THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF LUNENBURG
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
October 14, 2026
Minutes

The Lunenburg Zoning Board of Appeals held a meeting on Wednesday, October 14, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. The hearing was held at the Lunenburg Town Hall, 2nd Floor, Joseph F. Bilotta Meeting Room, 17 Main St. Lunenburg, MA.

Stephen Wallace, Director of Planning & Economic Development to present Zoning Amendments for the Annual Town Meeting in the Spring of 2027.

To hear the petition of The Lunenburg Food Pantry requesting a Variance for the placement of a single story manufactured building within the Village Center District. The proposed single story new structure is not allowed, necessitating a variance by the Zoning Board of Appeals per The Town of Lunenburg Zoning By-Law 250-4.17 E(3)(a).

Board Members Present: Alfred Gravelle, Chairman, Patrick Callahan, Karen Menard, Anthony Nicastro, and Associate Member Donald Gurney
Board Members Not Present: David Blatt

ZONING AMENDMENTS FOR 2027 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Stephen Wallace, Director of Planning and Economic Development, presented the four (4) zoning amendments that the Planning Board has been working on amending to be presented at the 2027 annual spring meeting. ***The by-laws being amended are: 250-4.18 Inclusionary Zoning, 250-5.6 Cluster Housing, 250-4.18 Senior Housing and creating a Minor Site Plan Approval by-law.*** The Planning Board has posted these amendments on their webpage and asks that each board member review them and give feedback by the end of November. They will be holding a public forum in early December and wish to have a public hearing around March.

DISCUSSION - 30 SCHOOL ST. ZBA-26-12 - VARIANCE

The hearing opened at 7:00 P.M. Alfred Gravelle, Chairman explained the hearing procedure. Leigh Bain, Board Secretary, read the petition. Mr. Gravelle then asked the petitioner if he had anything to add to the petition. Mr. Greg Roy, engineer (Dillis & Roy) stated that with the new zoning updates the board has more leeway for granting the variance. Mr. Gravelle read the new Zoning laws, and the old law and stated the new laws do allow the Board more latitude. Mr. Roy informed the board that they have a pending permit for Site Plan Review with the Planning Board, which is actually biright. That hearing was opened and continued until after the Zoning Board of Appeals hearing. They are also working with the Board of Health to connect to the existing septic

tank. They have met with the water department; the water had previously been capped, but they know the location so that they can install a new pipe. They have met with Unitil regarding the existing pole and having an underground connection. The applicant has a licensed/insured electrician lined up to do the work. Mr. Roy added that the proposed use clearly adds to the public good of the town and will be detrimental if lost.

Donald Gurney asked the applicant what the time frame is that they are looking to get things rolling. Nancy Beach, 31 Prospect St., Lunenburg, MA; President of the Lunenburg Food Pantry, stated the earliest anything could happen would be November 9, 2026, but realistically hoping to by December 1, 2026. Mr. Gurney inquired how long the Food Pantry intends to be in this "temporary" location. Ms. Beach stated they have a three (3) year license agreement with the Town of Lunenburg. Mr. Gurney followed up by asking what happens after the license expires. Ms. Beach stated they are renting the units, and they will be returned to the manufacturer. She also stated that the license agreement with the town has a stipulation that the land must be returned to the condition it was prior to the installation of the manufactured units.

Mr. Patrick Callahan asked if there is a hard date to be out of the T.C. Passios building? Ms. Beach stated that they were supposed to be out by July 1, 2026, so as soon as possible. Karin Menard explained the current situation of the TC Passios building to the board and why all occupants were told they need to relocate. She also stated that the Food Pantry knew in 2021 when they moved into the TC Passios building it was only temporary.

Ms. Menard stated she is aware of the importance of the food pantry because she used to work for one. She then inquired where the food pantry has looked for a new location, as she is not convinced this is the best solution. Ms. Menard asked Ms. Beach to explain why she cannot temporarily relocate to another community. Ms. Beach explained they would have to serve that community, and they do not have the capacity for that. Ms. Menard further explained that per the Worcester Food Bank, any food pantry must serve the community it is in whether temporary or permanent and then any other communities it can. The Lunenburg Food Pantry doesn't have the compacity to serve another community. Ms. Beach stated that they have looked at 37 different locations, 7 which were town land that did not fit; two places fell through for different reasons. Ms. Menard asked if they had looked at the Water District or Wallis Park. Ms. Beach replied they had checked the water district, and there were not any adequate locations. Ms. Menard urged Ms. Beach to reach out to the Parks Commission if things don't work out with this location. Ms. Menard also stated there are more variances that should have been applied for but seem to have been overlooked and inquired to Mr. Gravelle as to why or how they can be overlooked. She stated the flat roof, and that trailers don't meet the New England Style. Mr. Gravelle explained the Board goes by the decision the Zoning Officer/Building Commissioner makes. Mr. Roy stated they did file for a Zoning Determination, and they applied for what was stated in the written determination.

Mr. Gravelle stated they are having a hard time trying to look at what is best for the town and the people who use the food pantry; they don't want any zoning laws to create any unnecessary hardships. He stated that a variance would allow for reasonable use of the property. He asked the Board if they had any further questions.

Having no public present, there were no public comments.

MOTION - 30 SCHOOL ST. ZBA-26-12 - VARIANCE

Donald Gurney proposed the ZBA approve the requested variance for the Town of Lunenburg on

behalf of the Lunenburg Food Pantry. Anthony Nicastro seconded the motion.

The ZBA assesses practical difficulty and balances the applicant/public benefits (including housing production) against neighborhood welfare. Additional optional factors include soil/topography conditions, financial hardship, alternative methods, and whether the difficulty was self-created

FINDINGS - 30 SCHOOL ST. ZBA-26-12 - VARIANCE

After due deliberation, the Board found that on the basis of all of the data presented, the variance was granted.

a. A literal enforcement of the provisions of the Protective By-Law would involve substantial hardship, financial or otherwise to the petitioner.

b. The Board also finds that desirable relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good.

c. The Board also finds that the granting of this variance would not nullify or substantially derogate from the intent or purpose of the Protective By-Law.

DECISION - 30 SCHOOL ST. ZBA-26-12 - VARIANCE

The Board of Appeals found that the construction/ placement of the single story manufactured units was not more substantially detrimental to the neighborhood with four of the five members voting in the affirmative.

The Variance was granted with the contingency that the petitioner complies with all licenses, regulations, statues and ordinances of any and all applicable state, local and federal board or agencies with jurisdiction over the premises.

VOTE- 30 SCHOOL ST. ZBA-26-12 - VARIANCE

Alfred Gravelle Chairmain, voted to approve the Variance.
Patrick Callahan Vice Chairman, voted to approve the Variance.
Karin Menard voted against the Variance.
Anthony Nicastro voted to approve the Variance.
Donald Gurney voted to approve the Variance.

Leigh Bain reminded the board of the need to discuss and vote on the waiving of the permit fees. Karin Menard moved to waive the fees associated with the permit. Patrick Callahan Seconded.

VOTE - 30 SCHOOL ST. ZBA-26-12 - VARIANCE

Alfred Gravelle Chairmain, voted to waive the permit fees
Patrick Callahan Vice Chairman, voted to waive the permit fees
Karin Menard voted to waive the permit fees
Anthony Nicastro voted to waive the permit fees
Donald Gurney voted to waive the permit fees

Karin Menard moved to adjourn, Patrick Callahan Seconded.

VOTE - 30 SCHOOL ST. ZBA-26-12 - VARIANCE

Alfred Gravelle Chairmain, voted to adjourn

Patrick Callahan Vice Chairman, voted to adjourn
Karin Menard voted to adjourn
Anthony Nicastro voted to adjourn
Donald Gurney voted to adjourn

Adjourned at 7:55pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Leigh A Bain, Secretary

Lunenburg Zoning Board of Appeals

Alfred J Gravelle 10/28/24

Approved by Chairman of the Board of Appeals
Alfred Gravelle, Chairman Date

Documents referenced:
Certified Abutters List
Site Plans
Building Plans
Ledger Receipt
Copy of Zoning Determination
Updated Site Plan
APDC Recommendation