

# City of New Bedford Department of City Planning

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MAYOR JON MITCHELL

# **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

# ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS VIRTUAL MEETING Thursday, November 12, 2020

#### **MINUTES**

PRESENT:

Laura Parrish, (Chairperson)

Celeste Paleologos, (Vice Chairperson)

Stephen Brown, (Clerk)

Allen Decker Leo Choquette

ABSENT:

**Robert Schilling** 

STAFF:

Angela Goncalves, Assistant Project Manager

Danny Romanowicz, Commissioner of Buildings, and Inspectional Services

Ms. Goncalves gave introductory COVID comments and called the role. She confirmed this evening's applicants/anticipated speakers and provided participants with remote meeting guidelines and protocols. She noted that all this evening's case materials are available for review and she gave the online information for the same.

# 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Parrish called the meeting of the City of New Bedford Zoning Board to order at 6:06 p.m. Chairperson Parrish then explained the meeting process and protocols.

## 2. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

# <u>ITEM 1 - CASE #4427</u>

A motion was made (SB) and seconded (CP) to receive and place on file communication from the Commissioner of Building and Inspectional Services dated 9/30/20, staff comments from the Office of City Planning dated 10/5/20; letter in support of the proposal from Rev. David Lima dated 10/8/20; letter in support of the proposal from Rene Clark, Southcoast Health, dated 10/8/20; letter in support of the proposal from Police Chief, Joseph Cordeiro dated 10/13/20; letter in opposition of the proposal from Maria Silva, Interstate Equipment Rental, dated 10/10/20; the appeal package as submitted; the plan as submitted; and, that the owners of the lots as indicated are the ones deemed by this board to be the lots affected; and the action of the clerk in giving notice of the hearing as stated be and hereby is ratified.

Note: These are minutes only. A complete copy of the meeting audio is available on the City of New Bedford website at: http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/cable-access/government-access-channel-18/program-schedule/ Motion passed unopposed.

Att. Sean Hurley, 432 County Street, New Bedford, on behalf of petitioner Child & Family Services provided details of the organization which is under agreement to buy the subject property. He then spoke on the goals of the project to consolidate their current locations. Att. Hurley then gave details on the property and its history. He then provided a description of programs to be housed out of the facility, noting the three 24-hour p/day programs.

Att. Hurley spoke on the required findings, including traffic flow and safety, adequacy of utilities, et cetera. He again spoke on the nature of the community services provided by the organization.

Chairperson Parrish offered an additional letter in opposition from the file, from Rebekah Bedard, dated 11/10/20. A motion was made (SB) and seconded (CP) to receive and place the same on file. There was no opposition.

In response to Chairperson Parrish's invitation to speak or be recorded in favor, Rev. David Lima, 26 Joseph's Way, Executive Minister of the Inter-Church Council and part of an opioid task force operating with the police, addressed the board, et cetera. He stated he has worked for years with Child & Family and they are an invaluable service. He commented on their current offices which he believes is an asset to the neighborhood. Rev. David Lima voiced his support.

There was no response to Chairperson Parrish's further invitation to speak or be recorded in favor.

In response to Chairperson Parrish's invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition, Mrs. Kirsten Benderson of Reidar's Manufacturing stated she feels it is a great organization, but voiced concerns about traffic, noise and activity in the area. She stated that after speaking to other area businesses, they too feel the same.

In response to Chairperson Parrish's further invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition, Att. John Markey stated he wanted to speak more to what Mrs. Benderson has said rather than speak in opposition. He stated he represents Interstate Equipment Rental, and stated on behalf of the owners, with sensitivity to the work done by the organization that they believe is important, that they too express the same traffic, safety, and noise concerns. Att. Markey wanted to note that this is an industrial area in which there are ongoing businesses. He stated that in the future their business should not be restricted from making noise or having trucks coming in and out if a highly intensive family-type-use is used in that area. He is not saying it can't be done or that they're in opposition to the concept, but believe a special sensitivity needs to be brought to bear in order to do it right and well. He called upon his clients, Maria or Jack Silva to speak if presented.

Maria Silva, 1259 Chaffee Street, stated her attorney, Mr. Markey, has voiced her main concerns, the noise, the welfare of the kids and everything he said.

In response to Chairperson Parrish's further invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition, Councilor Linda Morad stated while she is not necessarily opposed to the project as presented. She noted Child & Family Services as a great city organization and commented favorably on their north end administrative offices where she noted traffic volume. She stated her concerns, as a taxpayer representative, about the statements made regarding financial hardship to the city

related to this large piece of commercial property abutting the rail coming off the commercial tax rolls. Councilor Morad acknowledged the rights of the parties to buy and sell. She related business owners' concerns as related to traffic. She referenced a requirement that Dutton Street be discontinued in order for the project to work before the planning board. She noted that would be in the city council's jurisdiction. She suggested conditions be imposed. Councilor Morad stated she just wanted her concerns on the record.

In response to Chairperson Parrish's further invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition, Rod McCollester, owner of R & W Rope. He echoed the concerns raised. He too acknowledged the value and work of the organization but felt concern as to how his and other business activities and noise may affect their work and wellbeing. He echoed concern about the placement of such an organization in the middle of industrial activity and its impacts, especially as it relates to any restrictions and complaints against Mr. McCollester's business activity and any consequences down the road. He again stated he echoes the same concerns raised by his neighbors.

In response to Chairperson Parrish's further invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition Nancy Mendez, 160 Tarklin Place, a neighborhood resident, expressed concern over the fact that there are many young children in the neighborhood. She noted an outdoor activity center on the plans. She also expressed concerns about the traffic, noting 100 employees. Mrs. Mendez expressed concern for emergency vehicles. She stated she does not feel the area is appropriate.

In response to Chairperson Parrish's further invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition Dave Rodrigues, abutter Business JAZ USA, stated while this is a very noble entity, he echoes the concerns of his fellow business owners. He listed early morning/late day tractor trailer traffic, cars leaving onto Church Street. He too noted concern about any future restriction on this industrial area.

Att. John Markey stated he wished to have noted the comments from four different industrial business employers and taxpayers. He cited a pig farm case where the farm was shut down and expressed their similar concern. Att. Markey just wants the applicant to have their eyes wide open. He invited dialogue with the applicant which he wanted noted.

Board Member Brown spoke on his function to draft the motion, bearing in mind this evening's concerns expressed, and proposed the following language related to the conditions, such as appearing before the planning board, and "let the record reflect at least four neighboring businesses, second that 1259 Chafee Street conducts business that involves loud machinery and trucks, and that the applicants are voluntarily coming to this environment." Board Member Brown stated that addressed their coming to the nuisance.

In response to Chairperson Parrish's further invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition Councilor Brad Markey stated that while not being able to add to what has been said, the calls he received were from business owners where their biggest concern was any future repercussions to their conducting their business.

In response to Chairperson Parrish's further invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition John Lima, neighboring business owner, stated he is opposed to the project. He felt the project should be closer to city medical facilities. He too noted traffic safety concerns. He spoke on business

hours as related to the residential neighborhood. He spoke on the history of the proposed building, area bus service, and litter. He again expressed his opposition.

In response to Chairperson Parrish's further invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition Carla Silva, owner Excel Brazilian Jujitsu, stated she shares Mr. Lima's and other's concerns, mostly about the traffic, which she thinks will be horrendous. She also commented on concerns expressed about the mental health of the children.

There was no response to Chairperson Parrish's further invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition.

By way of petitioner's response, Att. Hurley addressed Councilor Morad's comments regarding the order in which things were done and the possible tax consequences. He spoke on the overwhelming area noise concerns and stated he has already spoke with Att. Markey and the plans have been amended to add additional soundproofing. He noted the traffic/noise area where current services are. He spoke on the paper street plans. He spoke on emergency vehicle traffic/med transports. Att. Hurley then explained the extended hours of use, noting employees will be there between 7:00-7:00, with some 30 employees and patients present overnight. He commented that the services of this "medical facility" are mental health counseling services. He spoke on medical facility zoning requirements.

Jim Mazur, Child & Family Service, spoke about on-site clients.

Greg Siroonian, architect, spoke on the building design. He noted that under the building code this will fall under a business use.

Chairperson Parrish offered a representative of those in opposition the opportunity to speak in rebuttal.

Att. Markey commented briefly and affirmed Att. Hurley's representation that the neighbor concerns are being addressed.

With regard to an inquiry on traffic flow, Chairperson consulted with Commissioner Romanowicz who noted an expected traffic increase with 100 employees entering and exiting the facility, absent a present traffic report.

Att. Markey inquired as to whether Commissioner Romanowicz could request a traffic study be done. Chairperson Parrish confirmed with Commissioner Romanowicz that that could be added as a condition to the special permit.

Carla Silva added comments on the larger noise level at this property.

Board Member Paleologos supported a traffic study but voiced no other concerns.

Att. Hurley stated his client is acutely aware of where they are moving, as well as the nature of the neighborhood.

Board Member Choquette, with regard to noise, confirmed that the commuter rail will be abutting the property.

There were unidentified public comments on the trains and noise from the low planes.

David Rodrigues, JAZ USA stated he feels a traffic study should be done prior to approval. He raised a concern that New Bedford has limited industrial area for businesses.

Chairperson Parrish declared the hearing closed. There was consultation with Board Member Brown on the condition for a motion with regard to a traffic study.

After board discussion, a motion was made (SB) and seconded (CP) to grant a special permit under provisions of the City Code of New Bedford relative to property located at 947 & 965 Church Street, Assessors' map 130G lot 50,65,72 in an Industrial A [IA] zoned district, to allow the petitioner change the use of buildings from retail commercial to medical commercial to operate a medical office facility known as Child and Family Services per plans filed, which requires a special permit under Chapter 9, Comprehensive Zoning Sections 2200, 2210, 2230 Appendix A, and 5300-5390. In accordance with the City of New Bedford Code of Ordinances Chapter 9, Section 5320, the benefit to the city and the neighborhood outweighs the adverse effect of the proposed use, taking into account the characteristics of the site and of the proposal in relation to that site. Including consideration of the following: social, economic and community needs which are served by the proposal, traffic flow and safety, including parking and loading, adequacy of utilities and other public services, neighborhood character and social structure, and impact on the natural environments. With the following specific conditions:

- The work described herein requires approval of a site plan by the City of New Bedford Planning Board, pursuant to Section 5400 of the Zoning Ordinance. Any conditions imposed in such site plan approval shall also be conditions of this special permit.
- A traffic study is required as a component of the planning board application
- The record shall reflect that at least four neighboring businesses, such as those located at 1259 Chafee Street, conduct businesses that involve loud machinery, heavy trucks at regular hours, and that the applicants are voluntarily "coming to" this environment.

The following general conditions also apply: that the project be set forth according to the plans submitted with the application; that the applicant shall ensure a copy of the Notice of Decision bearing certification from the City Clerk's Office be recorded at the Registry of Deeds; and that the rights authorized by the granting of the special permit must be exercised by issuance of a building permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted or they will lapse.

# **ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Chairperson Parrish - Yes Board Member Brown - Yes Board Member Choquette - Yes Motion passed 5-0 Board Member Paleologos - Yes Board Member Decker - Yes

# ITEM 2 - CASES #4428/#4429

A motion was made (SB) and seconded (AD) to hold the public hearings concurrently.

Note: These are minutes only. A complete copy of the meeting audio is available on the City of New Bedford website at: http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/cable-access/government-access-channel-18/program-schedule/

# Motion passed unopposed.

A motion was made (SB) and seconded (AD) to receive and place on file communication from the Commissioner of Building and Inspectional Services dated 10/30/20, staff comments from the Office of City Planning dated 11/3/20; the appeal package as submitted; the plan as submitted; and, that the owners of the lots as indicated are the ones deemed by this board to be the lots affected; and the action of the clerk in giving notice of the hearing as stated be and hereby is ratified.

### Motion passed unopposed.

Nicholas Leing, Grady Consulting, explained the project details and history, noting the separation into two parcels under an 81L Plan. He stated they seek to reconfigure the shared property lines between the properties, following a present fence line and allowing for parking areas to service both properties. He detailed current conditions. He noted the planning board request for stone as opposed to asphalt. He invited questions.

In response to Board Member Brown, Mr. Leing stated the properties are in common ownership. Board Member Brown expressed concern about the pork chop lot and any affect the change will make to emergency vehicle access. Mr. Leing stated access should be enhanced and described the same, noting the addition of off-street parking.

There was no response to Chairperson Parrish's invitation to speak or be recorded in favor or opposition.

The hearing was declared closed.

After brief board discussion, including consultation with Commissioner Romanowicz and questions for Mr. Leing, a motion was made (SB) and seconded (CP) with regard to Case #4428, to grant a variance under provisions of the City Code of New Bedford relative to property located at 130 Summer Street, Assessors' map 58 lot 150,151,477 in a Residential B [RB] zoned district, to allow the petitioner to modify a shared lot line between two non-conforming lots to create space for off street parking on the lot which its intended to serve per plans filed, which requires a variance under provisions of Chapter 9, Comprehensive Zoning Sections 2700, 2710, 2720 - Appendix B, 2750, 2751, 2753 and 2755.

Having reviewed this petition, including materials submitted and testimony heard, in accordance with the City of New Bedford Code of Ordinances and M.G.L. Chapter 40A, §10, the board finds that the applicable requirements have been addressed and met. This determination includes consideration of the following:

The board finds there are circumstances related to the soil conditions, shape or topography specifically effecting the land or structure in question, but which do not generally affect the zoning district in which the land or structure is located. In this instance, circumstances are that the existing shape of the lot restrict ability to provide off-street parking. Due to those circumstances especially effecting the land or structure, literal enforcement of the provisions of the zoning ordinance or bylaw would involve substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, to the petitioner or appellant. In this case, the hardship is the enforcement would inhabit potential to provide off-

street parking for either lot. The desirable relief may be granted without nullifying or substantially derogating from the intent or purpose of the zoning ordinance or bylaw. The desirable relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good. With the following specific conditions:

This proposal requires site plan review and special permit by the planning board, and any
conditions imposed by the planning board shall be conditions of this variance.

The following general conditions apply: that the project be set forth according to the plans submitted with the application; that the applicant shall ensure a copy of the Notice of Decision bearing certification from the City Clerk's Office be recorded at the Registry of Deeds; and that the rights authorized by the granting of the special permit must be exercised by issuance of a building permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted or they will lapse.

#### **ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Board Member Parrish - Yes Board Member Brown - Yes Board Member Paleologos - Yes Board Member Decker - Yes

**Board Member Choquette - Yes** 

Motion passed 5-0

A motion was made (SB) and seconded (CP) with regard to Case #44-29, to grant a variance under provisions of the City Code of New Bedford relative to property located at 130 ½ Summer Street, Assessors' map 58 lot 150,151,477 546 in a Residential B [RB] zoned district, to allow the petitioner to modify a shared lot line between two non-conforming lots to create space for off street parking on the lot which its intended to serve per plans filed, which requires a variance under provisions of Chapter 9, Comprehensive Zoning Sections 2700, 2710, 2720- Appendix B, 2750, 2753 and 2755.

Having reviewed this petition, including materials submitted and testimony heard, in accordance with the City of New Bedford Code of Ordinances and M.G.L. Chapter 40A, §10, the board finds that the applicable requirements have been addressed and met. This determination includes consideration of the following:

The board finds there are circumstances related to the soil conditions, shape or topography specifically effecting the land or structure in question, but which do not generally affect the zoning district in which the land or structure is located. In this instance, circumstances are that the existing shape of the lot restricts ability to provide off-street parking. Due to those circumstances especially effecting the land or structure, literal enforcement of the provisions of the zoning ordinance or bylaw would involve substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, to the petitioner or appellant. In this case, the hardship is the enforcement would inhibit petitioner from providing off-street parking for either lot. The desirable relief may be granted without nullifying or substantially derogating from the intent or purpose of the zoning ordinance or bylaw. The desirable relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good. With the following specific conditions:

This proposal requires site plan review and special permit by the planning board, and any
conditions imposed by the planning board shall be conditions of this variance.

The following general conditions apply: that the project be set forth according to the plans submitted with the application; that the applicant shall ensure a copy of the Notice of Decision bearing certification from the City Clerk's Office be recorded at the Registry of Deeds; and that the rights authorized by the granting of the special permit must be exercised by issuance of a building permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted or they will lapse.

#### **ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Board Member Parrish -Yes Board Member Brown - Yes

Board Member Paleologos - Yes Board Member Decker - Yes

Board Member Choquette - Yes

Motion passed 5-0

# <u>ITEM 3 – CASE #4430:</u>

A motion was made (SB) and seconded (AD) to receive and place on file the communication from the Commissioner of Buildings and Inspectional Services dated 10/30/20; staff comments from the Office of City Planning dated 11/3/20; letter of Brad Markey, dated 11/12/20, in support; the appeal package as submitted; the plan as submitted; and, that the owners of the lots as indicated are the ones deemed by this board to be the lots affected; and the action of the clerk in giving notice of the hearing as stated be and hereby is ratified.

Motion passed unopposed.

Kalyn Andrade, 4080 Acushnet Avenue, stated she is looking to work out of a room in her house. She described her facial/waxing practice.

Board Member Brown confirmed that Ms. Andrade is the only employee and is operating only by appointment. Ms. Andrade noted the availability of off-street parking.

In response to Chairperson Parrish, Ms. Andrade stated she will have one small 24"x 12" sign.

In response to Board Member Decker, Ms. Andrade confirmed her belief that her driveway will accommodate her client needs. In response to Board Member Decker, Ms. Andrade confirmed remodeling changes are all interior.

There was no response to Chairperson Parrish's invitation to speak or be recorded in favor or opposition.

Board Member Brown suggested Ms. Andrade speak to a business lawyer about forming a D/B/A as opposed to a corporation/LLC.

The hearing was declared closed.

After board consultation with Commissioner Romanowicz, including handicap accessibility, a motion was made (SB) and seconded (LC) to grant a special permit under provisions of the City Code of New Bedford relative to property located at 4080 Acushnet Avenue, Assessors' map 136 lot 248 in a Residential A [RA] zoned district, to allow the petitioner to change the use of the sunroom into a spa room to allow for a home occupation per plans filed, which requires a special

Note: These are minutes only. A complete copy of the meeting audio is available on the City of New Bedford website at: http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/cable-access/government-access-channel-18/program-schedule/ permit under Chapter 9, Comprehensive Zoning Sections 2500, 2520- 2528 and 5300-5330 & 5360-5390.

In accordance with the City of New Bedford Code of Ordinances Chapter 9, Section 5320, the benefit to the city and the neighborhood outweighs the adverse effect of the proposed use, taking into account the characteristics of the site and of the proposal in relation to that site. Including consideration of the following: social, economic and community needs which are served by the proposal, traffic flow and safety, including parking and loading, adequacy of utilities and other public services, neighborhood character and social structure, and impact on the natural environments. With no specific conditions, the following general conditions apply: that the project be set forth according to the plans submitted with the application; that the applicant shall ensure a copy of the Notice of Decision bearing certification from the City Clerk's Office be recorded at the Registry of Deeds; and that the rights authorized by the granting of the special permit must be exercised by issuance of a building permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted or they will lapse.

#### **ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Board Member Parrish - Yes

Board Member Paleologos - Yes Board Member Choquette - Yes

Board Member Brown - Yes

**Board Member Decker - Yes** 

Motion passed 5-0

Chairperson Parrish recused herself from hearing the following matter. The petitioner, through their attorney, chose to move forward with only four board members.

#### **ITEM 4 - CASE #4431:**

A motion was made (SB) and seconded (AD) to receive and place on file the communication from the Commissioner of Buildings and Inspectional Services dated 11/2/20; staff comments from the Office of City Planning dated 11/3/20; letter of Councilor Joseph Lopes dated 10/26/20, in support; the appeal package as submitted; the plan as submitted; and, that the owners of the lots as indicated are the ones deemed by this board to be the lots affected; and the action of the clerk in giving notice of the hearing as stated be and hereby is ratified.

Motion passed unopposed.

Att. Chris Saunders stated they seek a special permit for residential dwelling units on upper level floors, as well as permission to change non-conforming uses and structures. The applicant appeared before the board a few months prior, as well as in May 2019. Att. Saunders covered the procedural history of the case. He noted there were plans submitted and favorably approved by the board unanimously, which called for a two phase project. Att. Saunders detailed the same, including the phase two Moby Dick Building. He stated the plans have been redrawn to increase the residential dwelling unit size, while decreasing the total amount of units from 51 to 46.

Board Member Brown sought to confirm that this modifies something previously allowed, where the modification is less onerous on city resources than the original application. Att. Saunders confirmed the same. Board Member Brown stated he sees the motion as very non-controversial.

Att. Saunders stated they have downsized and decreased the density, decreasing the number of studio apartments. He compared the project with the board approved Franklin Hospitality project. He noted they appeared before the planning board last week and the reduction in parking special permit was unanimously approved. He stated that site plan review has been granted. He welcomed questions.

There was no response to Acting Chairperson Paleologos's invitation to speak or be recorded in favor or opposition.

The hearing was declared closed.

After brief board discussion, a motion was made (SB) and seconded (AD) to grant a special permit under provisions of the City Code of New Bedford relative to property located at 115, 117, 121, 127-129 Union Street & 7 North Second Street, Assessors' map 53 lot 40,41,215,216 & 146 in a Mixed Used Business (MUB) and (DBOD) zoned district, to allow the petitioner to amend special permit #4372 to allow for a total of 43 residential units on the upper level floors along with a combination of retail and three work/live units on the ground level floor per plans filed, which requires a special permit under Chapter 9, Comprehensive Zoning Sections 2200, 2210, 2230 - Appendix A, 2400, 2410, 2420, 2421, 4500-4572 and 5300-5390.

In accordance with the City of New Bedford Code of Ordinances Chapter 9, Section 5320, the benefit to the city and the neighborhood outweighs the adverse effect of the proposed use, taking into account the characteristics of the site and of the proposal in relation to that site. Including consideration of the following: social, economic and community needs which are served by the proposal, traffic flow and safety, including parking and loading, adequacy of utilities and other public services, neighborhood character and social structure, and impact on the natural environments. With the following specific conditions:

Approval requires a revised approval from the Historic Commission and the modification
of a previous special permit by the planning board. Any conditions imposed by the
Historic commission and the planning board shall be conditions of this special permit.

The following general conditions apply: that the project be set forth according to the plans submitted with the application; that the applicant shall ensure a copy of the Notice of Decision bearing certification from the City Clerk's Office be recorded at the Registry of Deeds; and that the rights authorized by the granting of the special permit must be exercised by issuance of a building permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted or they will lapse.

#### **ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Board Member Paleologos - Yes Board Member Brown - Yes

Board Member Choquette - Yes

Board Member Decker - Yes

Motion passed 4-0

#### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made (SB) and seconded (SB) to approve the meeting minutes of September 17, 2020 concerning Cases 4394; 4372; and 4422

Note: These are minutes only. A complete copy of the meeting audio is available on the City of New Bedford website at: http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/cable-access/government-access-channel-18/program-schedule/ Motion passed unopposed

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The meeting was adjourned.

THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 17, 2020

1/27/21

Stephen Brown, Clerk

Date