance with applicable law.

Members in attendance (In-person): Melissa M. SantucciRozzi, *Chair*; David Ferris, *Member*; Christopher H. Heep, *Member*; Alexander Dale, *Member*; Sarah Baker, *Member*; Samuel Odamah, *Alternate*.

Absent Members: Gregory Girard, *Member*.

Staff present (in-person): Matthew Neubacher, *Planner*; Gideon Schreiber, *Director of Planning and Zoning*; Antonio Mancini, *Zoning Enforcement Officer*; Hannah Jury, *Administrative Specialist – Zoning*.

Chair Melissa M. SantucciRozzi opened the meeting. She introduced staff, noted the members in attendance, and reviewed the agenda.

Administrative Business:

The motion to approve the September 24, 2025 meeting minutes was made by Member Ferris, seconded by Member Dale. The motion was approved 4-0-2 with Members Ferris, Dale, Baker and Alternate Member Odamah voting in favor. Chair SantucciRozzi and Member Heep abstained.

Cases:

57 Pequossette St

Member Ferris read the legal notice. Project Architect Tom Timko, of Copper Beech Designs introduced himself, Jennifer Chung-Clark as the owner of 57 Pequossette St, and her daughter.

Architect Timko provided a background of the property and described the renovation as unique and difficult. He also noted that he started working on the project once construction had already started. The garage was discovered as unstable and unfit for occupation and must be replaced. He explained the

Historical Commission's ruling to renovate the house on the condition that the craftsman style façade was maintained. After the determination, the front face of the stucco façade collapsed. Timko reviewed intentions of the renovation project: restore traditional shingle-style façade, expand garage for safety and modern functionality, provide additional living space in a first-floor addition, and bring front portions of the garage/new addition into compliance with setbacks, driveway, and parking.

Member Odamah asked whether other challenges may be anticipated in the project. Mr. Timko responded that most challenges seem to have passed; the renovation has clear plans forward to meet building code requirements.

Member Dale clarified whether the driveway piece on the left side of the lot will be removed to which Mr. Timko responded that it will, and a 4' buffer would be created to replace the area with vegetation. Mr. Timko also clarified that there will be room for one car inside the garage and one on the driveway. Member Dale appreciated the rationale and increasing conformity of the front of the property.

Member Heep verified that only the left side yard setback is increasing in its nonconformity.

Member Ferris referenced the driveway on the left side of the lot, labeled bituminous concrete, and confirmed with Mr. Timko the width of the new driveway, the removal and adjustment of retaining walls, and that a small portion will be paved for the storage of trash barrels.

Member Ferris asked about exterior details of the house. He first clarified that the statement to retain arch windows as ruled by the Historic District Commission is no longer applicable. Mr. Timko confirmed that shingle siding around the garage and roof shingles of the addition will match the house.

Member Baker inquired about the plans prior to the collapse of the porch façade, and Mr. Timko discussed that the previous Architect's plans left the garage largely untouched besides cleaning up the front and resurfacing the roof patio above the garage. Member Baker was surprised that the structural issues were not identified in the 2017 inspections and sale of the house. Mr. Timko explained how the cantilevered addition over the garage expands living space, provides protection and downlighting function on the driveway, and visually decenters the garage to emphasize the house. Member Baker noted the extenuating circumstances, but that it is difficult to approve requests for changes during an active construction process.

Chair SantucciRozzi confirmed with Staff that the finding is not for the reconstruction of the façade, but the construction and changing size of the garage. Mr. Timko clarified that the structure of the garage itself did not fail, but the sheathing. Mr. Timko and Staff clarified with Chair SantucciRozzi the setbacks for cantilevered overhang and the garage.

Member Ferris raised questions for Staff regarding a lack of clarity in side elevation plans, the location of the second story dormer on the plot plan, and inconsistencies between the dimensional chart and the proposed plot plan. Chair SantucciRozzi clarified the location of the building envelope on the plot plan. Members of the Board discussed issues in the application causing confusion between previous and proposed plans, and whether the relief required is for only the garage, or also the house.

Chair SantucciRozzi asked when the collapse occurred and invited the homeowner to the podium. Mr. Timko estimated the collapse happened just before the application was filed with Planning and Zoning Staff. Staff clarified the previous and proposed front setbacks for the second story addition, first floor

corner of the house, the garage, and cantilevered first floor addition above the garage, which all conform. Member Ferris raised concerns about details on a proposed plot plan inaccurately depicting the front of previous garage and house as flush, to the number and variety of lines drawn on the plot plan, and the proposed dimension of 13.1', which should be 22'. Staff corroborated with Member Ferris that the second story of the house is within the 15' setback, explaining that in the original application the previous architect intended to extend the front of the house to the roofline, but were advised to pull it back to the conforming setback.

Chair SantucciRozzi invited public comment, and Mr. Timko stated that a neighbor had expressed support for the change.

Chair SantucciRozzi recapped the hearing: Proposed garage and first-floor addition with an overhang over the garage with conforming front setbacks; proposed alterations within the existing nonconforming side yard, from 9.6' to 7.5'. Staff clarified that the Board is providing relief only for the side yard setback for the garage and first-floor addition; the front setback was referenced in the project description because the initial application proposed a nonconforming detail but was altered to conform for parking.

Member Ferris motioned, and Member Heep seconded a motion to approve the request for a special permit finding to allow construction within non-conforming side yard setback for a second-floor addition and expanded garage. Motion was approved unanimously 6-0.

Executive Session:

Chair SantucciRozzi read the executive session agenda item as follows:

Executive session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy relating to pending litigation known as First Path, Inc., et al. v. Watertown Zoning Board of Appeals, Massachusetts Land Court, Case Nos. 23 MISC. 000619 and 25 MISC 000087, and The University Prints Building, LLC, et al. v. City of Watertown Zoning Board of Appeals, Massachusetts Land Court, Case No. 25 MISC 000265, all concerning 9-11-13 Boyd Street, if the Chair declares that discussing these matters in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Zoning Board of Appeals. A vote regarding whether to go into executive session is expected; and votes may occur during the executive session.

Member Ferris motioned, and Member Dale seconded to approve of entering the executive session. A roll call vote was held, and the motion passed 4-0-2, with Members Ferris, Baker, Dale, and Alternate Member Odamah voting in favor. Chair SantucciRozzi and Member Heep abstained from the vote and recused themselves from the executive session.

MINUTES APPROVED:-----