STAMFORD PLANNING BOARD
APPROVED MINUTES - TUESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2025
REGULAR MEETING
VIA THE INTERNET & CONFERENCE CALL
6:30 p.m.

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Meeting ID: 215 189 352 730 8
Passcode: D9kb2vQ7

Stamford Planning Board Members present were: Voting Members: Jennifer Godzeno, Chair; Jay Tepper, Vice Chair and Jeremy Linder. Alternates: William Levin and Chester Salit. Absent: Ravi Subramanian, Regular Member & Secretary. Present for staff: Lindsey Cohen, Associate Planner.

Ms. Godzeno called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Ms. Godzeno introduced the members of the Board and staff present.

PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

June 24, 2025 (Regular Meeting): After a brief discussion, Mr. Levin moved to ***approve*** the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 24, 2025 with the changes discussed; Mr. Salit seconded the motion, and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 4-0 (Godzeno, Levin, Linder and Salit). (Mr. Tepper was ineligible to vote as he was not present at the June 24, 2025 meeting.)

August 8, 2025 (Special Meeting): After a brief discussion, Mr. Linder moved to ***approve*** the Special Meeting Minutes of August 8, 2025; Mr. Salit seconded the motion, and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 3-0 (Linder, Salit and Tepper). (Ms. Godzeno and Mr. Levin were ineligible to vote as they were not present at the August 8, 2025 meeting.)

August 12, 2025 (Regular Meeting): After a brief discussion, Mr. Levin moved to ***approve*** the Regular Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2025 with the changes discussed; Mr. Salit seconded the motion, and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 4-0 (Levin, Linder, Salit and Tepper). (Ms. Godzeno was ineligible to vote as she was not present at the August 12, 2025 meeting.)

REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION:

1. **LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE CITY OF STAMFORD - PORTION OF BLACHLEY ROAD:** In April 2010, the City leased a portion of Blachley Road (I-95 adjacent) from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT) to allow for a walkway to/from Rogers International School. That lease expired on March 31, 2025. The CT DOT approved a renewal and the basic terms of the new Lease are as follows:

   Rent: There is no monetary consideration required.

   Lease Area: The Leased Area is a 9,359 sq. ft. rectangle bordered by I-95 to the north, Maher Road to the east and Blachley Road to the west.

   Term: The proposed Term is 5 years with two additional 5-year extensions for total possible Term of 15 years.

   Use: The City may use the Lease Area solely for the purpose of providing a pedestrian walkway to/from Rogers International School.

   Other: The City takes the Lease Area as-is and is responsible for any and all permits, utilities and maintenance that may be required. The City must insure the Lease Area per the CT DOT's requirements and hold harmless/ defend the State from any and all claims that may arise out of the City's use of the Lease Area.

Luke Buttenwieser, Transportation Planner, made a brief presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Linder recommended approval of the Lease Agreement between the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation and the City of Stamford for a portion of Blachley Road. This request has been reviewed pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Section 8-24 and the City Charter Section C6-30-13 and finds this request to be consistent with CGS Section 8-24, and the City Charter Section C6-30-13, as well as consistent with the adopted 2015 Master Plan; Mr. Salit seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Godzeno, Levin, Linder, Salit and Tepper).

REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION
SUPPLEMENTAL CAPITAL PROJECT APPROPRIATION REQUESTS:

1. **SIDEWALK EXTENSIONS - PROJECT #CP8706 - TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED $50,000.00:** Pedestrian safety and sidewalk upgrades as part of the Zoning Approval for 120 Hamilton Avenue.

Luke Buttenwieser, Transportation Planner, made a brief presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended approval of the Sidewalk Extensions - Project #CP8706 with a Total Request of $50,000.00. This request has been reviewed pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Section 8-24 and the City Charter Section C6-30-13 and finds this request to be consistent with CGS Section 8-24, and the City Charter Section C6-30-13, as well as consistent with the adopted 2015 Master Plan; Mr. Linder seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Godzeno, Levin, Linder, Salit and Tepper).

Ms. Godzeno noted that the draft 2035 Comprehensive Plan has an action item recommending reducing administrative barriers to development that are burdensome on the City and it's volunteer Boards. Accepting a certain dollar amount that is required to be paid per our Zoning Regulations could be considered one of those items that may not need approval since it is a City requirement.

2. **LIBRARY - HVAC EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT - PROJECT #CP2650 - TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED $400,000.00:** This request is to formally allocate the Ferguson Library's ARPA funding to this HVAC project, ensuring the funds are applied toward the planned infrastructure improvements and associated project costs.

Joshua Noggle, Building Systems Engineer, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Levin recommended approval of the Sidewalk Extensions - Project #CP2650 with a Total Request of $400,000.00. This request has been reviewed pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Section 8-24 and the City Charter Section C6-30-13 and finds this request to be consistent with CGS Section 8-24, and the City Charter Section C6-30-13, as well as consistent with the adopted 2015 Master Plan; Mr. Salit seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Godzeno, Levin, Linder, Salit and Tepper).

Mr. Salit asked whether this would be an example of a project that might not need to be reviewed by the Planning Board since it is simply a re-allocation of dollars from one account to another. Ms. Godzeno said perhaps a threshold could be considered.

ZONING BOARD REFERRALS:

1. **ZB APPLICATION #225-23 - CONTINENTAL FAMILY HOLDINGS, LLC - 23 BARRY PLACE - Site & Architectural Plans and/or Requested Uses and Special Permit:** Applicant is proposing to construct 60 townhomes and a 201-unit apartment building with a total of 474 parking spaces and associated amenities.

The Application is referred to the Planning Board by the Zoning Board due to the Special Permit requirement for any residential structure containing ten or more dwelling units, developing/altering 40,000 sq. ft. of lot area, and creating more than 100 parking spaces.

The Planning Board approved a Master Plan change for this property at its May 21, 2024 public meeting, placing this property partly in Master Plan Category #3 (Residential - Low Density Multifamily, eastern portion of the site fronting on Barry Place) and partly in Master Plan Category #5 (Residential - High Density Multifamily, western 'rear' portion of the site). These two categories were found to be more aligned with the surrounding small-lot single-family residential neighborhood than the pre-existing Master Plan Category 13 (Industrial - General). The proposed project is aligned with these two Master Plan categories by providing different housing types.

Master Plan Category #3 is intended to provide for the amenities of multifamily living in a single-family neighborhood setting. The proposed project would result in townhomes (potentially for ownership) in this area. This portion of the property fronts on Barry Place, so it is adjacent to single-family homes across the street. The townhome typology is generally agreed upon to be a good transition between apartments and single-family homes. Residents will have access to shared club services, providing the amenities of multifamily living. In addition, residents are proximate to the Downtown and transit center, aligning with amenities of multifamily living.

Master Plan Category #5 is intended to provide for and protect high-density multifamily development in areas convenient to shopping, mass transit and park and recreation facilities. Incorporates Zoning Board review on the basis of compatibility with adjacent development, superior design, amenities for Downtown living, and convenience to Downtown jobs and activities. I would not say shopping is convenient, but it is accessible in a short drive. Transit center is also over a mile away so that is not too convenient. Park and recreation facilities are nearby with newly improved Boccuzzi Park. The residential use of this property is more compatible with neighboring uses than an industrial office building. In addition, the design would be an improvement. There are, however, areas of improvement (transit) that will rely on City- or state-led efforts.

The project proposes providing all BMR units on site which aligns with Strategy 3C.3: Maintain the affordable housing stock to ensure that people who work in Stamford can afford to live in Stamford (on-site BMR units) and Policy 6B: Create new affordable housing. The proposed project would provide apartment units and townhome units which is aligned with Master Plan Strategy 6C.2: promote the development of a variety of housing types.

Similar to ZB #225-15, the Downtown is not far away but accessing it by other means besides car is unattractive - either there are not clean safe sidewalks for walking, frequent and direct bus service, protected bike lanes. These will be critical to the City's ability to maintain quality of life while accommodating for increased population density.

Michael Cacace, Cacace Tusch & Santagata, along with his team, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended **approval** of ***ZB Application #225-23*** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #3 (Residential - Low Density Multifamily) and Master Plan Category #5 (Residential - High Density Multifamily); Mr. Salit seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Godzeno, Levin, Linder, Salit and Tepper).

2. **ZB APPLICATION #225-24 - 492 GLENBROOK ROAD, LLC - 488 GLENBROOK ROAD and 37 & 41 PARKER AVENUE - Site & Architectural Plans and/or Requested Uses and Special Permit:** Applicant is proposing to construct a multifamily residential community containing 19 apartments, 28 off-street parking spaces and associated site improvements.

The Application is referred to the Planning Board by the Zoning Board due to the Special Permit requests pursuant to Section 5.JJ.5.f(1)(d) of the Zoning Regulations to permit substantial new construction in the Village-Commercial Zoning District, Section 5.JJ.4.b(16) to waive the 24-inch elevation for ground-floor apartments, and Section 12.K.5 to alter the sidewalk design criteria.
The Planning Board recommended approval of a request to re-zone 37 & 41 Parker Avenue at their June 24, 2024 public meeting. The Zoning Board subsequently approved the zoning map change. The project for consideration is the result of the approval and combines the aforementioned lots with a lot already in the Village-Commercial Zoning District, 488 Glenbrook Road.

All three lots are in Master Plan Category #6 (Commercial - Neighborhood Business). "This category is intended to provide for and promote pedestrian-scaled "Main Street" environments" as aligned with the 2006 neighborhood plan for Glenbrook. Current land uses are mixed, including commercial, mixed use, and residential with one- two- three- and multi-family homes. The proposed project is infill development of two vacant lots on Parker and one lot on Glenbrook with extensive parking fronting the active commercial street and a small industrial office use at the rear. The proposed building would meet the street, activating the frontage to create a better pedestrian experience, filling in a gap in the Main Street area of Glenbrook. As such, the project also aligns with Strategy 6A.4, "Support neighborhood generated revitalization plans"

This site in particular has a prominent location in close proximity to the Glenbrook Train Station across Glenbrook Avenue and 0.1 miles away. Residents will be within walking distance from many neighborhood amenities including the train, bus, restaurants, cleaners, childcare and the local elementary school. The infill development will "Create vibrant mixed-use centers that are pedestrian- and transit-friendly" (Policy BGS1) which in turn will help "balance new development with preservation of existing residential communities" (Policy 6A: Maintain Residential Neighborhood character) by providing opportunities to enliven the Main Street and provide residents opportunities to walk and not contribute to roadway traffic.

The proposed project creates 19 apartments including three (3) BMR units at or below 50% AMI, which aligns with Policy 6B to "create new affordable housing."

The Applicant developed a similar building on the lot adjacent to this one. That building included ground-floor commercial spaces. Staff does recommend considering activating the ground floor with commercial space, however there may be a reason for the Applicant not doing so based on the experience from the past project. In addition, staff recommend using high quality materials along Glenbrook Avenue as is required by the V-C District zoning regulations.

Jason Klein, Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey, LLP, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Linder recommended **approval** of ***ZB Application #225-24*** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #6 (Commercial - Neighborhood Business); Mr. Tepper seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Godzeno, Levin, Linder, Salit and Tepper).

3. **ZB APPLICATION #225-25 - THE STAMFORD HOSPITAL - 31 WRIGHT STREET - Map Change:** Applicant is proposing a Map Change for the 31 Wright Street property from the current R-5 (Multiple Family Medium Density Design) Zoning District to the proposed HCDD (Hospital Complex Design District) Zoning.

4. **<u>ZB APPLICATION #225-26 - THE STAMFORD HOSPITAL - 31 WRIGHT STREET - Site & Architectural Plans and/or Requested Uses and General Development Plan</u>:** Applicant is proposing to construct a new parking lot and to modify the General Development Plan to incorporate the Wright Street property.

Zoning Board Applications #225-25 and #225-26 are referred to the Planning Board by the Zoning Board due to being a Zoning Map change, a request to modify a general development plan pursuant to Section 5.M.6.d and final site plan approval pursuant to Section 5.M.6.a.

The property is in Master Plan Category #3 (Residential - Low Density Multifamily). Surrounding properties are also in MP #3. The property was formerly a residence which was recently demolished, and the site sits vacant. To the north, northwest and south of the property is Stamford Health. To the east, across Wright Street, are homes ranging from single-family to-, two-, three- and multi-family.

Th proposed project is aligned with Master Plan Policy WS1.8 to "Support the planned expansion of Stamford Hospital and the Vita Health and Wellness District initiative, which shall be considered the City's primary health services district."

Given the lot's location surrounded by the hospital, adding the lot to the hospital's campus does make logical sense. The hospital is in need of more parking. Perhaps if public transit access to the hospital were more convenient and efficient, they would need less parking. Additionally, many employees of Stamford Health commute to Stamford. If employees had access to housing options they could afford, perhaps the hospital would require less parking if employees because they would live closer and have different transit options. Given that transit accessibility and housing opportunities are works in progress; this proposal appears to meet the hospital's immediate need.

William Hennessey, Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey, LLP, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Levin recommended **approval** of ***ZB Application #225-25*** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #3 (Residential - Low Density Multifamily); Mr. Salit seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Godzeno, Levin, Linder, Subramanian and Tepper).

After a brief discussion, Mr. Salit recommended **approval** of ***ZB Application #225-26*** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #3 (Residential - Low Density Multifamily); Mr. Linder seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Godzeno, Levin, Linder, Subramanian and Tepper).

5. **<u>APPLICATION 225-31- RAYMOND MAZZEO, REDNISS & MEAD - Zoning Text Change</u>:** The purpose of this Text Change is to revise Section 2 (Permits and Approvals) to match the expiration and extension timing of Variance approvals to be consistent with both Site Plan and Special Permit approvals.

The Application is referred to the Planning Board by the Zoning Board due to being a text change. The purpose of this application is to standardize expiration and extension timing to make approvals easier to manage and to allow for a more reasonable time frame in which to do all the necessary things that need to be done between Zoning Board/Zoning Board of Appeals approval and Building Permit.

The Applicant notes they have seen an uptick in expiration extension requests and Staff concurs; there have been more requests. In addition, I have also seen that it is taking longer for Applicants to meet all the requirements of various departments prior to Building Permit. This Text Change will reduce the administrative burden on the Applicant's side and the City's side.

Raymond Mazzeo, Redniss & Mead, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended **approval** of ***ZB Application #225-31*** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #3 (Residential - Low Density Multifamily); Mr. Levin seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Godzeno, Alternate, Linder, Subramanian and Tepper).

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS REFERRALS:

1. **ZBA APPLICATION #019-25 - MIGUEL SOSTRE representing JASON GAYNOR - 32 APPLE TREE LANE - Variance of Table II, Appendix B:** Applicant owns a single-family dwelling with a shed and is requesting one variance to allow for an addition on the dwelling. Applicant is requesting a side yard setback of 12.6 ft. in lieu of the 15 ft. required.

The property is in Master Plan Category #2 (Residential - Low Density Single-Family). Directly adjacent and surrounding uses are all single-family homes that align with the Master Plan Category #2. The property is approximately 0.4 miles west of High Ridge Road (10-minute walk), a state thoroughfare and arterial commercial destination within the Master Plan Category #7 (Commercial - Arterial).

The variance request seems minor, however there is simply no hardship, no reason specific to this piece of property to be granted a deviation from the Zoning Regulations. It is above the minimum lot size, there is only one frontage, there are no wetlands or difficult topography. There is significant developable land area within a zoning compliant area. In addition, the home has functioned as-is without a bigger kitchen.

The use of the property complies with the Master Plan category with or without the variance.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended **approval** of ***ZBA Application #019-25*** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #2 (Residential - Low Density Single-Family); Mr. Linder seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Godzeno, Levin, Linder, Subramanian and Tepper).

2. **ZBA APPLICATION #020-25 - JOHN & OLIVIA DOWNING - 276 DEN ROAD - Variance of Table II, Appendix B:** Applicant owns a single-family dwelling and is requesting variance to allow for an addition on the dwelling. Applicant is requesting a side yard setback of 2.3 ft. in lieu of the 25 ft. required.

The property is in Master Plan Category #1 (Residential - Very Low Density Single-Family). Directly adjacent and surrounding uses are all single-family homes that align with the Master Plan Category #1. The dwelling is legally non-compliant with respect to setbacks; the existing building is completely within the required front and side yard setbacks. Any addition to the dwelling would require a variance. The portion of the addition for which the variance is sought aligns with the current encroachment into the side yard. The addition would not further encroach into the side yard.

The use of the property complies with the Master Plan category with or without the variance.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended **approval** of ***ZBA Application #020-25*** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #1 (Residential - Very Low Density Single-Family); Mr. Salit seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Godzeno, Levin, Linder, Salit and Tepper).

3. **ZBA APPLICATION #013-25 - CHRIS RUSSO, RUSSO & RIZIO, LLC representing McDONALD'S REAL ESTATE COMPANY - 1103 EAST MAIN STREET - Variance of Section 11.F, Section 12.D.10.b & Section 10.B.1 (*TABLED from the May 20, 2025 & June 10, 2025 meetings*):** The site contains an existing two-story masonry building for a McDonald's fast-food restaurant with drive-through facility. The applicant proposes the addition of a second drive-through lane with associated signage and site improvements. The existing restaurant will remain. Applicant is requesting the following:

   Section 11.F: Allowance of a springboard canopy, a digital pre-browse menu board of approximately 10 sq. ft. and an outdoor digital menu board of approximately 21 sq. ft. along the second drive-through lane.

   Section 12.D.10.b:

   - Reduction of the off-street parking requirement for a drive-through fast-food restaurant from the existing sixty-one (61) to thirty-seven (37) spaces where sixty-five (65) spaces are required.
   - Modification of a prior zoning approval which was conditioned as being approved per plans to modify the Site Plan to install a second drive-through lane, a springboard canopy, a digital pre-browse menu board and an outdoor digital menu board.

   Section 10.B.1: Allowance to enlarge an existing nonconforming drive-through facility where drive-through facilities are no longer permitted.

Chris Russo, Russo & Rizio, LLC, along with Ethan Schukoske, TBD Engineering, made a presentation and answered questions from the Board.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Tepper recommended **approval** of ***ZBA Application #013-25*** and that this request is in general harmony with Master Plan Category #2 (Residential - Low Density Single-Family); Mr. Salit seconded the motion and passed unanimously with eligible members present voting, 5-0 (Godzeno, Levin, Linder, Salit and Tepper).

Next regularly scheduled Planning Board meetings are:

- September 2, 2025 (Regular Meeting)
- September 9, 2025 (Public Hearing-Comprehensive Plan)
- September 16, 2025 (Public Hearing-Comprehensive Plan Adoption)

Mr. Salit asked about the Planning Board meeting schedule with regard to the 2035 Comprehensive Plan and the Board had a discussion about the upcoming scheduled meetings, meeting procedure and potential additional date(s).

The Board also had considerable discussion regarding the Public Hearings on September 9 & September 16, 2025.

Mr. Tepper announced that he would be stepping down from the Board. Ms. Godzeno wished him well.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Ms. Godzeno adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
August 28, 2025

Jennifer Godzeno, Chair
Stamford Planning Board

NOTE: These proceedings were recorded on video and are available for review on the Planning Board website at *http://cityofstamford.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=20*