

MINUTES FROM THE CITY OF WATERVLIET ZONING BOARD MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE WATERVLIET SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER, 1501 BROADWAY, WATERVLIET, NEW YORK

MEMBERS PRESENT: Frank Gilchrist
Tom Houlihan
Ken Keefer
Kayleigh O'Neill
Michele Jamrosz

ALSO PRESENT: Melissa Cherubino

Chairman Gilchrist called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Attendance was taken and the agenda was read.

CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATION OF ERIK PIORKOWSKI, OWNER OF 715 25TH STREET, WATERVLIET, NEW YORK, SEEKING AREA VARIANCES TO INSTALL A 42-FOOT WIDE BY 12 FOOT-LONG DRIVEWAY IN REAR OF HIS PROPERTY

Erik Piorkowski would like to install a driveway at the rear of his property. The driveway would be blacktop and along the alleyway. There will not be a green space issue if the driveway is approved. He will have it professionally installed by Redemption Blacktop LLC. Jack Polanski, owner of 709 25th Street, Watervliet, New York, spoke in support of the project.

Regarding SEQR for the lot size area variance, the board concluded that the proposed action is a Type II action and will not result in any significant adverse impacts on the environment and is not subject to further review under SEQRA.

The Watervliet ZBA weighed the effects of the requested variance with regards to the driveway not leading to a carport or garage on the interests of the applicant and on the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood and community and makes the following findings: (1) The requested variance will not create an undesirable change in the character of the neighborhood or detriment to nearby properties as similar properties contain driveways without a carport or garage and there is a significant amount of surface parking at the nearby RPI facility that do not include carports or driveways; (2) The benefit sought by the applicant cannot be achieved by some other feasible method because creating a driveway that meets code would interfere with the usable space in the rear yard; (3) The requested area variance is substantial numerically but similar within the character of the neighborhood; (4) The proposed variance will not have an adverse effect or impact on the physical and environmental conditions of the neighborhood or district because it will be sloped toward the yard and drain onto said property; (5) The alleged difficulty was self-created but it alleviates parking on the street.

A motion was made by Mr. Keefer and seconded by Mr. Houlihan to grant the application with the following stipulations: (1) Snow storage may not be placed in the alleyway or on neighboring properties; (2) Driveway must be pitched to property and not adjacent properties; (3) Must meet four-foot setbacks on both sides.

	YES	NO
Frank Gilchrist	X	
Ken Keefer	Motion	
Michele Jamrosz	X	
Tom Houlihan	Second	
Kayleigh O'Neill	X	

The Watervliet ZBA weighed the effects of the requested variance with regards to the driveway not meeting setbacks from the rear lot line on the interests of the applicant and on the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood and community and makes the following findings: (1) The requested variance will not create an undesirable change in the character of the neighborhood or detriment to nearby properties as there are surface parking lots at the nearby RPI facility and residential driveways on nearby properties that exceed setback requirements; (2) The benefit sought by the applicant cannot be achieved by some other feasible method because meeting setbacks would encroach on usable space in the rear yard and impair access if the driveway and alleyway were to be splintered by a 4-foot grassy area; (3) The requested area variance is substantial numerically but fits the character of the neighborhood due to its proximity to the RPI industrial facility with surface parking and residential driveways that exceed setbacks and are accessed from alleyways across rear property lines; (4) The proposed variance will not negatively impact physical or environmental conditions through stipulations requiring the applicant mitigate the potential for stormwater runoff by pitching the slope of the driveway to the applicant's property and storing snow on property; (5) The alleged difficulty is self-created on its own, this is not determinative and instead the factors must be weighed in making a determination whether the benefit to the Applicant of preserving the yard outweighs the detriment to the neighborhood.

A motion was made by Mr. Keefer and seconded by Mrs. Jamrosz to grant the application with the following stipulations: (1) Any lighting must be downcast and/or dark sky compliant; (2) Snow storage must be located on the property; (3) Four foot side setbacks must be maintained; (4) All construction must meet NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code; and (5) The driveway pitch must be sloped onto the property.

	YES	NO
Frank Gilchrist	X	
Ken Keefer	Motion	
Michele Jamrosz	Second	
Tom Houlihan	X	
Kayleigh O'Neill	X	

The Watervliet ZBA weighed the effects of the requested variance with regards to the driveway exceeding the 10-foot maximum width for a driveway on the interests of the applicant and on the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood and community and makes the following findings: (1) The requested variance will not negatively change the character of the neighborhood or create a detriment to nearby properties as there are a number of driveways that measure greater than 10-feet wide and a significant amount of surface parking at the nearby RPI facility. In fact, the Zoning Code permits wider driveways where wider garages and carports are installed; (2) The benefit sought by the applicant cannot be achieved by some other feasible method because installing a narrower driveway would encroach on usable space in the rear yard; (3) The requested area variance is substantial numerically but fits the character of the neighborhood due to its proximity to similarly sized driveways accessed from the alleyway and the RPI industrial facility with surface parking; (4) The proposed variance will not have an adverse effect or impact on the physical and environmental conditions of the neighborhood or district as the driveway will be pitched toward the applicant's greenspace and away from neighboring properties and snow storage will be placed on the property; (5) The alleged difficulty on its own, this is not determinative and instead the factors must be weighed in making a determination whether the benefit to the Applicant of preserving the yard outweighs the detriment to the neighborhood.

A motion was made by Mr. Keefer and seconded by Mr. Houlihan to grant the application with the following stipulations: (1) A 4-foot side setback to each neighboring property must be maintained; (2) Any lighting must be downcast and/or dark sky compliant to prevent light trespass; (3) The pitch of the driveway must slope into the property to prevent stormwater runoff onto the neighboring property and the applicant is to consider

installation of a raingarden to collect runoff; (4) during snow removal storage must be on the applicant's property.

	YES	NO
Frank Gilchrist	X	
Ken Keefer	Motion	
Michele Jamrosz	X	
Tom Houlihan	Second	
Kayleigh O'Neill	X	

CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATION OF MARY BRENNAN-BROWN, OWNER OF 427 5TH AVENUE, WATERVLIT, NEW YORK, SEEKING AN AREA VARIANCE TO INSTALL A DRIVEWAY ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF SAID PROPERTY

Mary Brennan-Brown was represented by Kathy Drovny, Esq. Mary wants to install a blacktop driveway to the AC unit at her house which is approximately 38 feet. A neighbor spoke in favor of the application. Joseph Brown, who is Mary Brennan-Brown's son, spoke in favor of the driveway. He stated Mary has seen an increase in parking issues because of bingo and additional houses on a lot that was used for parking. A driveway will give Mary parking for her handicap as it is difficult to help her when he works. One neighbor spoke against the driveway because of snow removal issues. The Chairman is also concerned because of a telephone pole that exists on the property. Mary will trim back her hedges.

Regarding SEQR for the lot size area variance, the board concluded that the proposed action is a Type II action and will not result in any significant adverse impacts on the environment and is not subject to further review under SEQRA.

The Watervliet ZBA weighed the effects of the requested variance on the interests of the applicant and on the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood and community and makes the following findings: (1) The requested variance will not negatively change the character of the neighborhood or create a detriment to nearby properties as there is a significant amount of surface parking at the nearby commercial facilities and driveways on nearby properties that exceed setback requirements and lack carports and garages; (2) The project cannot be installed without an area variance as installing a carport or garage and driveway that meets the setbacks would encroach on usable space in the rear yard and the property does not have an alternative point of access; (3) The area variance is substantial numerically but fits the character of the neighborhood due to its proximity to commercial facilities with surface parking and residential properties that include driveways without carports or garages and do not meet minimum setbacks; and (4) The area variance request is self-created but on its own, this is not determinative and instead the factors must be weighed in making a determination whether the benefit to the applicant of preserving the yard outweighs the detriment to the neighborhood.

A motion was made by Ms. O'Neill and seconded by Mrs. Jamrosz to grant the application with the following stipulations: (1) All lighting must be downcast and/or dark sky compliant; (2) The driveway must be pitched to the home and property; (3) Construction of the driveway requires a building permit and must comply with NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building code; (4) Snow removal shall be contained to the property.

	YES	NO
Frank Gilchrist	X	
Ken Keefer	X	
Michele Jamrosz	Second	
Tom Houlihan	X	
Kayleigh O'Neill	Motion	