



City of Somerville  
**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

**OCTOBER 26, 2022 MEETING MINUTES**

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Susan Fontano	Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Katherine Garavaglia	Clerk	<i>Present</i>	
Anne Brockelman	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Ann Fullerton	Member	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Charlotte Leis (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning), Andrew Graminski (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm and adjourned at 6:25pm.

**PUBLIC HEARING: 36 Berkeley Street (P&Z 22-068)**

The applicant team explained their request for a Hardship Variance. They wish to turn the rooms at the rear of the building into a bathroom, closet, and gym; however, one side of the existing structure is not set in by 1' from the side wall, so they are seeking a Hardship Variance from that requirement for the rear addition building component.

Chair Fontano opened public comment and noted that the Board had received written comments from a few members of the public.

No one indicated that they wished to speak.

Chair Fontano closed public comment.

The Board and applicant team discussed how long the building has been in its existing condition. Staff explained how the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) interpreted that the existing enclosed porch cannot be turned into habitable space and therefore the applicant would need to convert to a rear addition building component in order to do what they would like to do, and they would either need to comply with the Zoning Ordinance or seek a Hardship Variance.

The Board and applicant team discussed the additional \$25,000 cost and extension of the project timeline of pushing the rear addition back by 1', the proposed steps on the back porch, if the porch has been insulated, how this seems like a technicality considering that the massing will not change, and the plan to remove two windows on the first floor and the reconfiguration of the windows on the second floor.

The Board stated that the proposal does not change the character of the building as it is already over the line and has been that way for a while; the literal enforcement would be detrimental in terms of time and money; and more extensive construction would be more detrimental to the neighbors. The Board noted that the neighbors are in support of this proposal, and since this is not a big change there would not be any detriment to the neighborhood. They noted that if this proposal was going to change the footprint of the building they would have more concerns, but they want encourage people to keep improving their properties.

Following a motion by Clerk Garavaglia, seconded by Member Brockelman, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the requested Hardship Variance based on the discussion during the meeting and with the conditions in the Staff Memo.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS</b>
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*NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division at [planning@somervillema.gov](mailto:planning@somervillema.gov).*