



CITY OF WATERTOWN
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
PARKER BUILDING, 124 WATERTOWN ST.
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

Telephone (617) 972-6427
www.watertown-ma.gov

MINUTES

On Wednesday evening, January 28, 2026, 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 Present: Melissa M. SantucciRozzi, *Chair*, David Ferris, *Member*; Christopher H. Heep, *Member*; Alexander Dale, *Member*; Sarah Baker, *Member*.

Members Absent: Gregory Girard, *Alternate*; Samuel Odamah, *Alternate*.

Staff Present: Gideon Schreiber, *Director of Planning and Zoning*; Matthew Neubacher, *Planner*; Hannah Jury, *Administrative Specialist – Zoning*.

Present Remote: Antonio Mancini, *Zoning Enforcement Officer*

Chair Melissa M. SantucciRozzi opened the meeting at approximately 7:00pm. She introduced staff, noted the members in attendance, and reviewed the agenda.

Approval of December 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The motion to approve the December 17, 2025 meeting minutes was made by Member Ferris and seconded by Member Heep. The motion was approved 5-0 with Member(s) Ferris, Dale, Baker, Heep, and Chair SantucciRozzi voting in favor.

72 Mt Auburn St

Chair SantucciRozzi noted the agenda item for 72 Mt Auburn St. Member Heep motioned, and Member Dale seconded, to approve the request to continue the hearing for 72 Mt Auburn to the February 25th, 2026 ZBA Meeting, pending Planning Board recommendation scheduled for February 11th. The motion passed 5-0 with Member(s) Heep, Dale, Ferris, Baker and Chair SantucciRozzi voting in favor.

188 Palfrey St

Member Heep motioned, and Member Dale seconded to open the public hearing for 188 Palfrey St following partial public notification. Member Heep motioned, and Member Dale seconded the motion to approve the request for withdrawal without prejudice of Special Permit Finding request by the owner of 188 Palfrey St. The motion passed 5-0 with Member(s) Heep, Dale, Ferris, Baker and Chair SantucciRozzi voting in favor.

108 California St

The Hearing was opened and Member Ferris read the legal notice for the request for Special Permit Finding to allow construction of a 1.5 story vertical addition within nonconforming side yard setbacks and

distance between structures, and reconstruction of front porch roof within front yard setback. Project Architect, Patricia Welbourn introduced the proposed project and reviewed plans. The proposal is linked to another request at 108 California St for Site Plan Review by the Planning Board to approve the use of an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).

Chair SantucciRozzi clarified with Staff how area is calculated for ADUs, that the allowed maximum is derived from either 50% of the proposed total floor area or 900 square feet (SF), whichever is less. Staff noted that the Zoning Board of Appeals is not responsible for approving the size of the ADU, rather they review exterior changes that require zoning relief. Member Heep asked Staff why the project was not proposed as construction of a two-family residence, to which Staff stated this is not allowed due to the undersized lot size.

Member Baker referenced the western elevation, requesting clarification on details of arrows in a window, noting that this façade has high traffic and is highly visible from the street, and the windows do not promote an aesthetic balance.

Member Baker clarified that her confusion is not in location of windows, but the combination of new and old windows of the proposed plans raises concerns in aesthetic and visual inconsistency. Architect Welbourn stated that she understands and will revisit the design of the façade. Member Baker raised a similar concern for the back elevation, and Architect Welbourn clarified that the existing shed will cover this view. Member Baker suggested the chain-link fence on the front of the property be upgraded and plantings be introduced to the interior of the lot facing Stop and Shop.

Member Dale asked about the heating and cooling system in the house, and raised concerns regarding size of the addition, snow accumulation, and drainage for the proposed deck. Architect Welbourn stated that they have not discussed heating and cooling, and the structural engineer will ensure proper drainage. She noted they would consider reducing the size of the roof deck.

Member Ferris asked about existing and proposed siding, to which Architect Welbourn stated they intend to replace all siding with wood. She clarified for Member Ferris that the orange color on the plans indicates new construction, and they are not positive on whether all windows will be replaced. Upon being prompted for a definitive answer, she stated all windows will be replaced. Member Ferris highlighted inconsistencies and missing details in the plans, concerning trim, continuity of siding, and continuity of windows, stating that the Board must have an understanding on how the proposed project will look, which the drawings do not provide. Member Ferris noted the peculiarity of the interior layout, that the ADU does not have access to the basement and that residents of the primary unit must travel down to the basement and back up to exit the house. Staff noted they suggested creating a door and common hallway to create a more logical layout. Member Ferris concluded that plans would benefit from additional details and improvements for consistency and clarity.

Chair SantucciRozzi clarified that the entire basement is only accessible to the primary unit, and clarified the meaning of “not in contract” in the basement floor plan. Chair SantucciRozzi echoed Member Ferris’ comments, especially the unusual means of egress through the basement. Chair SantucciRozzi suggested considering adding a door to the deck. Architect Welbourn clarified plans for the third floor, to have a bathroom, bedroom, and deck, which was not labeled. Chair SantucciRozzi noted that the size of the structure will increase from 1400 SF to 3200 SF, and asked Staff to research if the shed was constructed with a building permit. Staff determined that the shed is greater than 10 years old based on aerial imagery and permitting history.

Member Ferris noted further inconsistencies between drawings and images of the property and requested further detail in depicting the vertical offset in the rear. Chair SantucciRozzi clarified with Staff that the ADU requires no parking spaces.

Chair SantucciRozzi stated that the degree of nonconformities in side setbacks, lot size, building coverage, and size of the structure warrants revised drawings for clarity. Two letters of support from abutters were documented and no public comments were heard.

Member Heep motioned, and Member Dale seconded the motion to continue the hearing to February 25, 2026. The motion was approved 5-0 with Member(s) Ferris, Dale, Baker, Heep, and Chair SantucciRozzi voting in favor.

Chair SantucciRozzi recognized Member Heep to Chair the February meeting in her absence. Member Heep motioned, and Member Dale seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was approved 5-0 with Member(s) Ferris, Dale, Baker, Heep, and Chair SantucciRozzi voting in favor. The meeting closed at approximately 7:53 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED:-----