



TOWN OF
STONEHAM
MASSACHUSETTS
Town Hall
35 Central Street
Stoneham, Massachusetts 02180
BOARD OF APPEALS
781-279-2695

Stoneham Board of Appeals Minutes
Thursday, October 30, 2025
Town Hall Hearing Room
6:00 PM

Members of the Board present: Chair Tobin Shulman, R. Michael Dufour, Kevin McLaughlin and Associate Members Bill Sullivan and Stephen Levy.

Also present: Town Clerk Maria Sagarino acting as Clerk to the Board of Appeals, Attorney Charles Houghton and Burton Visnick.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM by Chair Tobin Shulman. He introduced the board members and explained the procedure the board follows for public hearings. He explained that Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Levy would sit in for members Robert Saltzman and Eric Rubin.

Mr. McLaughlin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board confirmed the next meeting dates of November 20, 2025 and December 18, 2025.

Mr. McLaughlin made a motion to approve the minutes for September 25, 2025 which was seconded by Mr. Dufour. Four members present voted in favor 4-0 with Mr. Levy abstaining.

6 Month Extension for 32 Summer Street decision

Attorney Houghton requested a six-month extension of the decision for 32 Summer Street dated September 27, 2024. He stated that his client had the building permit application in but all information had not yet been provided to have the permit issued. They believe they will have it taken care of in the next month. Mr. Sullivan asked if they really need all six months. Mr. Houghton stated that the statute says six-month extension so that is what he is asking for. Mr. Sullivan made a motion to approve which was seconded by Mr. McLaughlin. All members present voted in favor 5-0.

Brief discussion of Weiss Farm pump & weir

The Board has a report from Corcoran & Company stating that the pump is working and the weir is not leaking. DPW Director Brett Gonsalves agreed. They also reiterated that DEP did not want the permit amended and the float levels changed.

Mr. Shulman Allowed Mr. Wantman of 20 Gerald Road to speak. He relayed the same message that he is still having water issues. He has water even during a dry period. He believes that the weir is leaking

Mr. Shulman informed Mr. Wantman that this is beyond the Board of Appeals being able to assist in any manner if the pump and weir are functioning.

Mr. Wantman believes the weir is leaking so badly that the pump should be turning on more frequently but is not. He said that after rain storms water gushes. Mr. Shulman read a portion of Hancock's report out loud and the pump is functioning as designed.

Mr. Wantman finds that hard to believe as he is flooded when it has not even rained. Mr. Sullivan asked if the conditions on his property are better or worse since the pump became operational. Mr. Wantman conceded that things are better but he still insisted that the weir is leaking and the pump is not set properly.

Mr. Shulman stated that unfortunately the data the Board has been given show that the pump is set to the proper levels. It kicks on when it is supposed to, fills up and drops down as it should. He added that it is beyond our ability to do anything. Mr. Wantman was referred to DEP going forward.

2 O'Grady Circle

Mr. Shulman read the legal notice into the record as follows:

“You are hereby notified that the Stoneham Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing Thursday, October 30, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Hearing Room, Town Hall, 35 Central Street, Stoneham, Massachusetts to hear all persons interested in the application by Burton S. Visnick, 2 O'Grady Circle, Stoneham, Massachusetts to construct a 2-story greenhouse shed with a 300 square foot footprint at 2 O'Grady Circle. The petitioner is requesting a variance from the Stoneham Town Code, Chapter 15, Section 4.2.2.2(c) 3. The maximum square footage for an accessory building is 250 square feet. The proposed square footage is 300 feet and 2 stories. A variance is also being sought from Section 4.2.2.2 (c) 4. The maximum height for an accessory building is 15 feet. The proposed is 24 feet 7 inches. A plan of 2 O'Grady Circle by Marchionda & Associates, LP dated July 24, 2025 may be seen daily except Friday afternoon in the Town Clerk's Office”.

Mr. Burton appeared before the Board to explain why he is seeking relief. He bought his home 5 years ago and has done quite a bit of renovating. He has a shed in the northeast corner that is deteriorating but is out of the view of his neighbors. He would like to build a new structure that will function as a shed and a greenhouse. He continued to explain that his wife is currently in hospice but that she had been an avid collector of Japanese miniature gardens. He wanted to use the greenhouse to continue her passion. He also grows fig trees and he would like to bring them inside during the winter. Mr. McLaughlin is jealous as he has tried for 20 years to grow figs.

Mr. Dufour asked how many square feet this would be? Mr. Shulman mentioned that there is a 300 square foot footprint but asked how much square footage is in the loft. Mr. Burton indicated it was about 175-200 square feet. Mr. Dufour asked if there would be electricity. Mr. Burton responded that there would be. Mr. Dufour asked about water. Mr. Burton stated there would be no plumbing, just water pumped in. Mr. McLaughlin asked about heat. Mr. Burton stated it would

be heated. Mr. Levy asked if there were windows on the side facing the neighbors. Mr. Burton indicated that they had left windows off of that side facing the neighbor's basketball court.

With no members of the public present, Mr. McLaughlin made a motion to close the public hearing which was seconded by Mr. Dufour. All members voted in favor 5-0.

Mr. Sullivan thinks it is a big ask. It is 24.7 feet high and a lot of square footage on a nice flat lot. What is the hardship to grant? Mr. Shulman didn't think 50 square feet was too crazy or the height which wouldn't affect the neighbors. Mr. Dufour thought there was sufficient screening in place. Mr. Levy thought it was friendly to the neighbors. Mr. Shulman added that the shape of the lot and topography work in his favor.

Mr. Dufour made a motion to accept with the hardship being the shape of the lot. It's out of the neighbor's view and can't be seen from the street. There's no water and sewer. It's just an elaborate garden shed. Mr. McLaughlin seconded the motion. Four members voted in favor with Mr. Sullivan voting against 4-1. Relief is granted.

72 Central Street

Mr. Shulman had previously read the legal notice into the record as follows:

“You are hereby notified that the Stoneham Board of Appeals will hold a Public Hearing THURSDAY EVENING, September 25th 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Hearing Room, Town Hall to hear all persons interested in the application by Right Whale Development LLC, of 18 Brick Kiln Road, Chelmsford, MA 01824 prospective purchaser pursuant to a purchase and sale agreement, dated June 12, 2025, with 72 Central Street LLC, a foreign Limited Liability Company, registered to do business in Massachusetts, with a Massachusetts office address of 272 Main Street Suite 4 Stoneham, MA, to demolish the existing structure and to construct three (3) residential condominium units on the property. Section 4.6.3.2: Dwellings are allowed on the first floor provided 50% of the gross floor area of the first floor is used for a use allowed in Section 4.6.2. The proposed condominium units will be 100% residential on the first floor. Plan filed with the application entitled “Proposed Conditions Plan located at 72 Central Street Stoneham, MA,” dated 09-03-2025, prepared by George C. Collins Professional Land Surveyor, prepared for 72 Central Street LLC, shows the proposed 3 Unit Condominium Building. Plan may be seen daily except Friday afternoon in the Town Clerk's Office”.

This matter had been continued from September 25, 2025. Attorney Houghton explained that they were unable to come up with an alternative plan that would work and are back with the original proposal. This house needs to come down. They could find no way of saving it. They could do a building that would comply but then you'd have a building right on the street. It would not be set back. With limited parking, the commercial use would not be ideal. And the house would come down.

With their proposal of three units, it conforms to the neighborhood which is mainly residential at this end of Central Street. They have a financial hardship.

Mr. Sullivan asked if they were to do commercial, if the house would come down. Mr. Houghton indicated it would come down either way. Mr. Sullivan stated that they can do what they want with commercial and the house would come down. He'd like to see a single family but he understands. There are houses on both sides so he doesn't see the harm in granting the variance to remove the commercial. Mr. Dufour said that the Board had previously walked through and this is not a house you would save. Mr. Levy asked how long it has sat vacant. Mr. Houghton responded that it's been 3 years.

Mr. Shulman opened the public hearing. Kim Nardone of 23 Myopia Rd spoke in favor. She stated she owns the second mortgage on the property. Any improvement is for the Town. As a realtor she said this makes the most sense. George Ricardelli, owner of 80 Central Street thought that they'd be bringing a new plan. He'd rather see two units instead of three and off-street parking. Mr. Shulman explained that with the three units, parking is being provided in front with garage space as well. There will be two spaces per unit. Mr. Ricardelli also explained that he is still upset about the Japanese knotweed and would like it cleaned up. Mr. Shulman responded that the petitioner was amenable to cleaning it up. Mr. Houghton added that this proposal has extra parking. There are more spaces than needed. Ms. Nardone spoke as a local realtor. She stated that buyers won't consider buying there if the parking doesn't meet their needs. They will buy elsewhere. Mr. Shulman asked her if she believed this plan was marketable. She believed it is. With three units there will be less cars, less congestion and green space.

With no further public comment, Mr. Sullivan made a motion to close the public hearing which was seconded by Mr. Dufour. All members voted in favor 5-0.

Mr. Sullivan indicated that there would be more than adequate parking. Three residential units seem more fitting than commercial on this part of Central Street. Mr. Levy added that the property has been vacant for three years. He doesn't consider this to be the strongest historical feature in Town given their description of the property. Mr. Shulman has reservations that have less to do with the house that's there and more to do with the future of the Central Business District. The appetite of the Town is for more commercial tax base not less. He did agree that this part of Central is residential. He understands that the residents want an improvement because what is there is not attractive and unsafe. He also appreciates the need to remove the Japanese knotweed. Although he would rather see commercial, he understands the need for residential.

Mr. Sullivan made a motion to approve. It doesn't derogate from the intent of the bylaw. Residential seems like the only thing worth putting there. There is a hardship for the community the longer it stays vacant. Today it is residential despite the zoning in the Central Business District. He would add a condition about tackling the Japanese knotweed as well as allowing a member of the Historical Commission access to the house prior to demolition. Mr. McLaughlin seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All members voted in favor 5-0.

Mr. Dufour made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Mr. McLaughlin. All members voted in favor 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:03PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Sagarino
Town Clerk

Documents and other exhibits used by the Board of Appeals during this meeting to be made part of the official record but not attached to these minutes:

Hancock Associates Weiss Farm Apartments Monthly Environmental Report for August 2025.

A plan of 2 O'Grady Circle by Marchionda & Associates, LP dated July 24, 2025.

Plan entitled "Proposed Conditions Plan located at 72 Central Street Stoneham, MA," dated 09-03-2025, prepared by George C. Collins Professional Land Surveyor.

Photos of the basement of 72 Central Street.