

MINUTES FROM THE CITY OF WATERVLIET ZONING BOARD MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2026 AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE WATERVLIET SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER, 1501 BROADWAY, WATERVLIET, NEW YORK

MEMBERS PRESENT: Frank Gilchrist
Jake Gilchrist
Ken Keefer
Tom Hulihan
Kayleigh O'Neill

ALSO PRESENT: Chris Chartrand
Melissa Cherubino
Paul LaBoissiere

Chairman Gilchrist called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He asked Chris Chartrand to take attendance and to read the agenda.

CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATION OF KHALID AKHTAR, OWNER OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1036 19TH STREET, WATERVLIET, NEW YORK, SEEKING AN AREA VARIANCE TO WAIVE THE TWO OFF-STREET PARKING SPACES REQUIRED PET CITY CODE AND AN AREA VARIANCE TO WAIVE THE 40 FEET OF FRONTAGE REQUIRED PER CITY CODE.

Mr. Akhtar purchased 1036 19th Street which is a vacant lot. There was previously a two-family home on the lot that had to be demolished due to negligence by the previous owner. Mr. Akhtar would like to build a two-family home on the property using the same footprint as the previous home. The City Code requires 40 feet of frontage and two off-street parking spaces for new construction, which is why two area variances are being sought. Mr. Akhtar will serve as the general contractor, and Enzo Sophia will be the architect. He did attempt to get an easement for parking from the owner of 1038 19th Street to no avail.

Eric Wilde, who lives at 1034 19th Street, attended the meeting and had a concern about the snow shedding from the roof and causing damage to his property. He was assured the proposed home would have a flat roof. He also asked if Mr. Akhtar had requested an easement from 1032 19th Street – that property has off-street parking in the back which is accessed on 12th Avenue. He did not have contact information and Mr. Wilde said he would take Mr. Akhtar's number and have the owner call him.

Regarding SEQR the board concluded that the proposed action is a Type II action and will not result in any significant adverse impacts to the environment and is not subject to further review under SEQRA. A motion was made by Mr. Frank Gilchrist and seconded by Mr. Hulihan to approve the SEQR findings.

	YES	NO
Frank Gilchrist	Motion	
Jake Gilchrist	X	
Kayleigh O'Neill	Second	
Joe Kokernak	X	
Tom Houlihan	X	

Regarding the frontage, 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 made the following findings: (1) The requested variance will not create an undesirable change to the character of the neighborhood or detriment to nearby properties because the frontage is compatible with all nearby properties; (2) The benefit sought by the applicant cannot be achieved by some other feasible method because of the existing lot size and existing neighborhood structure; (3) The requested area variance is not substantial because the existing lot is only 30' and the new structure will match existing two-family homes; (4) The proposed variance will not have

an adverse effect or impact on the physical and environmental conditions of the neighborhood or district because the frontage is consistent with other homes; (5) The alleged difficulty is not self-created because the lot was only 30' wide.

A motion was made by Mr. Hulihan and seconded by Ms. O'Neill to grant the variance with the following conditions: (1) Roof runoff must be at the rear of the building – north to south; (2) Snow removal to remain on the property and not in the street; (3) Garbage cans and equipment must be stored in the rear of the building; (4) Outside lighting must be downfacing; (5) Approval contingent on Albany County Planning Board review and comments; (6) The applicant shall comply with all required permit approvals and all other applicable provisions of the Code of the City of Watervliet; (7) If the applicant does not take the necessary steps to act upon this variance within 90 days of the date of this Resolution, then this variance shall be deemed null and void.

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

Regarding the off-street parking, 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 made the following findings: (1) The requested variance will not create an undesirable change to the character of the neighborhood or detriment to nearby properties because the characteristics of the lot do not allow for on-street parking. On-street parking can be found on 12th Avenue; (2) The benefit sought by the applicant cannot be achieved by some other feasible method because of the characteristics of the neighborhood and traffic pattern; (3) The requested area variance is not substantial because the lot size cannot be changed and parking is 60' away; (4) The proposed variance will not have an adverse effect or impact on the physical and environmental conditions of the neighborhood or district because the required parking spaces are the only thing being waived; (5) The alleged difficulty is not self-created because the existing lot is too small to require off-street parking.

A motion was made by Mr. Keefer and seconded by Mr. Jake Gilchrist to grant the variance with the following conditions: (1) Roof runoff must be at the rear of the building – north to south; (2) Snow removal to remain on the property and not in the street; (3) Garbage cans and equipment must be stored in the rear of the building; (4) Outside lighting must be downfacing; (5) Tenants moving in or out should not impede traffic on 19th Street; (6) No parking on the front lawn; (7) Approval contingent on Albany County Planning Board review and comments; (8) The applicant shall comply with all required permit approvals and all other applicable provisions of the Code of the City of Watervliet; (9) If the applicant does not take the necessary steps to act upon this variance within 90 days of the date of this Resolution, then this variance shall be deemed null and void.

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

At the conclusion of the agenda items, a brief sketch plan meeting took place regarding 601 23rd Street, Watervliet, NY. Ghulam Ali Azrakhsh is the owner of said property and he appeared with his architect Elizabeth

Rodriguez. He explained he would like to have two apartments and a small Halal restaurant with two tables and a retail market. Mr. Azrakhsh will need a use variance because the property is in an R-2 zoning district and an area variance due to off-street parking requirements in an R-2 zoning district.

The Board did declare itself lead agency with respect to the environmental review of the proposed project and determined that it is an unlisted action for SEQR purposes.

A motion was made by Mr. Keefer and seconded by Ms. O'Neill to approve said SEQR determination.

Mr. Azrakhsh's variance applications will be on the agenda at the October 14, 2026 ZBA meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.