



Haverhill

Economic Development and Planning

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CITY OF HAVERHILL PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

September 9, 2026 – 7:00 PM
City Hall, City Council Chambers, Room 202

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Paul Howard.

Roll Call:

Present were Members Mike Morales, April DerBoghossian, Freddy Perez, Nate Robertson, William Evans, Chairman Paul Howard, Planning Director Jacki Byerley and Planning Head Clerk Melanie Sloan.

Conduct of Hearing:

The Board read the standard conduct of hearing procedures into the record

Public Hearing:

Site Plan Review Dover Use – 121 Merrimack Street (PBDA-26-1) (Map 106 Block 9 Lot 24)

Davinci Mini Apartments requested a site plan review dover use for use of 121 Merrimack Street as a childcare facility for 56 children and 18-20 full-time staff on the first floor of a four-story building; and for the remaining 3 floors the applicant is seeking a special permit from the City Council for 12 apartment units. The applicant has withdrawn. Member Robertson made a motion to accept, and Member Morales seconded. Motion passed 6-0.

Special Permit to Amend Chapter 255 - 931 Boston Road (Map 754 Block 2 Lot 21)

The applicant is seeking to amend the Chapter 255 Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map by creating a Special Permit Planned Development District in accordance with Section 8.5 of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant, Pentucket North Development LLC, is requesting a special permit for a planned residential development on a portion of land owned by Cedardale Inc, to construct six duplex units and two single family units. The property is currently zoned Commercial Highway (CH).

Director Byerley began the discussion on the continued public hearing, noting that the session had previously been initiated. Both the applicant and his attorney were present to provide an update on their progress. She stated that the purpose of the evening's presentation was to review the work completed since the prior meeting, including updates relating to traffic, stormwater, utilities, and neighborhood concerns. Attorney Channing, representing applicant Ron Mailloux, provided an overview of the materials submitted. He explained that the development team had completed both a stormwater study and a traffic study, each of which had undergone peer

review. Earlier in the day, the applicant received the peer review prepared for the City of Haverhill, and the team had begun evaluating the recommendations. Attorney Channing stated that several concerns had been raised by residents of I Street, and the applicant was willing to incorporate improvements addressing those concerns.

Regarding stormwater, Attorney Channing noted that Engineering firm Morin & Cameron had authored a memo detailing required actions. The applicant had met with MassDOT, the Planning Department, the City Engineer, and Fire and Police Departments to discuss I Street and the general project. Water & Sewer staff requested a hydraulic flow analysis for the existing water main, which will be performed by the applicants' consultants. The applicant's engineer indicated that access from Route 125 was unlikely to be feasible; nonetheless, the team would reconfirm with MassDOT. Channing noted that widening I Street was discussed in the peer review and, even prior to receiving the review, the applicant had already committed to widening and repairing the road in an effort to address neighborhood concerns. Additional guest parking would be added on site. A sewer capacity analysis would also be performed and submitted at least seven days prior to the next hearing. The applicant had coordinated with the Postmaster regarding mailbox placement, and a plan was underway.

Mr. Ron Mailloux, President of Pentucket Development, introduced himself and described the proposal for fourteen units at the end of I Street. He stated that traffic and stormwater studies had been completed and reviewed. He reported communication with the Postmaster and the Address Management Team in Boston, as well as ongoing discussions with DPW and the City Engineer regarding the planned reconstruction of Oxford Avenue. He explained that the City intended to remove mailboxes from Oxford Avenue for safety issues and that widening I Street to approximately 24 feet would create safer access for mail carriers and residents. He also noted the proposed turnaround within the development, designed to allow fire apparatuses, police vehicles, and mail trucks to safely maneuver. He emphasized that all relevant City departments—DPW, Fire, Police, Water—had provided input. Mr. Mailloux acknowledged residents' concerns about the condition and width of I Street and affirmed the company's willingness to perform all necessary upgrades. DPW requested that street repairs occur after construction to avoid damage from heavy vehicles. He added that trash collection would be handled by private curbside service similar to standard municipal pickup and that no dumpsters would be used.

Attorney Channing reminded the board that the Planning Director had previously suggested the applicant's traffic consultant attend the next meeting. He proposed continuing until October 7; however, Director Byerley clarified that the Planning Board's October meeting would take place on October 14. Attorney Channing explained that updated analyses and a consolidated outline of all planned improvements would be provided in advance of that date.

Director Byerley asked for updates regarding the hydraulic flow analysis and sewer capacity evaluation. Mr. Mailloux stated that the water analysis would be scheduled through a contractor employed by the city. He added that engineering staff had indicated the sewage and water infrastructure on I Street was relatively new and adequately sized for the 14-unit project. Attorney Channing noted that Morin & Cameron Engineering would perform the sewer capacity analysis and that the city would review historical files. Director Byerley requested confirmation that updated plans, including road widening and guest parking, would be submitted prior to the

October 14th meeting. Mr. Mailloux confirmed that plans would be submitted and reviewed by DPW. He stated that a full survey of I Street had already been completed, documenting utilities, drainage, poles, and roadway width. He also noted that a 24-foot roadway appeared feasible, whereas the City Engineer's preferred 28-foot width likely was not. Attorney Channing also noted that interior fire protection would be required for all buildings. Mr. Mailloux added that, although code requires sprinklers only for three-unit buildings, the applicant intended to include fire protection systems in all units at the request of the Fire Lieutenant.

Chairman Howard asked why a 28-foot roadway could not be constructed within a 40-foot right-of-way. Mr. Mailloux explained that utility poles would need to be relocated onto private property, which was impractical and undesirable. He noted that a 24-foot width, potentially with a sidewalk on one side, was the most feasible design and would align with future sidewalk installation on Oxford Avenue. Member Morales asked about the current width of I Street. Mr. Mailloux stated that it ranges from approximately 19 to 22 feet. Member Robertson asked how long road widening would take and whether the applicant would fund it. Mr. Mailloux confirmed it would be privately funded and said the work would take about one week to prepare the sides and one morning to pave. Chairman Howard opened the hearing for public comment.

Carley Giovanni of 66 I Street urged board members to personally visit the street before the next meeting. She described I Street as narrow, active with children, and not suited for increased traffic. She expressed concern about emergency vehicle access, saying that even with planned improvements, response times could suffer. She suggested exploring access through the Cedardale property or from Boston Road rather than I Street.

Dan DeRoche, a longtime resident of I Street and current resident of Lakeview Avenue, requested that the applicant provide high-quality, readable digital versions of the plans, noting that existing scans were not legible when enlarged.

Scott Quimby, 25 Oxford Avenue, provided historical context; explaining that the area was once farmland and that I Street was previously denied commercial development due to traffic concerns. He stated that rezoning only benefits developers, not residents, and urged the board to consider access from Boston Road or Route 125 instead of I Street. He also noted the lack of playgrounds and open space in the area despite extensive development.

Ed Wilkins of 30 I Street described the historical zoning of the area as commercial highway and stated that he did not oppose development but opposed the impact it will have on the residents. He emphasized that widening I Street could render his driveway unusable and significantly devalue his property, as the grade change would create a "cliff." He requested that the board consider this impact.

Douglas Sanford of 33 E Street stated that the proposed density was out of character with the neighborhood, which consists of larger lots. He expressed concerns about wildlife, increased traffic, drainage issues, and the risk of water being directed toward his home. He noted longstanding problems with water pooling in the neighborhood and feared new drainage infrastructure would worsen conditions.

Marianne Abate-Day of 72 I Street echoed concerns about losing portions of resident-maintained property due to road widening. She asked how utility poles would be handled and where emergency vehicles would turn around. She opposed using I Street for access and explained that increased noise and construction activity would disrupt residents' work routines and daily life. She encouraged the board to explore access from Boston Road instead.

Matthew Day of 72 I Street described the neighborhood as peaceful and family-oriented, with children regularly playing in the street. He opposed the development's entrance being placed directly across from his home, citing increased traffic, neighborhood disruption, and loss of character. He also expressed concerns about overall area density, resource usage, and potential strain from other nearby development projects.

Attorney Channing responded that the applicant would provide larger, clearer plans and that all materials were already available on the City's online permitting portal. He noted that the peer review documents were also posted on the portal. Planning Director Byerley clarified that all submitted information was accessible online and explained that the turnaround would be entirely within the development site, not on I Street. She stated that pole placement would be evaluated during engineering review. Mr. Mailloux added that the applicant was not attempting to damage or diminish any resident's property and believed the development would increase property values.

Marianne Abate-Day interjected, stating she still could not picture the turnaround. Mailloux explained that the turnaround was designed to accommodate the largest fire apparatus in Haverhill, based on specifications provided by the Fire Department. Chairman Howard reminded attendees that direct questioning was not allowed during public comment, but Attorney Channing offered to follow up individually with residents. Mr. Mailloux stated that traffic studies showed minimal impact and reiterated that the project would add needed owner-occupied housing. Member Morales asked for confirmation that the turnaround would not be on I Street; Mr. Mailloux confirmed. The wife of Douglas Sanford, 33 E Street, stated that the map displayed at the meeting incorrectly labeled her driveway as Y Street. Mr. Mailloux clarified this was a city map, not an applicant-produced plan.

Following the close of public comment, Member Robertson moved to continue the hearing to October 14, and Member April DerBoghossian seconded. The motion passed 6-0.

Frontage Waiver at 110 Pilling Street

Chairman Howard opened the public hearing and stated that the matter before the Planning Board was limited to determining whether adequate access exists for the two proposed lots under the reduced frontage request. Applicant Michael Cassell of 16 Douglas Street, Haverhill, and owner of 110 Pilling Street, presented the request. Mr. Cassell explained that he had previously obtained a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals to create two single-family residential lots. He stated that both lots had paved access from a public way and that the site now includes a newly installed driveway providing adequate off-street parking. Mr. Cassell noted that he met with all relevant City departments during the standard departmental review process and that no changes were requested by staff; each department indicated the proposed plan met their requirements. Planning Director Byerley asked whether the site had proper access to the lots. Mr.

Cassell affirmed that access is fully paved and part of an established public way. He also confirmed that the frontage conditions and parking improvements addressed all departmental comments.

Chairman Howard reiterated that the Board's role in a frontage waiver request is solely to determine whether adequate access to the lots has been demonstrated. He noted that the applicant had provided sufficient explanation regarding access and improvements. Chairman Howard then asked whether any members of the public wished to speak on the matter. Hearing none, he closed the public portion of the hearing and asked Planning Director Byerley for her final comments. Director Byerley stated she had no further questions or concerns and that the application appeared complete.

With discussion concluded, Chairman Howard requested a motion from the Board. Member Robertson moved to approve the frontage waivers for 110 Pilling Street as presented. Member April DerBoghossian seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

Frontage Waiver 0 Liberty Street (Map 567, Block 1, Lot 19)

Chairman Howard opened the public hearing for the request for a frontage waiver for the property located at 0 Liberty Street. He stated that the purpose of the Planning Board's review was to determine whether adequate access existed under the reduced frontage request.

Troy Sears of Civil Design Consultants introduced himself and stated he was present with property owner Robert Ferreira. Mr. Sears explained that the lot is approximately 0.6 acres in the Rural Residential zoning district, partially containing wetlands, with roughly half the parcel located in Zone A and the remainder in Zone B. He stated that the Conservation Commission granted conditional approval for an order of conditions the previous month to allow construction of a single-family home. Site plans have been submitted for the Board's review. Mr. Sears reported that the property would be accessed by a paved roadway from Whitney Street and that the topography was generally flat, providing adequate access and egress. The lot is pre-existing and non-conforming regarding frontage and area. Zoning requires 200 feet of frontage; the lot contains approximately 150 feet. The Zoning Board of Appeals granted a variance for reduced frontage and lot area in June. Mr. Sears noted that they received comments from the Engineering Department earlier in the day and will address them prior to construction. He asked if the Board had any questions.

Member Morales asked what comments had been received. Mr. Sears confirmed that the comments came from Engineering and would be addressed as part of the pre-construction process. Chairman Howard stated that the Planning Board's responsibility was limited to reviewing whether adequate access existed for the lot with reduced frontage. He stated that based on the materials provided, adequate access had been demonstrated. Chairman Howard opened the hearing for public comment.

Mr. John W. Robertson, Jr., a resident of 160 Liberty Street, spoke and stated that he attended the previous meeting where concerns had been raised about the Conservation Commission's process. He expressed concern that the zoning board and conservation staff allegedly acknowledged that the owner had a private meeting with the Conservation Commission's expert

and that the board relied on recommendations from that meeting. Mr. Robertson stated that the public did not know what occurred in that meeting and he wished to register his concern on record.

Chairman Howard stated that such matters fall under the jurisdiction of the Zoning Board or Conservation Commission, not the Planning Board. He reiterated that the Planning Board's sole purview of the frontage waiver was if there was adequate access. He advised Mr. Robertson to bring zoning-related concerns directly to the Zoning Board. Seeing no further public comment, Chairman Howard closed the public portion of the hearing. Planning Director Byerley stated that because the Zoning Board had already granted the variance for frontage and lot area, she recommended that the Planning Board approve the frontage waiver request.

With discussion concluded, the Board proceeded to vote. Member Robertson moved to approve the frontage waiver for 0 Liberty Street. Member Evans seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

Minutes:

Member Robertson made motion to accept the minutes from the August meeting.
Member DerBoghosian seconded, motion passed 6-0

Motion to Adjourn:

Member Robertson made motion to adjourn. Member DerBoghosian seconded.
Motion passed 6-0. Meeting adjourned.