



# Haverhill

Board of Appeals  
4 Summer Street – Room #201  
Haverhill, MA 01830  
Phone: 978-374-2330 Fax: 978-374-2315  
jdewey@cityofhaverhill.com

The regular meeting of the Haverhill Board of Appeals was held on Wednesday evening, July 16, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.

Those Present:

Chairman George Moriarty  
Member Louise Bevilacqua  
Member Ted Vathally  
Member Lynda Brown  
Member Michael Soraghan  
Assoc Member Magdiel Matias

Also, Present: Jill Dewey, Board Secretary  
Tom Bridgewater, Building Commissioner

Chairman called the meeting in to order on July 18, 2025

## **Rebecca Balogh for 17 Wayne Street (Map 739, Block 4, Lot 6)**

Applicant seeks dimensional variances for side setback (10.54 ft where 15 ft is required) and rear setback (22.92 ft where 30 ft is required) to construct a one-story addition (master bedroom with bath/laundry) onto a single-family dwelling in a RM zone. (BOA-25-14)

\*\*\*NOTE: Recording was not good, it was very hard to make out what this couple was saying. I did my best to try and make out the words, so its not 100%

Rebecca Balogh: I have lived in several locations in Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, New Hampshire and now Massachusetts. I have lived in Mass since 1995, I got three homes I lived in since 1997, the first was a rental the apartments on Washington Street down near the Comeau Bridge, my second dwelling my first home purchase, was a condo on I Street not far from Cedardale, my current home of 12 years is located on Wayne Street. I recently retired from a large vets contractor in the area, and I am hoping to age with grace in with an addition to the ground floor in our home.

Mike Pettison: I am her partner and I have been living there about 8 years, during that same time we actually had a house that we were living in and we made he decision to move down here as it was 3000 sf for two people, it was a nice house but there is a lot more to be said for living in Haverhill, which is one of our drivers, so I am originally from Savannah GA, I have lived all over the country, numerous places in Georgia, I have lived in Texas, I have lived in New Jersey, I have lived in Colorado, I have lived in Nedw Hampshire, now I live in Massachusetts, I have lived on Wayne Street as I mentioned for about 8 years. MY first home was in Londonderry, and the second was in Chester as I mentioned. I recently retired from a large defense contractor in the area. So we talked about what the ask is in terms of the variances, the drive before which is our goal, we asked for variances for the ground floor single level primary bedroom that will longer our house and achieve our goal, our goal is we want to remain in our house, but more importantly we want to remain in our house, in our neighborhood within the Bradford section of Haverhill, this is where we want to go ahead and not only live for the rest of our life, but this is where we want to stay, it is not only in Haverhill but it is this house and the neighborhood, because we have checked out a lot of areas and the way we refer to Haverhill by the way is the gem of the Merrimac Valley, because



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we have lived in a lot of areas and you don't get the value, you don't get the culture, you don't have quite the quality of life that many people would like to have, that you would have in Haverhill. So our current design concept, you probably have seen elements of these, what we are trying to do is have no address effect to the abutters or the neighborhood character, a single story addition aligns with our existing home style and materials and neighborhood, it keeps with the neighborhood character, it minimizes roof line visual impact and matches the exterior existing architectural of the area, it practicality and functionality and another thing by putting in this single story addition is will result and maintain the home, we believe the single story addition will stay within the overall appeal and stability of the neighborhood, and that to me really help keep the value of the neighborhood. We want to avoid any teardown, we don't want that big of a change, we are talking about a small addition, so vesting in this single-story addition is preventing me from more destructive potentially in the future. And we mentioned long term, that's our driver, that's our goal, again we love living in this section of Haverhill, we love living in this neighborhood and having the ability to walk about 15-20 minutes to downtown Haverhill, crossing the Comeau Bridge, you can't beat it. One of the important things we tried to do when we came up with the design is that we have no diverse impact to the people around us, and that's what we did, we actually talked to all of our neighbors and we talked to an additional 4 people and said, here is what we are trying to do, we showed them the concept, the elevation plan.

Rebecca Balogh: If I might add, the very deck that we passed around tonight was the same package that we showed to all the direct abutters, we showed them the plans with this design, so what you are seeing here today is what they saw and were ok with.

Chairman: Thank you.

Mike Pettison: So in conclusion, a stuck adherence to the zoning ordinance, that is not having variances made, creates a hardship, what goes as spending our remaining years in Haverhill at this location, we don't want to move. We believe the proposed addition despite the requested variances will not harm the public good or the character of the neighborhood. We have played around with our current house, we have tried to maximize our design with the limited space we have on our lot, so we believe this is the minimum design concept necessary to achieve a reasonable and practical use of the property to reach our goal. More importantly we discussed our design concept with our neighbors as well as having considered any impacts to our abutters. Any questions that we can answer?

Chairman: Thank you very much. The side setback you said was on the right-hand side?

Rebecca Balogh: The right-hand side currently.

Chairman: And then the rear setback for that property behind

Rebecca Balogh: On Winchester Street

Chairman: And you have talked to those neighbors also?

Rebecca Balogh: Yes, we talked to everyone around us.

Chairman: Ok. And this is for your own usage?



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Rebecca Balogh: Yes

Mike P: The important thing we are trying to do, is put everything on one level, so as we age forward we can not have to go in the basement to do laundry or not have to go upstairs

Chairman: Questions from the board

Member Brown: You mentioned that you spoke to your neighbors that are abutting, I just wanted to ask, that looking at the renderings, 23 Wayne is that an abutter to you?

Rebecca Balogh: Yes directly to the west. Western neighbor, eastern neighbor, both neighbors directly behind us, and then everyone is facing us on the front, because obviously they would be facing the construction vehicles coming in

Member Brown: I see that the signed the letters

Rebecca Balogh: Everyone has signed the letters, excluding Donie Thompson who

Member Brown: Ok, that's it, no more questions.

Chairman: Other questions or comments from the board? Entertain a motion.

Member Vathally: I make a motion to accept the application for 17 Wayne Street

Member Soraghan: Second

Member Soraghan: Yes, the application meets zoning criteria for variance 255-10.2.2(2)

Member Brown: Yes, meeting variance criteria for 255-10.2.2(2)

Member Vathally: Yes it meets the criteria for 255-10.2.2(2)

Member Matias: Yes it meets the zoning criteria for 255-10.2.2(2)

Chairman: Yes

GRANTED 5-0

## **JPA-MKA Realty, LLC for 18 Church Street (Map 723, Block 698, Lot 5)**

Applicant seeks a special permit to change a former non-conforming use (dentist office) in a three unit (1 com & 2 res) existing structure into residential use - three-family dwelling in a RM zone. (BOA-25-15)

Attorney Russell Channen (25 Kenosha Ave): I am here with both Doctor Karl Arakelian and his wife Brooke Arakelian, who are managers of JAP-MKA Realty, LLC owners of the property at 18 Church Street. This is an application for a special permit chapter 255, section 5, in which there is currently a nonconforming use at the property and we are looking to change that to another nonconforming use, but based upon the intention we believe that it satisfies the criteria of section



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5.2, initially this is a property that has been in the Arakelian family for approximately 65 years, both Doctor Arakelian and his father operated their dental office at this location, this was essentially Doctor Arakelian office with another doctor, and moved out of the first floor, because currently there is three units there, two residential units on the top, and his commercial office was on the first floor, now that he had enriched his office with another person, this office is now vacant. To turn that unit into residential would be again, another nonconforming use, but would be subject to approval by way of a special permit, we believe that under the statute that basically states that the board may grant a special permit to change a nonconforming use in accordance with the section, if it determines that such change or extension, shall not be substantial or more detrimental than the existing nonconforming use to the neighborhood, and we believe that would be the case in that current, again this is a residential neighborhood and by removing the dental practice we have eliminated a lot of the parking problems that may or may not have existed there between the employees and the patients with the cars on the street in that area, instead now we will have just another residential unit, which would basically be just one or two cars that would be in that area. What we would also be doing is creating additional housing in Haverhill, which we all know is a major concern for most of the people there, one of the things that we did was, we originally submitted a plan and after we talked with the building inspector, we submitted a revised plan with the necessary for parking spaces at the property, and in fact the additional space was just recently, if anybody has been out there in the last few days that was just taken care of, the fence was removed, so the necessary four spaces are presently on site, so for all those reasons we would ask the board to approve this application for a special permit.

Chairman: Thank you, we had a conversation about four spaces that are required, this is right across from the Bradford Common. You will have to sprinkle all the units, are you aware of that? And would the status of the building need EV stations?

Tom Bridgewater: Yes if approved, you will have to go to developmental review, and that is where all the nuts and bolts of the building code and all that will come up. The sprinkle system the EV charging. Also if approved, it is in a historical zone, so if there is an egress window that needs to be added or any exterior changes, it will have to go through the historical society.

Chairman: So the fact that it is in a historical zone brings on other problems.

Tom B: Any exterior changes

Chairman: Any questions from the board?

Member Vathally: Three units, how many bedrooms per unit?

Attorney Russell Channen: There is on the first floor a 2-bedroom residence and upstairs there is a 2-bedroom unit and a 1-bedroom unit. Total 5 bedrooms so we needed four spaces.

Member Vathally: Ok. So, the one you're adding is a two. OK, thank you.

Chairman: Any other comments or questions from the board?



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Member Soraghan: One comment, I support this, my only comment is you have three units and four spaces, how are you going to say who gets the two spaces?

Attorney Russell Channen: It will be something that will have to be decided upon when the property is rented out, or leased. Again if someone is looking for two spaces, maybe it is a little bit more they will have to pay for, one unit will be afforded that extra spot in its lease.

Karl Arakelian: Second generation dentist, longtime resident in Haverhill. First floor is a one bedroom and a single woman lives there, and the second floor is a two bedroom, and a single woman lives there, so there are only two

Member Soraghan: I'd just, I would throw in an additional space, but that is just me. You have to deal with this problem, but I support this as it is.

Karl Arakelian: There is vehicle parking on the street

Member Vathally: I don't want to hear that.

Tom Bridgewater: I don't want to hear that either.

Chairman: Thank you. Any other comments or questions from the board? Entertain a motion

Member Vathally: I make a motion to accept the application for 18 Church Street

Member Soraghan: Second

Member Soraghan: I vote yes, the application meets the zoning criteria for special permit 255-10.4.2

Member Brown: yes, the application meets the zoning criteria for special permit 255-10.4.2

Member Vathally: yes, the application meets the zoning criteria for special permit 255-10.4.2

Member Bevilaqua: yes, the application meets the zoning criteria for special permit 255-10.4.2

Chairman: yes, the application meets the zoning criteria for special permit 255-10.4.2 and it has the required four parking spaces as indicated, and the applicant is aware of the historical features that need to be attended to at developmental review

GRANTED 5-0

The board voted to approve the meeting minutes from the June 2025 meeting (all members approved)