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

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MINUTES

PRESENT, REMOTE:

MEMBERS- Christopher H. Heep, *Acting Chair;* David Ferris*;* Alexander Dale*;* Gregory Girard, *Alternate Member*, Samuel Odamah, *Alternate Member.*

STAFF- Gideon Schreiber, *Director of Planning and Zoning*; Antonio Mancini, *Zoning Enforcement Officer,* Matthew Neubacher, *Planner;* Hannah Jury, *Administrative Specialist – Zoning*

ABSENT:

MEMBERS- Melissa M. SantucciRozzi, *Chair,* Sarah Baker, *Member*.

On Wednesday evening, June 24, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., the Zoning Board of Appeals held a remote meeting conducted via Zoom, in accordance with applicable law.

Acting Chair Heep opened the meeting at approximately 7:03 p.m. He introduced staff, noted the members in attendance, and reviewed the agenda. Member Ferris stated his recusal for the presentation following the modified site plan for 550 Arsenal St, and Acting Chair Heep confirmed members in attendance will still constitute a quorum.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. APPROVAL OF APRIL MINUTES

DISCUSSION

Acting Chair Heep recognized the four voting members in attendance of the remote meeting, including Alternate Member Girard. Alternate Member Odamah joined after Board approval of the minutes, at approximately 7:10pm.

VOTE

The motion to approve the May 27, 2026, meeting minutes was made by Member Ferris and seconded by Alternate Member Girard. The motion was approved 4-0 in a roll call vote with Member(s) Ferris, Dale, Alternate Member Girard, and Acting Chair Heep voting in favor.

B. BOARD REVIEW OF RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

DISCUSSION

Alternate Member Girard clarified the role of alternate members when the Board is the Permit Granting Authority (PGA). Staff clarified that "regular business" (e.g., approval of meeting minutes) always permits participation from alternate members, but for public hearing cases in which the Board decides on permits, alternate members may participate but shall only vote when designated by the Chair in case of absence or abstention by a full member. Staff clarified when public comments submitted to Planning and Zoning will be read during public hearings in meetings of the Board. Member Girard continued with suggestions for corrections and clarity.

Acting Chair Heep and Staff discussed clarifying that three members are sufficient to open a public meeting and conduct regular business, which is distinct from a quorum required for a public hearing.

VOTE

Member Ferris motioned, and Member Dale seconded to approve the Rules of Practice of Procedure with revisions as discussed. The motion passed 5-0 with Acting Chair Heep, Member(s) Ferris and Dale, and Alternate Member(s) Odamah and Girard voting in favor via roll call vote.

Acting Chair Heep suggested postponing the vote on the Board Nomination and Consideration of Officers until Chair SantucciRozzi is in attendance.

C. 550 ARSENAL ST

Acting Chair Heep introduced the next agenda item, the presentation by National Development of a modified site plan following the Board's approval of PZ-26-7 on April 22, 2026. Member Ferris recused himself from the presentation.

PRESENTATION

Nick O'Connor, Project Manager with National Development, introduced Rich Holworth, Project Engineer, of VHB and reviewed the previous approval which conditioned improved landscaping, pedestrian safety, and circulation. Project Manager O'Connor reviewed the plans received by the Board and emphasized the two main areas changes were made. The modifications included expanded frontage in front of the Junior Anchor, addition of a shaded landscape island, and more central positioning of the painted crosswalk. Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines was ensured for all changes. The project outlined updated made south of Best Buy, including a stone dust pathway, rain garden, plantings, a historical plaque, and crosswalks. Changes to the rear included additional bike racks.

BOARD INQUIRY

MEMBER DALE – Stated appreciation for the effort put towards the changes, especially the improvements of additional bike parking and pedestrian landscape changes in front of the Junior Anchor. Member Dale confirmed location of a bench and locations of the remaining 24 bicycle parking spaces. Rich Holworth of VHB specified the locations of bicycle racks.

ALTERNATE MEMBER ODAMAH – Inquired about whether the project team is satisfied with the outcome and if there is cohesion of design choices connecting the two newly landscaped areas (between south of Best Buy and the Junior Anchor), to which the applicant responded the area directly in front of Best Buy was not the focus of the improvements, but emphasizing distinct improvements to the two areas.

ALTERNATE MEMBER GIRARD – Clarified the rear bicycle racks are intended for employees and expressed concerns with the lack of connection between the two areas. He explained that the improvements south of Best Buy may be insignificant and superficial due to their isolation.

Staff reiterated this presentation of minor updates takes place after the Board approval of April 22nd. The scope of the decision was limited to an approval of an amendment to remove a condition that mandated interior access between Target and the mall. While the project included minor modifications to control plans, the discussion following the presentation in this meeting is not within the context of a public hearing, nor may Board members request further modifications to decisions or control plans.

No public comment was heard as this presentation for updates on a previously approved decision did not occur during a public hearing. Member Dale motioned, and Alternate Member Odamah seconded, to accept the updated site plan, with Member Dale, Acting Chair Heep, and Alternate Member(s) Odamah and Girard voting in favor.

The Chair invited a motion to adjourn the public meeting. Member Dale motioned, and Alternate Member Girard seconded to adjourn. The motion passed 4-0 with Member Dale, Acting Chair Heep, and Alternate Member(s) Odamah and Girard voting in favor.

MINUTES APPROVED:--