

City of Hudson Zoning Board of Appeals
Minutes of Regular Meeting
April 16, 2025

In attendance: Lisa Kenneally, Chairman; Abbie Lazare; Mary Ellen Pierro; Myron Polenberg;
Kathy Harter; Janis Gomez-Anderson, Counsel
Absent: David Giroux, Edward Morris

New Business

Ms. Pierro made a motion to open the meeting at 6:06 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Lazare and approved by all members in attendance.

Minutes

Ms. Lazare made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 19 meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Pierro and approved by all members in attendance.

250 Allen Street, Tax ID #109.60-1-53: Area variance application from Steve Corsun to build a 340-square-foot addition to the rear of the home, requiring a two percent lot coverage variance.

Architect Walter Chatham, representing the applicant, wanted to build a 340-square-foot addition to the rear of the home. The property is in the R4 zoning district and is a permitted use. Mr. Chatham said the applicant had already received approval from the Historic Preservation Commission.

Mr. Polenberg made a motion to deem the application complete. Ms. Pierro offered a second and the motion was approved by all members in attendance. Mr. Polenberg made a motion to set a public hearing on the application for 6 p.m. May 21, which was seconded by Ms. Pierro and approved by all members in attendance.

Public Hearings

512 Union St., Tax ID# 109.60-1-53: Area variance application from Alison Riley and Meshell Ndegeocello to remove a small section of the rear of the residence and build an addition requiring a 10-foot east side yard variance.

Ms. Pierro made a motion to open the meeting at 6:14 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Harter and approved by all members in attendance.

The applicant planned to build an existing one-story addition and align it with the existing building with a zero percent lot line. It would be within the existing footprint. Approval was granted by the Historic Preservation Commission.

There being no public comment, Ms. Pierro made a motion to close the public hearing, which was seconded by Ms. Lazare and approved by all members in attendance. Mr. Polenberg made a motion to approve the area variance, which was seconded by Ms. Lazare and approved in a roll call vote.

9 Partition St., Tax ID #109.43-1-33: Revised area variance application from Mike Wenzel to demolish a single-story structure and build a three-story single-family dwelling requiring variances for lot area, lot width, lot depth, front yard, two side yard, rear yard, lot coverage and a half-story.

Ms. Lazare made a motion to open and continue the public hearing at 6:21 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Pierro and approved by all members in attendance.

Architect Chip Bohl, representing the applicant, said that after hearing comments from the board and public last month, he “improved the design for the neighborhood.” The following variances were now being requested:

- Lot area: 1,491.5 square feet (difference of 62.71 percent)
- Lot width: 25.58 feet (difference of 36.05 percent)
- Lot depth: 57.5 feet (difference of 42.45 percent)
- Front yard: 0.75 feet (difference of 95 percent)
- West side yard: zero feet (100 percent)
- East side yard: zero feet (100 percent)
- Rear yard: 5 feet (83.3 percent)
- Lot coverage: 89.58 percent (difference of 155.94 percent)
- Stories: 3 stories requested (difference of a half story or 20 percent)

Mr. Bohl said the building was pulled back to give five feet of space in the rear along the width of the lot. That reduced the requested lot coverage variance from 100 percent to 89.58 percent. Ms. Lazare asked what the lot coverage was under the revised proposal. Mr. Bohl said it would now be 89.58 percent instead of 100 percent. Doing so also allowed access from the rear. The lot is unlike others on the street because it does not extend to Allen Street like other properties.

He said he tried to narrow the home but to achieve the desired size—three bedrooms and three baths—would be difficult to achieve because the lot is only 25.58 feet wide. The livable space would be 2,100 square feet. “We’re taking it to the edges to make it work,” he said.

Mr. Bohl said the home would have eight-foot-deep open porches that would wrap around the west side of the building, which had said had the effect of “reducing massing.”

The elevator and handrails of the rooftop deck were eliminated so a height variance would no longer be needed. A half-story variance would still be needed.

Mr. Bohl said digging would not be done for a basement, rather to provide a proper foundation and to stabilize the adjacent properties, particularly the one on the east side, which he said was leaning. The eaves of that property had been 35 feet but was now down to 28 feet.

A nine-inch front yard variance was requested so the project aligned with the rest of the street. Code Enforcement Officer Craig Haigh said because bay windows would extend over city property—the sidewalk—the Common Council would have to approve the encroachment. Ms. Gomez-Anderson reminded members that the only issue for the ZBA was the nine-inch front yard setback.

Mr. Bohl submitted a letter of support from Martha Lein, who lives at 38 South Front Street.

Richard Birkett, who resides at 27 Union Street, asked if the rooftop deck would still be accessible. Mr. Bohl said it would, but it was lowered three feet to meet the 35-foot height limit. He clarified that the building itself would be 32 feet tall, and the railing would make it 35 feet. “You won’t see the deck from Partition Street,” he said. A woman in the audience said the deck might not be seen from Partition Street, but it would be visible from elsewhere.

Dave Marston, who lives at 14 Union Street, said the idea that a three-story, single-family home was in character with the rest of the neighborhood was not accurate. “Building a 35-foot building on that size parcel, I think that scale is wrong.”

First Ward Councilmember Margaret Morris asked if Partition Street had sidewalks. Mr. Bohl said there were sidewalks, but they were in “terrible disrepair and “heavily eroded.”

“My sense is that there were more buildings there,” Mr. Chatham said. “It would’ve been a lot denser. If Hudson hadn’t fallen in the ‘50s and enact zoning, the area might still be dense.”

Mr. Bohl confirmed the larger density that was shown on a Sanborn map from the early 1900s. The map showed a number of homes on Partition Street. He also tried to make the case for the height of the building by stating that there were three-story buildings on Allen and Union streets.

“Three stories is not inconsistent to that neighborhood or block of Front Street,” Mr. Polenberg said. He added that a three-foot railing was required by law to prevent people from falling off the rooftop deck. Reducing the height would make it invisible to neighbors. “The work has been done as accommodating as possible in my opinion.”

A man stated that Partition Street was an alley and that there were no three-story houses on it. Ms. Kenneally said the city deemed it a street, not an alley.

“It will completely change the look of that street,” another man said. “It’s a self-made hardship to me. He wants to develop it in such a way that breaks all those rules.”

Mr. Polenberg said much went into ZBA decisions and one thing was “to not be discriminatory. There’s no reason not to give a variance if it seems reasonable.”

Ivy Dane of 15 Union Street asked if there was access to the rear of the property. Mr. Bohl said there was yard space, but people would have to enter the house to access that space. He added that it was not uncommon to have a yard that was captured by other properties. “One of the unique aspects of this lot is that it doesn’t go all the way through to Allen Street.” He said the applicant spoke with a neighbor who would allow occasional use of their driveway.

Resident Alan Weaver said replacing a garage with a house would benefit the community. He said people bought property in Hudson and knew that something could be built next to them.

Resident Lloyd Koedding referred to that block of Partition Street as “a dump.”

There being no further public comment, Ms. Pierro made a motion to close the hearing at 7:39 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Harter and approved by all members in attendance.

The board found that the requests would not be an undesirable change in the character of the neighborhood or a detriment to nearby properties; that the benefit sought could not be achieved by some method feasible for the applicant to pursue; that the variances were substantial; that the variances would not have an adverse effect or impact on the physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood; and that the difficulty was self-created.

Ms. Lazare made a motion to approve the variances, which was seconded by Ms. Pierro and approved in a roll call vote.

Mr. Polenberg made a motion to adjourn at 7:45 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Lazare and approved by all members in attendance.