



TOWN OF WILLSBORO
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

MINUTES
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
DATE: September 17th, at 6:00PM
LOCATION: WILLSBORO TOWN HALL

Present: Chairperson: Anna Reynolds; Board Members: Kathleen Nasner, Nichole Gerding and Trisha Sheehan

Absent: Susan Mueller

Members of the Public: Adam Hathaway, Greg Gordon, Lorilee Sheehan, Jeffrey Bigelow, Mark Hall, Elizabeth Becker, Barbara Paye, Sarah and Jay White, Darren Dickerson, Cindy Samuelson, Susan Fahey, Marykay Drolette, Bud Wilson and Jonathan Franke (Zoning Officer)

Reynolds called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Minutes:

The August 2025 minutes were approved as presented.

A motion was made by Gerding, seconded by Sheehan, to approve the August 2025 minutes as presented. Roll call: Gerding, Sheehan, Nasner, Reynolds.

Reynolds thanks the board as they are volunteers and set ground rules for the public hearings and reviewed the process.

Public Hearing:

John & Patti Wukovits – 20.3-2-19.000 – 3 Weigands Way – HC2 – Demolish single-family seasonal dwelling and rebuild new single-family year-round dwelling

Reynolds opened the public hearing at 6:03pm.

Reynolds asked if the applicant or representative had anything to add about the project.

Mark Hall stated that there is a reduction in the side yard setback. The applicant would like to tear down the existing cabin and build a new home. The applicant is reducing the nonconforming areas by moving the new home back 5' from the water but can't move it back any further due to the septic tank etc.. The new home would be a two-story home where it is only a single story currently.

Reynolds invited anyone from the public to speak in regard to this project.

Jay White stated that he and his family have a camp directly adjacent on the other side of route 22. Jay White stated that he believes this is a significant request looking to have relief on three sides and the south side affects him and his family. He understands the desire to make the camp year round and fully supports that but the proposed size of the camp is much larger than the existing camp and sees this as an inconvenience because it will hinder his view of the water and the character on long pond. Jay White stated that he sees going from a single story to a two story home is a preference and not being driven by any other condition.

Reynolds stated that he has over his three minutes for speaking.
Jay White stated that he will have his attorney contact the town.

Sarah White stated that the view will be obstructed with this new building and they would like to maintain the current view they have of the pond. Sarah White stated that the new home will be very close to the path to the water and doesn't understand why they would want it that close.

Reynolds stated that this is a worse case scenario and review the relief requests. Reynolds stated that they are in the HC2 district and the lot coverage is 30% and the applicant is far under that with the new home.

Sheehan asked the Whites to show on the map where their deeded access is for the path to the water. Jay White stated that they do not have deeded access but did share where the path is on the map. Sarah White also showed a photo from her phone.

Gerding asked if the applicant planned on living at this new home year round. Mark Hall stated that they are retiring and plan to spend more time here.

Sarah White asked what the existing square footage of the camp is versus what's being proposed.

Reynolds stated that the existing camp is 872 square feet and the new proposed is around 1400 square feet.

Sarah White asked why they couldn't move the camp towards the road more.

Reynolds stated they can't due to the septic.

Mark Hall stated that the building may be able to be shifted to open up more space on the south side but due to unknowns we don't know if we can do that but this is why we are looking for relief. Mark Hall stated that the portion of the new camp that is on the south side will be single story.

Reynolds asked if the applicant was going to have to cut any trees.

Mark Hall stated that they do not intend to cut any trees.

Gerding asked the Whites if they use this path primarily to go to the water. They stated yes. Gerding asked if anyone else uses this path. The Whites stated that yes, it is the only path to the water to be used by other residents.

Gerding made a motion to close the public hearing at 6:20pm, seconded by Sheehan.

The Board read aloud and reviewed the five questions. Discussion followed.

The Board read aloud and reviewed the SEQR and declared a negative declaration.

Reynolds asked Mark Hall that if the Board put a condition in to plant more trees if that was doable. Mark Hall didn't see that as an issue as long as there was space to do it.

Sarah White asked why the camp has to be shifted to the south and why cant it stay on the existing footprint.

A motion was made to approve the application for a single-family home in HC2 Long Pond, for minimum lot size relief of 27,387 square feet resulting in a minimum lot size of 12,613 square feet and north side yard setback of 10, south side yard setback relief of 10 feet resulting in two 10-foot side yard setbacks.

Jay Cohen – 11.13-1-23.000 – 579 Corlear Drive – RL-1 – Demolishing existing garage and building a new 23'x24' garage

Reynolds opened the public hearing at 6:31pm.

Reynolds asked if the applicant or representative had anything to add.

Jeffrey Bigelow stated that they will be tearing down the existing garage and increasing it in size but not asking for any other setbacks than where it is currently.

Reynolds stated that it has the same road side setback and it meets the north shore setback and that the current lot coverage is 12.5% and the new garage will be about 14.5% and they are allowed 15%.

Reynolds asked if anyone from the public had anything to say. No one from the public had any comments.

A motion was made by Gerding, seconded by Nasner to close the public hearing at 6:33pm.

The Board read aloud and reviewed the five questions. Discussion followed.

The Board read aloud and reviewed the SEQR and declared a negative declaration.

Reynolds asked if the board had any other questions. No other questions from the board.

A motion was made by Nasner, seconded by Gerding, to approve the application for a garage in RL1 and LC for minimum lot size relief of 26,932 square feet resulting in a minimum lot size of 13,068 square feet and a 15' relief for front yard setback resulting in a 35' road (front) yard setback under section 5.50 accessory structure and 5.52 section 2.

Lorilee Sheehan – 21.5-1-52.000 – 127 Corlear Drive – RL-1/LF – Add living space to the front of the home to occupy where the original enclosed porch occupied which is now a deck & remove current deck

Trisha Sheehan stated that she would be recusing herself from this project. Reynolds recommended that Trisha Sheehan excuse herself from the room. Sheehan departed the building.

Reynolds opened the public hearing at 6:39pm.

Reynolds stated that a new site plan map that was requested of the applicant at the last meeting was provided to the board. The board reviewed the map.

Greg Gordon stated that he was not present at the meeting as the planning board chair that he is there as he has resided at 127 Corlear Drive and been a legal resident for the past 13+ years.

Reynolds and the board discussed the lot coverage. Reynolds shared a spreadsheet showing the breakdown for the lot coverage.

Nasner asked what is being removed. The board reviewed the map with Gordon. The board asked clarifying questions on the project and Gordon explained using the map provided to the board.

Barbara Paye stated she doesn't care about the outcome of the variance but stated that the zoning board needs to be ethical and that there is a clear conflict of interest.

Reynolds asked if anyone else from the public would like to speak. No one else wanted to speak.

Reynolds asked if there were any letters received from the public. The ZO stated that he received one letter from Jennifer Allard stating she was not in favor of the project. The ZO read the letter out loud.

Nasner asked if the board can ask for drainage be added for the impervious surface so that the drainage is directed somewhere. Reynolds stated that a condition can be put on the variance. Nasner stated that she has seen some additions done and the water is directed so all the run off isn't going to the same location.

Reynolds stated that she is concerned with the waterfront and the distance of the home from the water but not the quality of water.

Nasner stated she was confused about what's existing and what will be new with this project. Gordon explained and reviewed the project and the maps with the board again. Nasner asked if there was any drainage throughout the property. Gordon stated that there are currently downspouts but it will have to be directed under the concrete because it can't go over and there is a discharge for the sump pump so it will all be tied in.

Lorilee Sheehan stated that she submitted photos as well as for what was previously existing and she isn't asking for anything more than what was there. Reynold asked when it was a cabin? Lorilee Sheehan stated yes we took the screen porch off and now we just want to enclose it again and its not going any closer than what is was initially and the neighbors from the north and south will not be obstructed.

Gerding asked if the addition is one story or two. Gordon stated that it will only be one story.

Reynolds asked if the applicant had the 3D plans to review. Gordon provided the 3D plans. The board reviewed the plans.

A motion was made by Gerding, seconded by Nasner, to close the public hearing at 6:58pm.

The Board read aloud and reviewed the five questions. Discussion followed.

The Board read aloud and reviewed the SEQR and declared a negative declaration.

Nasner asked whether the addition is on the same footprint or not. Reynolds and Gordon confirmed it is the same footprint.

Nasner stated that they are remodeling their home and putting it back to what it was originally. Lorilee Sheehan stated she is correct.

Gerding asked if you could see this from the road. Nasner stated that the addition you cannot see it from the road. Lorilee Sheehan stated she was correct that it could not be seen from the road. Gordon and Lorilee Sheehan reviewed photos with the board of the line of site to the north and south.

Nasner asked about adding trees. Gordon stated that there are cedar trees there now and they do not plan to cut them down and that the plan is to dig around the big tree.

Reynolds asked if there were any other questions or concerns from the board. Gerding asked if they are leaving the natural growth on the beach. Lorilee Sheehan and Gordon stated they are.

Reynolds asked the ZO if when this project goes to the planning board is that when the drainage system is reviewed. The ZO stated that yes it will be part of their review.

Gerding asked about adding green space to the project. Lorilee Sheehan stated that the front part of the addition is stonework and planter boxes and reviewed the map showing this.

A motion was made by Gerding, seconded by Nasner to approve the application for a single family home in RL-1 for minimum lot size relief of 16,900 square feet resulting in a minimum lot size of 23,100 square feet and a front yard setback relief of 37 feet resulting in 13 foot yard setback and a south side yard setback relief of 11 feet resulting in a 9 foot maximum side yard setback, with added condition for stormwater drainage controls from patio and living space addition, leave all trees, keep existing plants and provide additional plantings/shrubs at and near shoreline seawall.

Old Business: No old business.

New Business: No new business.

Reynolds asked if there was any other business.

Cindy Samuelson stated she had a question. She asked if the condition being set on a project for stormwater drainage systems was going to be setting a precedence for future projects. Reynolds stated that it would be specific to the project. Samuelson asked if they were going to require this of anyone else on the point when doing future projects. Reynolds stated that it would be the planning board. The ZO stated that it's a request that the ZBA put in place. Reynolds stated that it would be based on each individual project.

A member of the public asked if the board goes out to the properties. Nasner stated that the board does every time.

Reynold stated that there is training at Essex County on Monday if anyone can make it.

Meeting adjourned at 7:14pm.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 15th, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,

Morgan Drinkwine
Secretary for Planning and Zoning Board