



**TOWN OF CARLISLE
OFFICE OF
Zoning Board of Appeals**

**66 Westford Street
Carlisle, MA 01741
978-369-9702**

**Minutes: Board of Appeals January 5th, 2026
Approved January 20th, 2026**

Call to Order

Chair Eric Adams called the meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals to order at 7:30 PM on Monday, January 5, 2026, via Zoom. He confirmed that Ms. Beland was recording the meeting and asked if anyone else was recording as well. No other recordings were noted.

Statement of Compliance

Chair Adams confirmed the issue of compliance regarding the posting of the meeting agenda and public hearing notices. Ms. Beland reported that notification to abutters for both applications was sent on November 5th, and notices were posted at Town Hall on November 6th. Both hearings were continued at the last ZBA meeting. The meeting agenda was posted on December 30th.

Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

Chair Adams recognized the required quorum of Members. Present were Associate Members Ian Applegate and Kyle Rogers.

Approval of Agenda

Chair Adams asked those present if there were any matters other than those listed on the agenda that the public would like to add to the agenda. Member Rogers moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Member Applegate. The motion was unanimously approved (3-0-0).

Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes: December 1, 2025

Member Lee moved to accept the minutes as amended. Member Applegate seconded the motion, and it was approved by roll call vote (3-0-0).

Approval of Invoices

There were no invoices to approve.

Public Comment

Chair Adams asked if there was any public comment on matters not listed on the agenda. There was none.

Old Business

Continued Public Hearing Case 2503: Application of Jeffery T. Curran on behalf of Alexandria Jabbour - 564 East Street

The applicants, Jeff Smith and Alexandra Jabbour, explained that they had met with Ms. Mercier and Ms. Beland to address the requirements discussed in the previous meeting. Their architect, Amy, was also present during the call.

Chair Adams thanked the applicants for their proactive approach. Detailed calculations performed by Chair Adams revealed the current total gross square footage of the property as 2,512 square feet. Given the town's regulations, this allowed for an additional 1,256 square feet, leading to a potential total of 3,768 square feet.

The project's proposed additional square footage of 649 square feet would bring the new total to 3,161 square feet. Consequently, this would leave 607 square feet available for any potential future expansion.

During the discussion, the architect, Amy Nastasi, confirmed the accuracy of these calculations and acknowledged that there were 276 square feet of unfinished and unheated attic space intended for modification. However, the Board made it clear that since this space was not finished, it should not count toward the square footage calculations relevant to zoning requirements. Chair Adams noted that it was beneficial to have received updated information and appreciated the applicants' willingness to work through the zoning complexities.

Before closing the hearing, the Board asked if any members of the public would like to comment on Case 2503. There were no public comments during this portion of the meeting. The Board moved to close the public hearing on this application.

Member Applegate made a motion to approve application 2503, which was seconded by Member Rogers. The motion was carried unanimously (3-0-0).

In providing clarity on the subsequent procedural steps, Ms. Mercier detailed that a draft decision would be created, encapsulating the discussions and agreed calculations, complete with references to the provided diagram. Following this, the Board would sign the decision, which would then be officially filed with the town clerk. After a 20-day appeal period, the conclusive document will be recorded at the Middlesex North Registry of Deeds. Only then could the applicants move forward to apply for a building permit, enabling them to begin the construction process.

Continued Public Hearing Case 2504: Application of Makeovers and Finishes Group - 358 East Street

The applicant representative, Lucas, presented the renovation plans for an unfinished basement. The Board had a detailed conversation about the proposal, which was to convert the basement and add dormers to the existing structure. According to the calculations provided during the session, the property initially had 1,780 square feet before 1988. At that point, an extra 308 square feet had been added, leaving the property with 582 square feet of allowable expansion under the 50% rule. However, Lucas's current proposal sought to add 884 square feet, which would exceed the allowable addition by 302 square feet.

The Board engaged in extensive discussion about the Bylaw interpretation, particularly whether it had the authority to approve an addition that surpassed the 50% allowable expansion. Chair Adams and other Board members conveyed that variances are strictly limited to cases where hardship arises due to soil conditions, shape, or topography of the lot, none of which seemed applicable in this instance. Despite Lucas's proposed renovations not altering the exterior appearance of the house, Chair Adams, confirming agreement from Member Rogers, pinned on the bylaw language, which explicitly states that "no such extension shall be made which increases the total of all floor area by more than 50 percent over the total so devoted at the time the use first became nonconforming." There was a contemplation about potential hardship categories, but these remained tied more explicitly to ground conditions or financial constraints, neither of which aligned with Lucas's appeal.

The Board, acknowledging the limits of its jurisdiction, suggested seeking further advice. Understanding the applicant's position, it was proposed that the Town Counsel be consulted to gain an opinion on whether finishing an existing unfinished space, like the basement in question, could be interpreted outside the confines of the 50% rule limitations. The possibility that prior determinations had brought allowance for comparable cases lingered, raising further inquiry about historical Board decisions.

Member Applegate moved to continue application 2504 to Tuesday, January 20th, or Monday, February 2nd, both at 7:30 PM. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Ms. Mercier agreed to contact the Town Counsel for an opinion and outlined that their insights would be shared with the applicant to offer clarity before reconvening. The hope was that insight from the Town Counsel could provide a clear path forward, possibly unveiling precedents or interpretations that could aid the applicants in their planning decisions or outline constraints that were previously unconsidered.

New Business:**Informal discussion for a potential location for an Accessory Dwelling Unit ADU at 224 Woodridge Road**

Dianne Wilson presented her property on Woodridge Road, where she aimed to build an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). The property has an unusual shape, creating challenges because of wetland constraints and its border by conservation land. While the property met the 250-foot frontage requirement, the irregularity of the lot shape made it difficult to find a compliant location for the ADU, as based on the 2021 wetland delineations. It was determined that any feasible location for the ADU would necessitate variances from setback requirements on multiple sides due to the constraints.

The Board recommended conducting a site visit to gain a better understanding of the specific challenges and unique characteristics of the property. Highlighting the constraints further, Dianne noted that the land next to them is town-owned, adding another dimension to the site's unique positioning. The Board also acknowledged the applicant's previous beneficial meetings with town staff, including discussions about the aesthetic impact, confirming that a footprint would not extend into sensitive areas more than necessary.

After discussing potential scheduling for the site visit, the Board and applicant agreed on a date and time to convene at the property, on Saturday, January 24th at 9:00 AM. Chair Adams emphasized to all the need for the visit to be strictly observational, noting the requirements that no deliberations or decisions could occur at the site. The purpose would strictly be to gather further information and view the site's conditions in person to aid in future discussions and decisions regarding the application.

Discussion of ADU Site Plan Review Regulations

Ms. Mercier presented draft ADU Site Plan Review Regulations that the Planning Board would be reviewing and potentially adopting at their February meeting. These regulations were aimed at streamlining the process for ADUs, with Ms. Mercier encouraging feedback from various stakeholders, including the ZBA. She highlighted forms for calculating square footage and obtaining certification from building officials, which could streamline complexities that arise during the application process. These tools might prove beneficial for the ZBA, too, when dealing with Section 6.3 applications.

The regulations included a "gross floor area cheat sheet," a simplified tool to help applicants and Board members calculate gross floor area consistently. The cheat sheet was adapted from a state regulation that defines how to calculate gross floor area specifically for ADUs. Discussions ensued on how adopting certain elements from the ADU regulations might enhance the ZBA's procedural clarity and enable consistent application of the 50% expansion limitation, especially pertaining to unfinished spaces like basements and attics.

Ms. Mercier clarified the intention behind various elements, explaining that the state-defined gross floor area for ADUs is tied to specific standards from which the local building inspectors could derive calculations. Member Applegate and Chair Adams emphasized that having precise definitions and calculations would aid in reducing ambiguity in future rule implementations. Board members considered how definitions within the ADU regulations, e.g., habitable space versus non-habitable space, might mirror or expand upon Section 6.3 interpretations.

The Board also addressed the clarity needed in these regulations, particularly about finished versus unfinished spaces. Chair Adams posited how the ability to finish spaces without needing additional permits might favorably impact applications and how to balance that with preservation ideals. Ideas about potential updates to the ZBA's bylaws or new interpretations were fielded as members sought to preserve flexibility in granting approvals without compromising the regulations' integrity.

As the Board wrapped up this segment, members agreed to further review and deliberate on these regulations. Ms. Mercier shared that there was still an ongoing effort to access historical Zoning Board decisions, which might provide deeper insights into past practices and interpretations. This would, in turn, support informed decisions aligned with evolving regulations.

Discussion of ZBA Procedures and Application Form

Ms. Beland and Ms. Mercier presented a thorough update process to improve the ZBA application and procedures. The updates focused on several key areas, including:

- Clarifying the required documentation: The updated forms and instructions aim to make it abundantly clear what documents are necessary for a complete application.
- Adding forms adapted from the ADU regulations: By incorporating forms from the recently formalized ADU regulations, the ZBA seeks to enhance consistency across applications.
- Adding a certification of floor area form with clear categories: The new form requires applicants to categorize floor areas at various stages, including the original nonconforming state, prior enlargements, and proposed enlargements. This aims to ensure applicants consistently distinguish between gross and net floor area calculations, providing a more transparent process. Chair Adams suggested including wording on the form to prompt applicants to select either gross or net, clarifying that the chosen method must remain consistent throughout.
- Adding a legal notice billing authorization form: The addition of this form intends to set clearer expectations regarding the financial responsibilities for ad placements, thus preventing any surprises for applicants.
- Creating a one-page information sheet explaining the application process to applicants: Ms. Beland developed this information sheet, inspired by other jurisdictions, to lay out the typical timeline and critical steps involved in the ZBA process. The sheet also serves to educate applicants on potential fees, expected duration, and the necessity for complete applications. The Board discussed the importance of setting out right from the beginning that no hearing date would be scheduled until an application was complete, as emphasized by Chair Adams.

The Board provided feedback on these updates, suggesting minor improvements to ensure clarity and efficiency throughout the application process. By adding language to the forms and documentation, they aim to reduce any ambiguity regarding applications and focus on increasing efficiency for both the Board and applicants. Furthermore, the Board noted that while making these updates, it's crucial to align them with the meeting's ongoing enforcement of local zoning bylaws to maintain harmony between process improvements and legal requirements.

Recognition of Past Member, Steve Hinton

The Board discussed how to recognize Steve Hinton's service to the town. Ms. Beland had researched award options, but Chair Adams clarified he was thinking more of a one-time recognition, like a plaque at Town Hall, rather than an annual award. The Board requested more information about existing recognitions at Town Hall and agreed to continue the discussion after learning what precedents exist.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Noelle Beland, Planning and Land Use Coordinator

List of documents associated with this meeting:

[Pending Applications | Carlisle, MA](#)

These minutes were approved on January 20, 2025