

Village of Walden
Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
March 26, 2025

Chairperson:	Brenda Adams	Present
Members:	Mary Ellen Matise	Present
	William Sestrom	Present
	Scott Barilli	Present
	Lisa Mazzella	Present
Alternate Members:	Christine Scieurca	Present
Building Inspector:	Robert Wallner	Absent
Village Attorney:	Dave Donovan	Present
Secretary:	Anisetta Valdez	Present

Chairperson Adams - Called the Zoning Board meeting to order at 6:30pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 26, 2025

Motion to approve the minutes with two changes. The date should be 2025 from 2024 and the second, Kathy Greak had to move the shed. Seconded by Member Sestrom. One abstain. Motion carried.

2. BOARD'S BUSINESS

Chairperson Adams: Introduction of the members. Alternate Christine Scieurca in the audience.

Attorney Donovan: It would be appropriate to invite [Member Scieurca] up to the dais to proceed.

Chairperson Adams: [Member Scieurca], if you would join us, thank you. Is there anyone who needs to recuse themselves?

A. PUBLIC HEARING

A.1 21 Wileman Avenue, 6:30 PM

Chairperson Adams: *Read the notice.* The notice had a typo, but it's not a problem. Yes.

Anna Steinhauer: May I pass these out? What I've just given you is a summary of the neighborhood. Showing in 307-2 there are 50 x so I gave you a summary and a tax map where I've highlighted homes that are similar to ours. And I've included the survey for the proposed dwelling and the house we'd like to build to show that it is characteristic for the neighborhood.

Chairperson Adams: Is there anything benefits you'd like to add?

Anna Steinhauer: Curb appeal, more [inaudible].

Chairperson Adams: I want to ask some questions. When the lot for which the variance is being requested, became a lot, there was a change in lot size. At what point did this property become a lot?

Anna Steinhauer: My husband originally owned both lots and at one time we had sold the house and lot to our son but we purchased it back from him. So my husband has lived there even as a renter since 1982 or '83.

Sidebar as Member Mazzella came late, sat in the audience.

Anna Steinhauer: That's my son.

Chairperson Adams: It was bought and sold, did you do a title search? And the deed is clear. At some point you transferred it back to yourself?

Village of Walden
Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
March 26, 2025

Anna Steinhauer: We merged the properties.

Chairperson Adams: That was the right thing to do. With a non-conforming lot such as this. When did you subdivide? Did you go to the Planning Board and subdivide?

Anna Steinhauer: No. It's always been two separate tax bills. We never had a new survey.

Peter Guarino: I'm her son. Apparently when I sold it back to her there was an issue with the deed.

Chairperson Adams: But you merged them. That was what drew my attention because it says that it was [merged].

Anna Steinhauer: It was always those two pieces. My niece may want to live there. Yes.

Member Matise: You sold **23 Wileman**? That deed is listed back to 1949. Unfortunately, we don't have the past deeds so we aren't sure what happened there. Did you bring any tax reports with you? Not the history of the tax bills for that property? I'm not sure how you merged them without getting one bill. What year was that? 2017?

Anna Steinhauer: No. I didn't.

Attorney Donovan: Was there a point when the two parcels were in the same ownership? So by operation of law, it merged and the issue is not the tax law. By code the non-conforming lot merges. You can't take action on that - there needs to be a subdivide. Not all municipalities have a law but the Village of Walden does, 305-48. It's not a separate lot.

Anna Steinhauer: How do we proceed?

Chairperson Adams: I think this is a legal question. I think we should proceed with the public hearing.

Member Sestrom: What process did you go through to merge and then un-merge [the lots]?

Peter Guarino: It was during the sale. I'm not sure what happened.

Member Sestrom: Was it a local attorney?

Peter Guarino: Yes. John Revella.

Attorney Donovan: The code frowns on non-conforming lots but the ZBA can't act on this.

Chairperson Adams: I saw that.

Motion to open public hearing made by Member Sestrom. Seconded by Member Barilli. All ayes. Motion carried.

Evan Panagiotopoulos: I live on **17 Wileman Ave**. I have a list of seventeen neighbors who oppose the variance. The applicant purchased this knowing that this was a non-conforming lot. So it was self-created and should be denied. Zoning laws exist to protect the public interest. The applicant has not demonstrated the necessary characteristics. If this comes to pass, this creates precedent that would undermine the zoning code. Where should I submit the signatures. This is the only copy. This is an incompatibility with the complan so it should be denied to maintain orderly development.

Village of Walden
Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
March 26, 2025

Chairperson Adams: I know you went through the factors what we use so I wanted to know what is your main objection? It's too small. If the home was built with the proper setbacks, I appreciate all the work you did, but other than the 500 sqft too small, what is the problem. I just want to make sure what your complaint is.

Evan Panagiotopoulos: It's too small. We have zoning laws for a reason.

Judy Cummings: 38 Highland, I've lived in Walden my whole life and I guess my concern is, the back of my house faces this wall and it may look so big, but it is short. And I go by Walnut and our excitement was that the houses are farther apart. And we put in a big pool and we take pride in our yard and there's a fence but we can see this lot from our yard. And it's tight. And the house next to me, my family member is purchasing that. On Highland versus Walnut the houses are much closer.

Chairperson Adams: That is R5, Walnut is one of the older streets.

Regis Sonner: 4 Wileman Ave. We've lived in our home for many years and I understand why they want to sell this property, but they knew what they were purchasing. And I saw this on zillow being listed for 100k so I don't know what their intent is. And I think the claim of a family member moving in is sketchy. We purchased a 50ft lot next to us after we build our home for the purpose of keeping a buffer. So if this should go through then that creates precedence. The home that is next to us, it's an old house, is 5ft off their property line and it's mess. We aren't pristine, but we aren't slobs and this place has two abandoned cars and shanty houses, and they are right there. We have contacted the building department and we've spoken to Mr. Revella as well. It deteriorates the character of the neighborhood.

Lance Sonner: 4 Wileman Ave. We are concerned about precedence because what if I want to build my [50 ft] lot? This is just Valley Ave all over again with houses on top of each other.

Chairperson Adams: Everyone has the right to appeal these laws and get changes. But please don't feel like we are going to do things to just make people happy.

Attorney Donovan: I'm going to recommend to the board that this be denied as this is not being brought before the board correctly as this is not a lot. Orange county SBL is working here. Tax map will often assign things without noting them, but the village has a provision to deal with it.

Member Matisse: [Inaudible]

Rory Ram: 23 Wileman. We moved from Queens to find a place with some space. We came from a place where you can see into people's homes. And it wasn't until closing that we realized that this was not apart of the lot. We purchased our home back in December. Yes, we did.

Chairperson Adams: Did you get a deed and survey when you purchased your home?

Anna Steinhauer: When they purchased the home they were welcome to do a search. The lots were never presented as a unit.

Peter Guarino: We offered [Evan Panagiotopoulos] the lot before we sold to

Motion to close made by Member Barilli. Seconded by Member Scieurca. All ayes. Motion carried.

Chairperson Adams: No GML.

Member Matisse: Can they withdraw their application?

Attorney Donovan: Yes, they can.

Village of Walden
Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
March 26, 2025

Anna Steinhauer: We will withdraw the application.

B. FORMAL APPLICATIONS

B.1 21 Wileman Avenue, Area Variance

B. 2 24 Ulster Ave.

Chairperson Adams: I will ask Member Sciurca to step down and Member Mazzella to step up for the purpose of voting. I would like to call for a motion.

Motion to approve the resolution for **24 Ulster** made by Member Sestrom. Seconded by Member Barilli. All ayes. Motion carried.

C. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Grace Economy signed paperwork

D. INFORMATION ITEMS

E. CORRESPONDENCE

3. COMMUNICATIONS

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Member Barilli. Seconded by Member Sestrom. All ayes. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

Anisetta Valdez, Zoning Board Secretary

