

**CITY OF NORWALK
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING JANUARY 15, 2026
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
DRAFT MINUTES**

ATTENDEES: Danielle Sanchick, Lee Levey, Andy Conroy, Kathy Olsen, Anthony Simari, Steve Ferguson, Ben Hanpeter.

STAFF: Tammy Maldonado.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Danielle Sanchick.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Ms. Sanchick. All members were present and a quorum was confirmed.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. 26-0115-01 – ACR Property, LLC – Variances of front yard setbacks and parking within the front setback, and backout space adjacent to Lane Rd. property line to construct new Single-Family Residence. Property located at 6 Lane Road. District 1, Block 83, Lot 33.

Seated for this item were Ms. Sanchick, Mr. Levey, Mr. Simari, Mr. Hanpeter and Ms. Olsen.

Ms. Sanchick opened the public hearing. Mr. Levey read the staff memo into the record, describing the requested variances for front yard setbacks (30 feet required at Lane Road, 13 feet proposed; 30 feet required at East Rocks Road, 20 feet proposed), parking within the front yard setback (30 feet required at Lane Road, 18 feet proposed; 30 feet required at East Rocks Road, 20 feet proposed), and backout space adjacent to the Lane Road property line to allow construction of a new single-family residence on the undersized vacant lot in the CD-1M zone.

Ms. Patsy Gill, representative for the applicant (Gill & Gill Architects), presented the application and reviewed the site plan, landscape plan, architectural plans and proposed changes from the previous application. She explained that the lot was legally subdivided in 1928, is a long-standing building lot, and that while the proposed house does not fit within the available building envelope, it does meet coverage and height requirements. She highlighted the addition of landscaping, the location of the driveway, a hedge buffer along the street, and a slight reduction in the East Rocks Road setback request compared to prior submission. She noted that the proposed single-family residence includes a one-car garage and one additional parking space, and that the design includes sliding glass doors facing the adjacent stone house with potential for a future patio area.

The Board asked questions regarding the site plan orientation, the relationship of the proposed house to neighboring properties, visibility, driveway configuration, and landscaping improvements.

Written Public Comments

The following written comments were received and summarized for the record:

Mr. Josh Bleggi (nearby resident) expressed opposition, citing concerns about increased traffic and safety hazards on the already narrow Lane Road, potential impediments to emergency vehicles and delivery trucks, weakening of neighborhood design standards for spacing and sight lines, and the need for a compromise such as dedicating land to widen Lane Road.

Ms. Gail Candlin opposed the application, stating that this is the second attempt by the developer to overdevelop the parcel, that the site plan is misleading by not showing the adjacent two-family dwelling, and that the proposal would increase traffic, density, noise, and eliminate green space with mature trees. She noted that the developer is not a Norwalk resident and lacks concern for the community.

Ms. Amy Kule expressed concerns regarding neighborhood character and scale, increased density, stewardship of the property, and the precedent set by granting the variances.

Mr. Ray Guier (30 East Avenue) objected to the new development, citing multiple families living at the adjacent property, and stated that the neighborhood does not need added noise, traffic, or disruption.

Ms. Jacqueline Novotny expressed concerns about the proposal, noting excessive parked cars at the adjacent property, the narrowness of Lane Road and portions of East Rocks Road, lack of additional parking opportunities on Glendening Road, potential blockage of views for oncoming traffic, and poor property maintenance.

Ms. Patricia Czako (10 Homer Street) stated that the variances are severe and significant, that the proposed structure would be out of character with nearby historic homes, and that the project would exacerbate traffic and parking issues in the vicinity.

Ms. Jaina Jaeger and Mr. David Callan (3 East Avenue) opposed the application, describing it as a bad idea for a busy road and intersection, noting poor property maintenance, excessive parking, and questioning the feasibility of the driveway and building site.

Ms. Dawn Hodges (9 East Meadow Lane) opposed additional housing on the property, citing excessive cars already present, potential blockage of views on narrow Lane Road, and existing parking issues in the area.

Ms. Lauren DiBartolomeo reiterated strong opposition, stating that there has been no meaningful improvement to the plan and that concerns about safety, privacy, and community consistency remain unchanged.

Live Public Comment

The public hearing was opened to live comments. No speakers raised their hand to speak in favor of the application.

Mr. Chris Shimko (Bumblebee Lane, lifelong Norwalk resident) stated that the lot is not flat, raised concerns about structural integrity issues from excavating the sloped East Rocks Road side, and argued that the proposal does not comply with zoning regulations intended to protect residential character, prevent overcrowding, and regulate building bulk and relationships to surrounding land.

Ms. Sophie Constandaki (2 East Rocks Road) explained the history of the lot subdivision, disputed the claim that the lot was unaffected by subsequent subdivisions, and raised significant safety concerns about visibility and traffic on narrow Lane Road, which functions almost as a one-way street. She stated that the proposal does not fit the historical character of the neighborhood.

Ms. Amy Kule (nearby resident of 25 years) echoed concerns about overdevelopment on a constrained parcel, poor maintenance and excessive parking at the adjacent property, narrowness of Lane Road, and the negative impact on the leafy residential character of the neighborhood.

Ms. Patsy Gill was given the opportunity to rebut the public comments. She addressed concerns about parking and maintenance at the adjacent property, clarified that the subject lot is undeveloped with no cars parked on it, explained that the site plan is an accurate survey, presented a section drawing showing the house nestled into the site, and noted that the proposed design uses gable roofs, clapboard siding, and double-hung windows consistent with neighborhood architecture. She reiterated that the house would not interfere with sight lines at the intersection and that the city has right-of-way available to widen Lane Road if desired. The Board continued discussion, with members raising questions about the property's hardship, the narrowness of Lane Road, potential traffic impacts, construction challenges, lack of usable outdoor space, and the house's architectural fit with the neighborhood.

The public hearing was closed.

The Board discussed the application. Members expressed differing views on whether the proposed design adequately responded to the site constraints, the strength of the hardship presented by the undersized triangular lot and multiple frontages, the sufficiency of landscaping improvements, potential traffic and parking impacts, and the appropriateness of the building envelope and orientation.

**** MR. HANPETER MOVED TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION AS PRESENTED.**

****MS. SANCHICK SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION FAILED 2-3 (IN FAVOR – MR. HANPETER, MS. SANCHICK | OPPOSED – MR. LEVEY, MS. OLSEN, MR. SIMARI).**

The application was denied.

IV. BOARD ACTION

IV. BOARD ACTION ON: A. AND REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF TIME ON 641 CONNECTICUT AVENUE VARIANCE #25-0717-01.

Ms. Sanchick called Item IV.A for discussion and decision was made as noted above.

Secretary Lee Levey read the staff report regarding the request for extension of time into the record, noting that the application (25-0717-01, Norwalk CT Avenue, LLC) was continued from July 17, 2025, and had been approved with conditions by the Zoning Board of Appeals on August 21, 2025. The variances granted were for front setback, reducing required number of stories, and frontage build-out to construct a new freestanding drive-through coffee shop in the CD-3C zone at 641 Connecticut Avenue (District 5, Block 72, Lot 28A).

Secretary Lee Levey further explained that the applicant is now requesting an extension of time to obtain building permits. The original deadline was February 17, 2026 (six months from approval). A zoning permit has been issued, and the applicant has been working with the Department of Public Works, which provided comments approximately 10 days prior. Additional reviews are still required from the Fire Department and Health Department before the building permit application can proceed.

Ms. Sanchick noted that the following members would sit for this item: herself (Ms. Sanchick), Mr. Levey, Mr. Conroy, Ms. Olsen, and Mr. Ferguson. Mr. Simari and Mr. Hanpeter sat out, as Mr. Simari was not present for the original approval and Mr. Hanpeter volunteered to sit out.

Ms. Liz Suchy, partner at Carmody Torrance Sandac and Hennessy and representative for the applicant (641 Connecticut Avenue, LLC), addressed the Board. She confirmed that the Certificate of Variance was recorded timely in September 2025, a zoning permit was applied for in September and issued in November 2025, and the applicant has been diligently coordinating with the Department of Public Works. She requested a six-month extension (to August 16, 2026) to allow completion of the remaining departmental reviews and avoid the need for another appearance before the Board, though she noted the Board could grant a shorter extension if preferred. Mr. Mike Barbudo of Yankee Crew (Seven Brew) was also present to answer any questions.

The Board had no questions for the applicant. Mr. Ferguson made a lighthearted comment about looking forward to the coffee shop.

No public comment was required or taken on the request for extension of time.

**** MR. CONROY MOVED TO GRANT A SIX-MONTH EXTENSION OF TIME FOR THE APPLICANT TO OBTAIN BUILDING PERMITS, SUCH THAT BUILDING PERMITS MUST BE OBTAINED BY AUGUST 16, 2026.**

****MR. FERGUSON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The request for a six-month extension of time was approved.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

A. Action on Hearing Minutes (December 18, 2025)

**** MR. CONROY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 18, 2025, MEETING.**

****MR. LEVEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED (ABSTENTIONS – MS. OLSEN (NOT PRESENT AT THE DECEMBER 18, 2025, MEETING), MS. SANCHICK (NOT PRESENT AT THE DECEMBER 18, 2025, MEETING),**

The minutes were approved as presented with no abstentions, omissions, or deletions.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

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

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:17 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Courtney Baldwin,
Recording Secretary**