

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 17, 2025 at 7PM
DRAFT MINUTES**

ATTENDANCE: Andy Conroy (Chairman), Danielle Sanchick (Secretary), Lee Levey, Keith Lyon, Steve Ferguson, Ben Hanpeter.

OTHERS: Tammy Maldonado (Zoning Officer), Patricia Gill (Applicant Architect), Amy Kule (Public Speaker - Opposition), Serena Cutugno (Public Speaker - Opposition), Donna Cutugno (Public Speaker - Opposition), Gail Candlin (Public Speaker - Opposition), Roger Brouard (Public Speaker - Opposition), Daniela Alfaro (Applicant, appeared by phone for continuance request), Liz Suchy (Attorney, representing Norwalk CT Ave LLC applicant), Matt Bruton (BL Companies - Civil Engineer for Norwalk CT Ave LLC).

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Conroy called the virtual Zoom meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He confirmed a quorum with members Mr. Conroy, Mr. Levey, Mr. Lyon, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Hanpeter, and Ms. Sanchick (Secretary).

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call confirmed six members present.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. APPLICATION 25-0515-01 – ACR PROPERTY, LLC – 6 LANE ROAD

Seated for this item were Mr. Levey, Ms. Sanchick, Mr. Lyon, Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Hanpeter.

The Board heard a variance application for front yard setbacks along Lane Road and East Rocks Road, front yard parking, and backout space related to construction of a new single-family residence in the CD-1M zone.

Ms. Gill, architect for the applicant, initiated the presentation by stating that the lot was subdivided in 1928 before zoning codes existed in Norwalk. She explained that the general zoning regulations enacted later, particularly increased 30-foot setbacks on all street frontages, severely constrained the buildable area, making a conventional compliance build infeasible. The current plan is for a modestly sized single-family home with a garage and one additional off-street parking space, set into a steeply sloped lot descending from East Rocks Road. Preservation of existing trees and natural features was emphasized, with no blasting anticipated and building located to minimize visibility from the adjacent stone house.

Board members questioned Ms. Gill regarding the lack of any patios or terraces. Ms. Gill indicated only a front porch was included and no formal outdoor living spaces. Mr. Levey expressed concern about how future occupants would accommodate basic outdoor activities like barbecuing. The absence of a detailed landscaping or screening plan was raised, and Ms. Gill noted screening could be added but no formal plan had yet been developed. Mr. Hanpeter inquired about anticipated tree removal and potential blasting; Ms. Gill was unable to specify exact tree impacts but confirmed no blasting was expected as the building would have no basement. Mr. Lyon confirmed the property would have city water and sewer connections. Ms. Gill showed the limited buildable triangular area on the lot remaining after the large setbacks, acknowledging that the lot size was less than 60% of the zoning requirement.

The Board then opened the floor to public comment. Ms. Amy Kule spoke first, referencing the large volume of opposition letters submitted. She stressed that shoehorning a house onto such a substandard lot threatened the architectural harmony and single-family character of the neighborhood. She highlighted that Lane Road is a narrow single-lane road with frequent traffic bottlenecks and parking conflicts, and that the new house's design and size raised concerns about aesthetics and environmental disturbance, including tree loss and site grading. Ms. Kule urged rejection based on these comprehensive neighborhood impacts.

Ms. Serena Cutugno, residing directly across at 6 East Rocks Road, echoed these concerns, describing Lane Road as saturated with parked vehicles and traffic congestion, stating that adding another residence would exacerbate already difficult parking and circulation conditions. She cited observations of up to seven cars parked at another nearby house contributing to congestion.

Ms. Gail Candlin, also of East Rocks Road, emphasized the incongruity of a large home on a very small lot and warned that increasing density with multiple family uses in the vicinity was detracting from the neighborhood's unique character. She opposed further change in this predominantly single-family neighborhood.

Mr. Roger Brouard, 1 Lane Road, whose driveway faces the subject property, concurred with prior speakers. He described the narrow road as already challenging for vehicles to negotiate safely. Mr. Brouard expressed his concern about loss of neighborhood woodland and the visual impacts of further development, referencing prior clearing by adjacent lot owners and its consequences.

Finally, Ms. Donna Cutugno, Serena's mother and also resident at 6 East Rocks Road, recounted prior adverse parking conditions associated with another nearby property, described as effectively a rooming house with excessive vehicles. She characterized the neighborhood as suffering from "oversaturation" and believed the new construction would worsen conditions. The applicant's architect clarified that this was a separate lot and unrelated to this proposal.

At the conclusion of verbal testimony, Ms. Sanchick read aloud the names and addresses of over 30 residents who had submitted written opposition letters, all unanimous in objection based on similar neighborhood character, parking, and environmental concerns.

Ms. Gill offered rebuttal emphasizing the modest size of the proposed residence, the intent to preserve existing greenery, and acknowledged the hardship caused by post-subdivision adoption of zoning setbacks that rendered the lot virtually unbuildable without relief.

Following deliberation, Mr. Levey moved to deny the application without prejudice so that the applicant could reconsider design and landscaping to better fit the neighborhood character. Ms. Sanchick seconded. The motion carried 4–1 with Mr. Hanpeter opposed.

B. APPLICATION 25-0626-01 – DANIELA ALFARO – 34 GARNER STREET

Seated for this item were Mr. Levey, Ms. Sanchick, Mr. Lyon, Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Hanpeter.

Ms. Sanchick summarized the variance request regarding parking within the front setback due to an illegal conversion of garage space to living area at an existing single-family home in the CD-1S zone. The property is also under ongoing zoning violations for use as a rooming house and alleged unpermitted animal care business.

Despite repeated attempts by staff to contact Ms. Alfaro prior to the meeting, she did not initially appear. During the hearing, an attendee identified as “Apple’s iPhone” unmuted and identified herself as Ms. Alfaro, explaining she was currently hospitalized and lacked full access to present. Ms. Alfaro requested a continuance.

Mr. Levey moved to continue the hearing to August 21, 2025 to allow the applicant adequate time to prepare. Mr. Hanpeter seconded and the Board unanimously approved the continuance.

C. APPLICATION 25-0717-01 – NORWALK CT AVE LLC – 641 CONNECTICUT AVENUE

Seated for this item were Mr. Conroy, Ms. Sanchick, Mr. Levey, Mr. Lyon, and Mr. Hanpeter.

Ms. Sanchick read the variance requests for front setback, building height and frontage buildout for a proposed freestanding drive-through coffee shop on property zoned CD-3C.

Attorney Ms. Suchy represented the applicant, explaining that the site is currently a large parking lot in front of Raymour & Flanigan furniture. The proposed coffee kiosk is a small, roughly 580 square foot, predominantly drive-through facility with some pedestrian access. She argued that due to existing parcel configuration and zoning history, the strict new form-based code requirements for building placement and frontage were impractical for this use.

Planning staff memorandum was read into the record expressing opposition to the variances as the proposal conflicted with city goals to create pedestrian-friendly, urban-form retail frontage along Connecticut Avenue consistent with the new zoning code and the city’s Plan of Conservation and Development.

Board members discussed the uniqueness of the proposal, noting its essentially auto-centric nature with associated excessive parking and lack of active frontage. Several members voiced concern that the project was inconsistent with long-term zoning objectives for this corridor.

Mr. Conroy asked the Board if there were any objections to continue this item to the August meeting. There were none. The item was continued.

IV. BOARD ACTION ON APPLICATIONS

Regarding the applications, the Board took the following actions:

APPLICATION 25-0515-01 – ACR PROPERTY, LLC – 6 LANE ROAD

- ** MOTION TO DENY THE APPLICATION WITHOUT PREJUDICE.**
- ** MR. LEVEY MOVED TO DENY THE APPLICATION WITHOUT PREJUDICE.**
- ** MS. SANCHICK SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (CONROY; LEVEY; SANCHICK; LYON) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (HANPETER).**

APPLICATION 25-0626-01 – DANIELA ALFARO – 34 GARNER STREET

- ** MOTION TO CONTINUE THE HEARING TO AUGUST 21, 2025, DUE TO EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES.**
- ** MR. LEVEY MOVED TO CONTINUE THE APPLICATION TO AUGUST 21, 2025.**
- ** MR. HANPETER SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPLICATION 25-0717-01 – NORWALK CT AVE LLC – 641 CONNECTICUT AVENUE

- ** MR. CONROY CONTINUED THIS ITEM TO AUGUST 21, 2025**

V. ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. LYON MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
- ** MR. FERGUSON SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Courtney Baldwin