

**Town of Needham
Board of Appeals**

MINUTES

Thursday August 25, 2016 at 7:30 PM

Selectmen's Chambers, Town Hall
1471 Highland Avenue, Needham, Massachusetts

Pursuant to notice published at least 48 hours prior to this date, a meeting of the Needham Board of Appeals was held in the Selectmen's Chambers, Town Hall, 1471 Highland Avenue, Needham, Massachusetts.

Jon D. Schneider, Chairman, presided and the following members were present: Jonathan D. Tamkin, Howard Goldman, Peter Friedenberg, and Kathy Lind Berardi. The agenda is attached. Mr. Schneider opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Goldman made a motion to approve the July 21, 2016 meeting minutes. Mr. Tamkin seconded. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Case # 1 238 Highland Avenue

Granted

Director of Planning and Community Development Report -

Lee Newman, Director of Planning and Community Development, explained zoning changes to be presented at this Fall's Town Meeting and updated the Board on the Large House Committee's progress. And then, Ms. Newman asked for feedback for improvements to existing zoning by-laws.

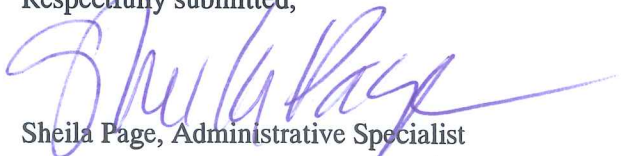
Ms. Newman and Mr. Schneider, who also is on the Large House Committee, said that committee is made up of diverse interests, including builders, architects, and realtors. Ms. Newman explained the Large House Committee will be proposing zoning changes at the Spring Town meeting. These changes are intended to break up the massing of the large homes, particularly the ones built on small lots. Members of the Board expressed concern that these proposed measures were not enough to actually reduce the size of the houses. Mr. Tamkin said that while these changes will encourage nicer looking homes, it is not doing enough to reduce the size. He thinks townspeople want smaller houses with smaller footprints. Mr. Friedenberg said that he felt strongly that the changes need to be more aggressive. The Board suggested that the same flexibility is needed for non-conforming front setbacks as the proposed provisions allowing the pre-existing non-conforming side setbacks to be modified; especially if the front setback changes from 20 feet to 25 feet.

As for improvements to existing zoning by-laws, the Board suggested that the definition of structure should be changed to exclude decorative walls. Now, landscape walls covering more than 100 square feet should observe the setback unless they are considered to be boundary walls. Boundary walls have been loosely interpreted by the Building Department. Many decorative walls are not boundary walls as they are not on the property line.

And finally, the Board recommended that a special permit for a third garage bay in the SRB district be eliminated. The garages are being built anyway as it is just a matter of what kind of door is installed. This by-law doesn't lead to a better project. The only thing the Board controls is eliminating inappropriate lighting which could be captured another way.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sheila Page, Administrative Specialist

**TOWN OF NEEDHAM
BOARD OF APPEALS**

AGENDA

Selectmen's Chambers, Town Hall
1471 Highland Avenue, Needham, MA
THURSDAY, August 25, 2016 - 7:30PM

Minutes

Review and approve minutes from July 21, 2016 meeting.

Case #1 – 7:30 PM

This case was continued from July 21, 2016 per the applicant's request.
Public notice is hereby given that Allen Douglass and Christine Lachkey, prospective tenants, have made application to the Board of Appeals for a Special Permit under Sections 3.2.5.2(c), and 7.5.2, and any other applicable Sections of the Zoning By-law to operate a Montessori school for toddlers and pre-schoolers in a 4,162 square-foot space and to waive strict adherence to parking and design requirements pursuant to Section 5.1.1.5 of the Zoning By-law. The property is located at 238 Highland Avenue in the Highland Commercial 128 District and the New England Business Center District.

Business Matter

Director of Planning and Community Development Report