

**CITY OF NORWALK
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING **DRAFT** MINUTES - MARCH 19, 2026
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

ATTENDEES: Andrew Conroy, Anthony Simari, Benjamin Hanpeter, Danielle Sanchick, Kathy Olsen, Keith Lyon, Lee Levey.

STAFF: Tammy Maldonado.

OTHERS: Mark Barrett, Jillian Majlak, George Lowe, Liz Suchy

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the City of Norwalk Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order by Ms. Sanchick. The board reviewed the procedures for conducting the virtual meeting on the Zoom platform, including the public hearing process for each application on the agenda, the opportunity for participants in favor and against to be heard, the applicant’s rebuttal opportunity only, the requirement that all speakers state their name and address for the record, the limit that new applications will normally not be heard after 9:00 p.m., and the reminder that the entire meeting including each hearing is recorded and becomes a matter of permanent public record.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Announcements and changes to the agenda were made. The board agreed to swap the order of the two items on the agenda, hearing application 26-0319-01 first followed by application 26-0219-03.

The public hearing for application B, 26-0319-01 JMT Charles 25 LLC, variance of Table 4.3.1-D for height of retaining walls, 4 feet maximum allowed and 8.8 feet proposed to be constructed on the site of a proposed two-family dwelling in the CD-2 zone and Coastal Area Management Overlay located at 34 Charles Street, District 3, Block 7, Lot 43, was opened.

Mr. Levey read the official papers, background, analysis and findings, and coastal management requirements into the record, including the steep slope of the building site meeting the hardship requirement, the need for two decisions on the variance and coastal site plan review, the requirement that the board’s motion contain a statement on consistency with the goals and policies of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act and any adverse impact on coastal resources, and the attached memo from Bryan Baker, Principal Planner. Ms. Liz Suchy, partner at Carme Torrent, Sandak and Hennessy, 1055 Washington Boulevard, stated her name for the record as representative for the applicant and owner. Considering a letter received from

concerned neighbors around 12:45 p.m. that day identifying a variety of issues, concerns, and questions, Ms. Liz Suchy requested a continuance of the public hearing to the next month's meeting so the applicant could meet with the neighbors, explain the project, answer questions, and hopefully resolve concerns before returning in April. Ms. Sanchick stated she had no issue granting the continuance. Other board members indicated no objection.

****MS. SANCHICK MOVED TO GRANT THE CONTINUANCE OF THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR APPLICATION 26-0319-01 TO THE APRIL 2026 MEETING.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CONTINUED.**

The public hearing for application A, 26-0219-03 Mark Barrett and Jillian Majlak, variance of Table 4.3.1-C for rear setback, 15 feet required and 9.4 feet existing and proposed for proposed alterations and additions which include connecting an existing accessory building (detached garage) to the existing principal building (single-family residence) in the CD-1S zone located at 10 Winthrop Avenue, District 5, Block 5, Lot 125, was opened.

Mr. Levey read the official papers, background, analysis and findings, and staff recommendation into the record, noting the corner lot, the revised survey dated January 24, 2026 showing the garage at 6.7 feet from the rear property line instead of the 9.4 feet advertised in the legal notice, that the existing accessory structure is in a conforming location but connecting it creates a non-conforming rear setback, staff belief that this is a self-created hardship stemming from the desire to maintain and expand the existing garage footprint, and the revised plans reducing the connecting addition length, adjusting the roofline, and relocating the garage footprint to 10 feet from the rear property line. Mr. Georgie Loa, designer representing remodeling consultants on behalf of senior architect Eric Jacobson, stated his name for the record and thanked the board for the previous continuance, noting that the redesign addressed the concerns raised. Mr. Mark Barrett, property owner, along with Ms. Jillian Majlak, stated their names for the record and presented a screen-shared overview including a table of the setback requirement, the current property layout with the garage at 6.7 feet from the rear line, the proposal to attach the garage and move its footprint to create 10 feet of space to the property line which would provide more space between the structures and be more considerate to neighbors, the conforming height of 19 feet 11¼ inches, overhead views comparing the existing and proposed, and six letters of support from neighbors including Tracy and Stephanie Edwards who had reviewed the paper plans in person at their kitchen window and confirmed no impact on their view.

Mr. Conroy requested to view the existing elevation again and noted the steps coming down from the garage which sits 2.5 to 3 feet above the main home floor level. Mr. Mark Barrett explained that the original desire to stay in the existing footprint was due to less site work, but they had addressed the site work by jogging the garage. Mr. Levey expressed his primary concern that maneuvering a vehicle out of the garage space closest to the house might pose a hazard due to the diagonal retaining wall and picket fence. Mr. Georgie Loa responded that the design meets standard clearance, but they would take any recommendation for adjustment into

strong consideration. Mr. Levey suggested possibly changing the angle or adding a curve to the retaining wall to provide at least 18 feet of back-up space before maneuvering into the main driveway. Mr. Simari asked about the hardship. Ms. Majlak described the hardship as the current garage being too small to fit their two SUVs, the vehicles currently parked in the long driveway, and a break-in attempt on January 19 with police reports, making secure garage parking important, along with the topographic elevation change from the back to the front of the property. Mr. Conroy accepted the topographic change as a significant hardship but reiterated concern about backing an SUV out and smashing the rear bumper. Mr. Conroy suggested increasing the distance to between 12 and 13 feet.

Further discussion occurred on the 3-foot height difference between the garage and main home, the 8-foot-4-inch connector length for the mudroom incorporating the existing bathroom bump-out and the only powder room on the main level, the impact on the small back patio which would begin to disappear, changes to the driveway angle, and challenges with the steep Melbourne Road hill, existing retaining wall, and drainage if the garage were moved further or partially buried to a common grade. Mr. Levey reread the staff findings confirming the self-created hardship analysis. Ms. Sanchick summarized that one board member desired further reduction in the nonconformity with the grade change accepted as the hardship. Staff noted that moving an additional 5 feet would eliminate the need for a variance. Mr. Conroy stated his vote would hinge on reducing the nonconformity to the bare minimum and suggested 12 feet. The applicants noted that 12 feet would make the mudroom considerably smaller and the project more expensive, that a compliant detached garage with second story could be built at only 5 feet from the line but would create an undesirable large mass close to neighbors, and that the proposed attached design is better for the neighborhood. Board members reminded the applicants that cost is not a consideration and confirmed height limits for accessory structures. Mr. Conroy confirmed that four affirmative votes are needed and, based on comments, a continuance would allow time to revise for 12 feet. The applicants asked about reapplication rules if denied and were advised that a denial without prejudice would allow return with revisions while a denial with prejudice would impose a six-month wait. The board encouraged the applicants to redesign within the 12-foot suggestion. The applicants offered 11 feet, but the board held at 12 feet. The applicants agreed to the continuance.

****MR. LYON MOVED TO GRANT THE CONTINUANCE OF THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR APPLICATION 26-0219-03 TO THE APRIL 2026 MEETING.
**MR. CONROY SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CONTINUED.

IV. BOARD ACTION ON: A-B

No board action was taken on applications A or B because both public hearings were continued to the April 2026 meeting.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

A. Action on Hearing Minutes (February 19, 2026)

The minutes of the February 19, 2026, meeting were reviewed.

****MR. SIMARI MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 19, 2026, MEETING AS PRESENTED.**

****ABSTENTIONS – MR. LEVEY (NOT PRESENT AT THE LAST MEETING), MR. CONROY (NOT PRESENT AT THE LAST MEETING) & MS. OLSEN (NOT PRESENT AT THE LAST MEETING).**

****THE MOTION PASSED. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS PRESENTED.**

Ms. Maldonado reviewed the new requirement for all board members to switch to norwalkct.gov emails, explained the activation process, and requested that any member who had not yet activated their city-issued email contact her so a ticket could be created.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

****MR. HANPETER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

****MS. OLSEN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin
Recording Secretary