

Winthrop Board of Appeals
December 14, 2023
6:30 pm
Meeting Minutes
Winthrop Town Hall, Harvey Room

Board Members in attendance: Darren Baird, Chair, Marc Chapdelaine, Thomas Chiudina, Jason Wright, John Young

Town Staff members in attendance: Rachel Kelly

Board Members absent: Jaime Stern

The meeting was called to order at 6:44 pm followed by roll call.

Minutes:

The Board reviewed minutes from the September 28th, November 1st, and November 30th meetings. One edit made to November 30th minutes. A motion to approve the minutes for September 28th, November 1st, and November 30th was made by Marc Chapdelaine. The motion was seconded by Jason Wright. All members voted in favor.

40 Willow Avenue (037-2023)

The applicant requested to withdraw without prejudice. The applicant stated that the project drawings was going to be changed and redesigned and would be resubmitted as a new application. The motion to withdraw without prejudice was made by Marc Chapdelaine. The motion was seconded by Jason Wright. All members voted unanimously.

The meeting entered into a recess at 6:48 to await the arrival of the 5th member. A motion was made to enter into a recess by Jason Wright. The motion was seconded by Marc Chapdelaine.

A motion to end the recess was made by Marc Chapdelaine at 6:53. The motion was seconded by Jason Wright. All members voted in favor.

14 Townsend Street (030-2023)

The applicant provided the board with a new set of drawings with revisions to the height of the proposed addition to the house. The applicant referenced the public comment about concerns of the height of the house casting a shadow onto abutting properties. The height of the building was reduced by 4' 6" and the 3rd floor living space was reduced to under 50% of the second floor or 290 square feet.

The Chair opened the meeting to public comment on the new design.

Zack Brennen, 77 Tafts Avenue. Did not feel that the new design was a significant revision. It would still impose a shadow onto his back yard.

Jim Nessar, 18 Townsend Street. It is still a 3 story house, they just added a dormer. Has lived in the house next door for 60 years. Concerned that 2x6 construction. Is this safe construction? Condos across the street is 3 floors. How was this allowed? Plans look the same except dormer on the rear. What is the difference?

Ashley Brennen, 77 Tafts Avenue. The lots are all different and had their issues. Will lose the sun for almost the entire afternoon. It feels that we should be mindful of the neighbors.

A motion to close public comment was made by Marc Chapdelaine. The motion was seconded by Tom Chiudina. All members voted unanimously in favor.

The applicant was able to walk the Board through the new drawings. The original height was 34 feet tall. Now the height is 29 feet 6 inches tall. The square footage of the 3rd story is also reduced. It was noted that there was nothing unusual about the lot or unique about the way the existing house is situated on the lot. The Board discussed proving a hardship for the applicant and work to be done.

A motion to approve the variance for side yard set back was made by John Young. The motion was seconded by Jason Wright. Darren Baird voted in favor of the motion. Marc Chapdelaine and Tom Chiudina voted against the motion. The motion does not pass, and the application is denied.

30 Grovers Avenue (041-2023)

The applicant submitted an application for an Airbnb. The owners live onsite. The unit has two bedrooms and a kitchen. There was confusion on the layout of the Airbnb unit and the rest of the dwelling. The board felt that a site walk would be the best option. A site walk was scheduled for January 11, 2024 at 6:00pm.

A motion to continue the hearing until January 11, 2024 was made by Jason Wright. The motion was seconded by Marc Chapdelaine. All members voted in favor.

60 Grand View Avenue (042-2023/043-2023)

The applicant attended to present the application for a single-story addition to the existing single family house. The addition will allow for more living space. The lot is small and a unique shape. The addition will be in line with the existing structure. Abutting neighbors have similar floor plans. The project will be going before Conservation Commission.

The Chair opened up the meeting to public comment. There was no public comment.

A motion to close public comment was made by John Young. The motion was seconded by Marc Chapdelaine. All members voted in favor.

A motion to approve the variance for side yard set back of 3.7 feet was made by Marc Chapdelaine. The motion was seconded by Jason Wright. All members voted in favor.

A motion to approve the special permit for altering or extending a non-conforming structure was made by March Chapdelaine. The motion was seconded by The motion was seconded by Tom Chiudina. All members voted in favor. The hearing was closed.

17 Walden Street (46-2023)

The application was for a parking variance for a fitness/taw kwon do business. There is no off-street parking available for the building where the business will be. The property is currently vacant.

The Chair opened the meeting up to public comment.

Maureen Morrow, 33 Walden Street. Did not understand what a parking variance was and why it was needed. Cars parking in the area for businesses park up against short street and proposes a hazard for exiting Short Street.

Gail Chase, 132 Herman Street. Difficulty getting in and out of Short Street and must back down Walden Street to enter/exit. If cars are parking down on and near Short Street, concerned about getting out of the street. How many kids will be in a class and using the facility.

Karen Chavis, 63 Lincoln Street. Concerned with Walden Street parking and safety issues. With kids entering and existing classes at the studio parents are going to double park because they have no place to park for drop off/pick up. Walden Street has become 75%-80% busier plus bus route. Adding to the parking issue with this business. Think about safety on the street.

A motion to close public comment was made by Jason Wright. The motion was seconded by Tom Chiudina. All members voted in favor.

The applicant currently has his business in Michael's Mall in Winthrop. The rent increased which prompted the move to the new location. The applicant provided the hours of operation of the businesses and classes, which was generally 4:00pm to about 6:00pm. Classes are generally 15-20 people. The Board inquired about belt ceremonies and the crowds that this would draw. The Board noted that the applicant and business should use signage to encourage patrons to park in safe and appropriate areas. Signage may need to be installed near Short Street to prevent people from parking too close to Short Street's curbs to make exiting Short Street safer.

The hardship is that there are no other options for off-street parking.

The Board felt that the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee should review Walden Street parking signage and safety and that a recommendation should be made to have the Committee review the area and identify areas of safety improvement.

The Board identified special conditions for the Decision to be issued:

1. Applicant should post signage instructing patrons to not park on Short Street or at the Pillar House property.
2. Applicant should post signage instructing patrons to post by Ingelside Park.
3. There will be a limitation on special events and that the events be no greater than 10 students.
4. The location only be used as a Martial Arts studio.

A motion to grant relief for a parking variance, at a location that does not offer any off street parking, with the above listed special conditions, was made by Tom Chiudina. The motion was seconded by Jason Wright. All members voted in favor.

A motion to send a recommendation to TSAC to review Walden Street for traffic safety improvement was made by Jason Wright. The motion was seconded by John Young. All members voted in favor.

Adjourn:

A motion was made by Jason Wright to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Jaime Stern. All members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:35.