Wallingford Zoning Board of Appeals

October 19, 2026

7:00 p.m.

Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers
Town Hall – 45 South Main Street

Minutes

Present: Thomas Wolfer, Chairman; Bruce Conroy, Vice Chair; Robert Gross, Secretary; Board Members: Raymond Rys; Chris Larocque; Robert Prentice; Rachel Shamaly, Land Use Specialist/Zoning Enforcement Officer; and Kevin Pagini, Town Planner.

Chairman Wolfer called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Voting members tonight are *Conroy, Gross, Rys, Prentice, and Chairman Wolfer.*

Chairman Wolfer noted that tonight's decisions will be published in the Record-Journal on Friday, October 23, 2026. The effective date of your variance will be Friday, October 23, 2026, the date a certified copy is recorded on the land records. The statutory 15-day appeal period will expire on Sunday, November 8, 2026. If you commence operations and/or construction during the appeal period, you do so at your own risk.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. ***#26-011/Special Exception Request/Gentile/Garage Area of 1,662 sq. ft. (max. 936 sq. ft. allowed) to construct a 1,200 sq. ft. detached garage at 1549 Tuttle Avenue in an RU-40 District. and***
2. ***#26-012/Variance Request/Gentile/Building Coverage of 13% (max. 10% allowed) to construct a 1,200 sq. ft. detached garage at 1549 Tuttle Avenue – RU-40 District.***

Mr. Gross read the staff notes into the record. The applicant is requesting a Special Exception for a garage area and a Variance to increase building coverage on the property by 3% over what is allowed by right in the RU-40 zoning district. The property has ample space for the additional garage area; the proposed detached garage is height- and location-compliant. The buildings and lot were created prior to the adoption of the Zoning Regulations in October of 1958 and therefore are undersized for the current zoning designation. Correspondence included a letter from OCC group received July 23, 2026, with the drawing and letter from Faris and Ashley Aruri, neighbors, received July 27, 2026.

Mike Gentile, 1549 Tuttle Avenue, and Dominic DiMartino, 920 South Colony Road, explained the application.

Mr. DiMartino explained that Mr. Gentile is a car collector and wants to bring all his cars to his property. The plans are for 1200 sq. ft. garage (30 ft. x 40 ft.) with a single door. His neighbor to the left would be most affected and supports this.

Chairman Wolfer asked what is stored in the other two garages. Mr. Gentile replied that he has a total of 7 cars, but only two on the property now. He also has a couple of antique motorcycles and has very little storage space in the house. He will not do repairs to the cars.

Mr. Rys asked if there would be plumbing or drainage at the garage and if he would be doing any bodywork or mechanical work there. Mr. Gentile replied no.

Mr. Gross asked if he would do oil or coolant changes. Mr. Gentile replied no. Mr. Gross asked about paving up to the new garage. Mr. Gentile replied that the garage is at the end of the stone driveway. He may pave it in the future. Mr. DiMartino explained that the garage will be 24 ft. ahead of the garage that exists. It will be about 170 ft. away from the road. Mr. Gentile added that the front of the new garage will be in line with the back of the house. Mr. DiMartino stated that it is larger by 300 sq. ft. Tall pine trees will block the view for all neighbors except one. Mr. Gross noted that this is a large structure in a residential neighborhood. The two garages together will be larger than the house. Mr. DiMartino disagreed. Mr. Gross noted that the maximum coverage is 10% and this will make it 13%, as well as adding an impervious driveway. Mr. DiMartino said the current gravel driveway will remain.

Mr. Conroy asked about the hardship for the variance. Mr. DiMartino replied that the zoning changed 3 or 4 years ago. Mr. Pagini stated that there has been no change. The application was required due to the size. He noted that the lot is undersized for the district.

PUBLIC COMMENT
None

Hearing no public comment, Chairman Wolfer closed the public hearing and asked for discussion or possible action.

> **Mr. Gross: Motion to approve application #26-011/Gentile/Special Exception/1549 Tuttle Avenue for a Special Exception Request for Total Garage Area of 1,662 sq. ft., where 462 Sq. Ft. exists and 936 sq. ft. maximum is permitted to construct a 1,200 sq. ft. detached garage at 1549 Tuttle Avenue as shown on the Property Survey, showing the proposed detached garage on the property of Michael J. Gentile, 1549 Tuttle Avenue, dated August 20, 2024, and submitted plans received July 23, 2026.**
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> **Mr. Rys: Second**
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> **Vote: Conroy – no to approve; Gross – no to approve; Rys – yes to approve; Prentice - yes to approve; and Chairman Wolfer – yes to approve.**

The application is denied.

> **Mr. Gross: Motion to approve application #26-012/Gentile/Variance Request/1549 Tuttle Avenue for a Variance Request for Building Coverage of 13% where 8% exists and a maximum of 10% is permitted to construct a 1,200 sq. ft. detached garage at 1549 Tuttle Avenue as shown on Property Survey, showing proposed detached garage on property of Michael J. Gentile, 1549 Tuttle Avenue, dated August 20, 2024 and submitted plans received July 23, 2026.**
>
> **Mr. Rys: Second**

Vote: Conroy – no to approve; Gross – no to approve; Rys – yes to approve; Prentice - yes to approve; and Chairman Wolfer – no to approve.

The application is denied.

3. ***#26-013/Variance Request/Westbrook/Front Yard setback variance of 44.2 feet where 50 feet is required to construct a front door overhang at 17 Fawn Drive – RU-40 District.***

Mr. Gross read the staff notes into the record. The applicant is requesting a variance to extend an addition for a front overhang approximately 6 feet into the required front yard setback in the RU-40 zoning district. The overhang, as observed by a site visit, confirmed by the building department, as well as by the Assessor's records, is already built. The Board should verify this with the applicant, and this approval would bring the applicant into compliance. The Board should make the applicant aware that they should receive the variance first before building any addition the next time around.

Heather and Mike Westbrook, 17 Fawn Drive, presented.

Chairman Wolfer confirmed that they received the stop work order from the Building Inspector.

Ms. Westbrook explained that since receiving the order, they stopped work and followed the required steps to get here today. Mr. Westbrook stated that they had no intention to bypass the permit. The house was re-sided and the roof redone. It was an oversight. They thought the overhang was included in the permit for the siding.

Mr. Gross confirmed that they had a permit for the siding and roof and that the same contractor did the overhang.

Mr. Conroy clarified that the contractor didn't include the overhang in the permit.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Hearing no public comment, Chairman Wolfer closed the public hearing and asked for discussion or possible action.

Mr. Gross: Motion to approve application #26-013/Variance Request/Westbrook/17 Fawn Drive for a Variance Request for a front yard of 44.2 ft., where 50.3 ft. exists, and 50 ft. is required to construct a front overhang addition at 17 Fawn Drive as shown on Zoning Location Survey, property of Michael and Heather Westbrook, 17 Fawn Drive, dated May 1, 2026, and submitted plans received August 4, 2026.

Mr. Rys: Second

Vote: Conroy – yes to approve; Gross – yes to approve; Rys – yes to approve; Prentice - yes to approve; and Chairman Wolfer – yes to approve.

The application is approved.

4. ***#26-014/Special Exception Request/DeBaise/Garage Area of 1,376 sq. ft. (max. 936 sq. ft. allowed) to construct an 804 sq. ft. detached garage expansion at 45 Country Club Lane – R-18 District.***

Mr. Gross read the staff notes into the record. The applicant is requesting a Special Exception for a garage area to construct an expansion on a pre-existing 672 sq. ft. detached garage by 704 sq. ft. for a total area of 1,376 sq. ft. of garage area. The property has ample space for the additional garage area; the proposed detached garage is height- and location-compliant. The second page of the application was corrected as the numbers didn't match the square footage on the survey.

Tim DeBaise, 25 Country Club Lane, explained that he has a 3-car garage that is full. He collects cars and needs storage. He is adding an additional 700 sq. ft. to the existing garage. He will go back 13.3 ft. and 8.6 ft. to the right.

Chairman Wolfer asked if he would be doing any car repairs there. Mr. DeBaise replied no.

Mr. Gross asked for an explanation of the location. Mr. DeBaise replied that he is adding on to the existing garage. It is now 22 ft. deep and 30 ft. wide. It will be within the setback, so 20 ft. from the neighbor. Mr. Gross noted that it will be 1,300 sq. ft. in total, which is a big garage for the neighborhood. He added that Mr. DeBaise is entitled to do a small addition. Mr. Pagini stated that this is a bit more than what he is entitled to do. He gets 936 sq. ft. by right and is only asking for 400 sq. ft. extra. Mr. Gross noted that there is a trailer there. Mr. DeBaise replied that it is not there all the time. He added that he has three collector cars plus needs room for storage. He added that there is a house not too far away with a couple of big garages.

Mr. Prentice asked if the neighbors had any issues with this. This will be seen from the road. Mr. DeBaise replied no.

PUBLIC COMMENT
None

Hearing no public comment, Chairman Wolfer closed the public hearing and asked for discussion or possible action.

> **Mr. Gross: Motion to approve application #26-014 – Special Exception Request/DeBaise/45 Country Club Lane for a Special Exception request for Total Garage Area of 1,376 sq. ft. where 672 sq. ft. exists and 936 sq. ft maximum is permitted to expand an existing 672 sq. ft. detached garage by another 704 sq. ft. at 45 Country Club Lane as shown on Property Survey, showing proposed detached garage expansion on property of Tim DeBaise, 45 Country Club Lane, dated August 2, 2026 and submitted plans received August 10, 2026.**
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> **Mr. Rys: Second**
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> **Vote: Conroy – no to approve; Gross – no to approve; Rys – yes to approve; Prentice - yes to approve; and Chairman Wolfer – yes to approve.**

The application is denied.

5. ***#26-015/Special Exception Request/Kroher/Garage Area of 1,464 sq. ft. (max. 936 sq. ft. allowed) to construct an 884 sq. ft. detached garage at 38 Pieper Drive – R-18 District.***

Mr. Gross read the staff notes into the record. The applicant is requesting a Special Exception for garage area to construct an 884± sq. ft. detached garage for a total area of 1,464± sq. ft. of garage area (an attached 528 ± sq. ft. garage currently exists). The property has ample space for the additional garage area; the proposed detached garage is height and location compliant. This application was heard at a previous meeting and was denied due to non-compliance with height requirements. A closer look at this returning application revealed that the applicant had submitted the previous application with the wrong parcel survey and incorrect abutters. The corrected application with the applicant's correct lot of record gives them approximately another 3,000± sq. ft. compared to the previous application that was submitted. The lot that was submitted with the previous application was Lot 42 from the original Pieper Drive subdivision map in 1973, and the applicant's actual lot is Lot 10.

Mr. Pagini noted that the corrections have been made. This was an oversight by the Building Department. His property is actually Lot 10. He added that the height is now compliant.

Tom Kroher, 38 Pieper Drive, stated that he is building a three-car garage because the existing garage is too small and he needs bigger doors for his vehicles. He also needs space for a wheelchair accessible van as well as two antique boats.

Mr. Gross asked about the location and if the driveway is extended already.

Mr. Pagini clarified that a Variance requires hardship. A Special Exception is considered if it meets certain conditions such as fitting the neighborhood.

Mr. Conroy noted that the lot size hasn't changed much with the corrected lot number. He would like to see a smaller garage.

Mr. Kroher noted that his neighbor was recently approved for a 30x40 garage. He showed photos of garages in the neighborhood.

Ms. Shamaly noted that the existing attached garage is 528 sq. ft. and that a smaller proposal would be acceptable.

Mr. Pagini noted that the Board can keep this application open to think about whether it is acceptable in the neighborhood. Any accessibility question would be more of an accommodation. The Board can suggest changes as well.

Chairman Wolfer stated that the Board can vote on what was presented or keep it open. He stated that he would like to see something smaller. Consensus was to vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Hearing no public comment, Chairman Wolfer closed the public hearing and asked for discussion or possible action.

Mr. Gross: Motion to approve application #26-015 – Special Exception Request /Kroher/38 Pieper Drive for a Special Exception request for Total Garage Area of 1,464 sq. ft. where 528 sq. ft. exists and 936 sq. ft. maximum is permitted to construct an 884 sq. ft. detached garage at 38 Pieper Drive as shown on Property Survey map, showing proposed detached garage on property of Thomas Kroher, 38 Pieper Drive, and submitted plans received August 10, 2026.

Mr. Conroy: Second

Vote: Conroy – yes to approve; Gross – yes to approve; Rys – yes to approve; Prentice - yes to approve; and Chairman Wolfer – yes to approve.

The application is approved.

6. ***#26-016/Special Exception Request/Ulbrich Steel Inc./Sign Area of 1,182 sq. ft. (max. 682 sq. ft. allowed) at 1 Dudley Ave – I-20 District.***

Mr. Gross read the staff notes into the record. The applicant is requesting a Special Exception for maximum sign area to install a 700± sq. ft. building sign for a total area of 1/182± sq. ft. of total sign area, where 682 sq. ft. is allowed. The company has multiple buildings, and the additional signage would be placed on the side of the building and should not present a visual or aesthetic impediment to the surrounding area.

Laurie Keily for 1 Dudley Avenue and John Ulbrich, 1 Dudley Avenue, presented.

Mr. Ulbrich explained that they have been updating their cultural signage at their facilities around their purpose statement. This will be a banner of their 100-year history. It will be put in their highest traffic area between buildings to be seen by their workforce.

Mr. Gross asked if it will be illuminated. Ms. Keily replied no. They are just asking for additional square footage. The sign will not be facing the road.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Hearing no public comment, Chairman Wolfer closed the public hearing and asked for discussion or possible action.

Mr. Gross: Motion to approve application #26-016 – Special Exception Request/Ulbrich Steel Inc./1 Dudley Ave for a Special Exception Request for Total Sign Area of 1,182 sq. ft. where 482 sq. ft. exists to place a 700 sq. ft. building mounted sign at 1 Dudley Avenue as shown on documentation dated August 13, 2026, showing proposed signage on the property of Ulbrich Stainless Steel and Specialty Metals, 1 Dudley Avenue and submitted plans received August 14, 2026.

Mr. Conroy: Second

Vote: Conroy – yes to approve; Gross – yes to approve; Rys – yes to approve; Prentice - yes to approve; and Chairman Wolfer – yes to approve.

The application is approved.

7. ***#26-017/Special Exception Request/Godinez/Customary Home Occupation – Nail Salon at 580 Gianotti Ct. – R-6 District***

Mr. Gross read the staff notes into the record. The applicant is requesting a Special Exception for a Customary Home Occupation – Nail Salon at 580 Gianotti Ct. in an R-6 District. The applicant has identified a location within the dwelling on the upper floor, which has approximately 660 sq. ft. total available, including a bathroom. The Board should condition any approval on the use of no more than 500 sq. ft. of the attic space for the home occupation use, which the Applicant has been made aware of before the meeting. The homeowner's daughter, who is also a resident in the home, will be the sole employee, serving one customer at a time. Off-street parking is provided. No signage or retail services are proposed or permitted.

Debra Godinez, 580 Gianotti Court, presented that they want to set her daughter up with a nail salon in the attic. This is to start her first business.

Chairman Wolfer asked if they will overlap appointments. Ms. Godinez replied no. Chairman Wolfer clarified that there is enough parking. Ms. Godinez replied yes. Chairman Wolfer asked if they will be able to use only 500 sq. ft. of the available 600 sq. ft. Ms. Godinez replied yes.

Mr. Gross noted that it is all one open room. Ms. Godinez replied that there is nothing there now. Mr. Gross asked Mr. Pagini if the town will go back and verify that they are only using 500 sq. ft. Mr. Pagini replied that prior to a building permit, the Building Department will review the layout. Mr. Gross asked if they will abide by the 500 sq. ft. limit. Ms. Godinez said yes.

Mr. Conroy confirmed that there will only be one client at a time. Ms. Godinez agreed.

Mr. Larocque asked if there are any plans to build a structure to limit it to 500 sq. ft. Ms. Godinez replied that they will if they have to.

Ms. Shamaly noted that this can be a condition of approval.

Mr. Gross suggested a condition that there be only one client at a time.

PUBLIC COMMENT
None

Hearing no public comment, Chairman Wolfer closed the public hearing and asked for discussion or possible action.

> **Mr. Gross: Motion to approve application #26-017 – Special Exception Request/Godinez/580 Gianotti Ct. for a Special Exception Request for Customary Home Occupation – Nail Salon as shown on submitted plans at 580 Gianotti Court received September 9, 2026 and as shown on documentation received October 14, 2026, subject to the following conditions:**
> 1. **Home occupation not to occupy more than the maximum 500 sq. ft. of available attic space.**
> 2. **Only one customer permitted at a time.**
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> **Mr. Conroy: Second**

Vote: Conroy – yes to approve; Gross – yes to approve; Rys – yes to approve; Prentice - yes to approve; and Chairman Wolfer – yes to approve.

The application is approved.

8. ***#26-018/Variance Request/McNulty/Side Yard setback variance of 3.91 feet where 12 feet is required to construct a side egress at 722 Center St., R-11 District.***

Mr. Gross read the staff notes into the record. The applicant is requesting a Variance to build a covered side egress required by the Fire Department, approximately 8 feet 1 inches into the required side yard setback in the R-11 District. The house, built in 1898, predates the inception of zoning, and there is an existing non-conforming structure in the side yard setback (11.8' where 12' is required). This building was previously approved for conversion into a three-family home, and the Fire Marshal is requiring an independent egress to the third floor, with a 10' separation buffer from the main house. The Applicant reviewed alternatives with the local Fire Marshal and Wallingford's Chief Building Officer and determined that the proposed egress location is the only compliant location to meet fire code restrictions.

Francis McNulty, 8 Salted Lane, Durham, presented. He stated that he was approved two years ago for converting a two-family house into a three-family house. He added a second stairway in the front to allow a second egress for the third floor. The Fire Marshal requires an independent egress for the third floor. It was determined that the best option is to come off the second-floor landing. It has to be 10 feet off the side of the house and run to the back of the house. He noted that he has more things to do for fire prevention as well. The stairway will be just shy of 4 ft. from the property line, so the required stairs cut into the setback.

Chairman Wolfer clarified that he worked with the Fire Marshal and the Building Department. Mr. McNulty confirmed and noted that this was their recommendation.

Mr. Larocque asked for the architectural drawings, which Mr. McNulty provided.

Mr. Gross asked if there is already an apartment on the third floor. Mr. McNulty replied no. It is currently storage, and the second-floor apartment does not have permission to use the third floor. Mr. Gross asked about the hardship. Mr. McNulty replied that the house was built in 1898. is not in the middle of the lot, and the property line is angled. He has notes from all the abutting neighbors that they have no objection. Mr. Gross noted that the hardship can't be financial. Since he will be renting the apartment, he is doing it for profit. Ms. Shamaly noted that considerations are the inception of zoning and the geography of the lot. Financial is also part of the consideration.

Mr. McNulty noted that the Town wants to increase housing density. He is restricted in trying to make the house conform to the existing stairs, the lot shape, and the Fire Marshal's request. He stated that he couldn't put the stairway out the back due to the Fire Marshal and the Building Department.

Mr. Prentice asked if he could get the stairs closer. Mr. McNulty replied that there is a jut-out for the first floor bathroom. The walls need to be fireproofed, and he will need to change the windows so they are fireproof. Nothing will bring it closer than 10 ft.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Hearing no public comment, Chairman Wolfer asked for discussion or possible action.

Mr. Conroy noted that off the back would be more compliant.
Mr. Gross agreed.

Mr. Pagini stated that the application can be left open and we can ask the Fire Marshal to see if the back is an option.

Mr. McNulty reported that he sent a letter to the Fire Marshal and the Building Department and gave them copies of everything. He hasn't heard back yet.

Chairman Wolfer believes that the Fire Marshal told him to do it this way.

Mr. Gross: Motion to continue application #26-018 – Variance Request/McNulty/722 Center Street to the November meeting to get clarification from the Fire Marshal on egress.

Mr. Conroy: Second

Vote: Conroy – yes to approve; Gross – yes to approve; Rys – yes to approve; Prentice - yes to approve; and Chairman Wolfer – yes to approve.

The application is continued.

Ms. Shamaly reported that staff can reach out to the Fire Marshal.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

1. **July 20, 2026, Regular Meeting**

Mr. Rys: Motion to accept the July 20, 2026, Zoning Board of Appeals Minutes as submitted.

Mr. Conroy: Second
Vote: Unanimous

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Conroy: Motion to adjourn the October 19, 2026, regular meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals at 8:20 p.m.

Mr. Rys: Second
Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl-Ann Tubby
Recording Secretary