



CITY OF LACKAWANNA

Zoning Board of Appeals

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MINUTES

Wednesday April 30, 2025

Opening:

The regular meeting of the City of Lackawanna Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order at 5:00PM.

Present: Geercken, Kogut, Sobaszek, Stampone, Turner

Pledge of Allegiance called

Motion to approve minutes for the meeting on 3/26/25: Sobaszek Second: Kogut

All yeas carried 5-0



Item #1

Area Variance

MT Olive/Peter J. Sorgi, ESQ, Project Attorney

66 Wasson Ave

Twelve requested area variances in Mixed Residential Zone.

Chairman Geercken called upon the applicant to address the Board.

Peter J. Sorgi, ESQ, Project Attorney with Hopkins Sorgi & McCarthy PLLC representing,
John Barniak, Civil Engineer with Carmina Wood Morris representing.

Project Attorney Sorgi provided overview of the agenda item. He stated the project is a mixed-use redevelopment of numerous parcels contiguous to the existing Mt. Olive Baptist Church located at 66 Wasson Avenue, containing approximately 2.25 acres. Project construction consists of the following:

1. A 3-story mixed-use building at approximately 31,000 square feet containing a coffee shop and Laundromat in part on the first floor; and residential apartments in part on all three floors;
2. A 3-story building at approximately 29,000 square feet containing senior apartments;
3. A field house and athletic center at approximately 7,000 square feet;
4. A childcare center at approximately 3,000 square feet which will be an addition to the existing church; and
5. 89 parking spaces and related site infrastructure.

Of the twelve variances, nine deal with setbacks for the mixed-use building, senior apartments, field house, child care facility and parking areas. The remaining three variances encompass the entire project area and address building and lot coverage as well as parking spaces. The project site is in an area with vacant lots in which Mount Olive Baptist Church is the neighbor, as they own the surrounding property. Ultimately the Board was advised that the redevelopment project will provide much needed benefits for the community.

Code Enforcement Officer Scott Hayes stated that the Mount Olive Baptist Church project came in front of the Board in approximately 2021 and were approved at that time, but the approvals expired. The original approval included a 3-story medical building and one of the stipulations was no drug or day drug rehabilitation center on the property.

Chairman Geercken asked about the proposal and what has changed.

Project Attorney Sorgi stated there is a proposed medical use regarding the mixed-use building, and the site plan application has the same stipulation from the original approval.



Project Attorney Sorgi stated there would not be a rehabilitation center, but rather services that are not in the immediate area in terms of medical care.

Director Clark compared the mixed-use building to the Uniland warehouses at the steel plant. Uniland was given approval to build the building and every tenant that comes in puts a site plan before the Board and a variance request if necessary. This would not be the last time the Board hears from the applicants regarding what would go into the mixed-use building.

Project Attorney Sorgi offered an example using a coffee shop and that it would be a different aspect from a traditional chain with a drive-through service.

Director Clark stated proposed businesses would be more neighborhood friendly and the Board will hear from prospective tenants as they come in regarding mixed-use.

Motion to open public hearing: Sobaszek Second: Stampone

All yeas carried 5-0

Member Turner stated he will have to excuse himself from voting.

Director Clark stated Member Turner is a founding member and consultant to "Men in Action", a community organization assisting Mount Olive Baptist Church in this project.

Director Clark stated that Member Turner believes his involvement is too close and as such, is recusing himself from the vote on this matter only.

Project Attorney Sorgi asked for a twenty-four-month extension should the project be approved due to the size, financing and stakeholders involved.

Director Clark asked if the applicants have a roadmap for what buildings will be developed and in what order or if multiple projects will occur at the same time. Multiple projects at the same time could be difficult for the area.

Project Attorney Sorgi responded that they believe the child care center will go first, but would obtain an answer before the site plan meeting.

Director Clark stated that would be more applicable to the site plan review.

Motion to close public hearing: Sobaszek: Second:

All yeas carried 4-0

Motion to approve area variance for extended period of twenty-four months:

Sobaszek Second: Kogut

All yeas carried 4-0



Item #2

Area Variance

Richard Zybert

1975 Electric Ave

Variance for larger garage size than allowed in Mixed Residential Zone.

Chairman Geercken called upon the applicant to address the Board.

Richard Zybert of 7 Lisa Lane, Owner of Z Mobile Homes Park representing.

Mr. Zybert stated the property is a mobile home community and he is proposing to build a 24-foot by 60-foot pole barn garage as he owns a bobcat, loader and various pieces of snow removal equipment. The mobile home community has grown to include a large senior population and out of necessity to keep the road clear and equipment stored he needs to build a garage bigger than code allows.

Code Enforcement Officer Scott Hayes stated it is bigger than a three-car garage.

Chairman Geercken asked if the building will be used for storage for equipment.

Mr. Zybert replied yes.

Chairman Geercken asked if the equipment will be used to maintain the mobile home park

Mr. Zybert replied yes and it will be a storage building looking toward the future and will include a few vehicle bays for some of the seniors to store their vehicles.

Chairman Geercken asked if the building will block any road entrances and exits

Mr. Zybert replied no.

Motion to open public hearing: Sobaszek Second: Stampone All yeas carried 5-0

Motion to close public hearing: Sobaszek Second: Turner All yeas carried 5-0

Motion to approve area variance for a 24-foot by 60-foot pole barn garage:

Sobaszek Second: Kogut

All yeas carried 5-0

Mr. Zybert asked if he will need to apply for a building permit or if the approval encompasses it.

Code Enforcement Officer Steve Balon stated he will need to apply for a permit.



Item #3

Area Variance

Abdul Khalique

19 Gibbons St

Variance for 6ft fencing in front yard in Mixed Residential Zone.

Chairman Geercken called upon the applicant to address the Board.

Abdul Khalique of 19 Gibbons St representing.

Chairman Geercken asked if they wanted a 6-foot fence around the perimeter of the yard.

Ms. Khalique replied yes.

Code Enforcement Officer Steve Balon stated there used to be a fence that came out from the front of the house and went around the property.

Chairman Geercken asked if it went along Gibbons and Electric.

Code Enforcement Officer Steve Balon replied yes and the applicants want the fence to be even with the house on Gibbons, come out to approximately 10-feet from the sidewalk on Electric, and then continue down. The measurements were checked and tested using the Code Enforcement vehicle to verify visibility of approaching cars.

Chairman Geercken stated there is a stop sign on Gibbons that is parallel with the property line.

Code Enforcement Officer Steve Balon stated that is why the fence is set back 10-feet from the sidewalk so enough room is provided to see cars.

Chairman Geercken asked if the pool will be taken down or moved.

Ms. Khalique replied it will be moved.

Member Stampone asked if a fence exists there now

Code Enforcement Officer Steve Balon stated no, as it fell down during a prior storm.

Motion to open public hearing: Sobaszek Second: Kogut

All yeas carried 5-0

Director Clark stated he has an envelope from John and Annette Iafallo who are the immediate neighbor to the East.

Director Clark read the following: To whom it may concern regarding a variance for 19 Gibbons Street. Abdul and his family are my backyard neighbors and they are wonderful people. They have made so many repairs, changes to the property and it has improved the area.



I have no objection to them putting up a fence to further improve the look. Sincerely, Annette and John Iafallo, 275 Colton”.

Motion to close public hearing: Sobaszek Second: Kogut

All yeas carried 5-0

Motion to approve area variance for 6-foot fence: Sobaszek Second: Stampone

All yeas carried 5-0

Code Enforcement Officer Steve Balon stated the applicant has to come in to apply for the permit as they'll need to check measurements and make sure it's being built according to the approved variance.

Motion to adjourn: Sobaszek Second: Turner

All yeas carried 5-0