



Land Use Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

Present: Councilors Kelley (Chair), Leary, Block, Farrell, Golden, Irish, Lucas, and Roche

Also Present: Councilor Wright

City Staff Present: Senior Planner Sondria Berman, Deputy Chief Planner Cat Kemmett, Deputy City Solicitor Jonah Temple, and Planning Associate Zach Melcher

All Special Permit Plans, Designs, Plan Memoranda and Application Materials, both past and present, can be found at the following link: [NewGov – City of Newton Land Use Committee Special Permit Search](#).

The full video of the January 27, 2026, Land Use Meeting can be found at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivcl7N1hxbw&list=PLqJiDbsvfNjUwMJnmuRsKZOBf_K9kg5C7

Note: *The Committee will review a request for a consistency ruling for 11 Florence Street. The petitioner is seeking a consistency ruling from the Commissioner of Inspectional Services as to whether the relocation of the memory care terrace from levels three and four to level two, as well as the decorative wall along the Florence Street sidewalk, may be deemed consistent with the approved plans under Special Permit #356-22. The Commissioner is seeking the opinion of the Land Use Committee on the matter.*

11 Florence Street - <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/904384>

Note: Attorney Stephen Buchbinder, representing the petitioner joined the committee to discuss the consistency ruling for 11 Florence Street. Atty. Buchbinder provided background on the project which included that it is a five-story building with 120 beds for elderly housing. The special permit was originally approved on November 8, 2023. Bridget McCafferty, project architect, presented the changes to the approved plans, which included the removal of the memory care terraces and the addition of balconies and patios. The changes are contingent on the relocation of memory care residents to level two, affecting the stairs and exterior terraces.

Sondria Berman, Senior Planning Associate reiterated that the changes included a west-facing terrace, modifications to the third and fourth-floor terraces, and the addition of new balconies.

A councilor raised concern regarding the outdoor terrace but ultimately supported the changes.

A councilor questioned if there was any change to the overall square footage or building height. Ms. McCafferty noted that there was no change.

A councilor raised concerns about the sound from the rooftop mechanicals and impact on the neighbors. Ms. McCafferty explained that this is something that they could look into.

Councilors thought the changes were appropriate, not substantial and in keeping with the intent and purpose of the existing Special Permit.

Chair's Note: *The petitioner has requested to withdraw the following petition without prejudice.*

#58-26 Request for a Special Permit to waive 38 parking stalls at 1135 Walnut Street
THE PARISH OF SAINT PAUL petition for SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL, to waive 38 parking stalls at 1135 Walnut Street, Ward 6, Newton, on land known as Section 52 Block 08 Lot 11, containing approximately 16,695 sq. ft. of land in a district zoned Multi Residence 1. Ref: Sec. 7.3.3, 5.1.4, 6.3.12.B.1, and 5.1.13 of Chapter 30 of the City of Newton Rev Zoning Ord, 2017.
1135 Walnut Street - <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/904528>

Action: Land Use Committee voted to Approve the Withdrawal without Prejudice 8-0

Note: Councilor Roche motioned to approve the request to withdraw without prejudice, which passed unanimously.

#15-26 Request to exceed FAR and to extend a nonconforming front setback at 355 Walnut Street

YEVGENYA ZISLIS petition for SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL, to construct a mudroom and entry landing, extending the nonconforming front setback and FAR at 355 Walnut Street, Ward 2, Newton, on land known as Section 24 Block 11 Lot 01, containing approximately 7,238 sq. ft. of land in a district zoned Multi Residence 1. Ref: Sec. 7.3.3, 3.2.3, 7.8.2.C.2, 3.2.11, and 7.8.2.C.2 of Chapter 30 of the City of Newton Rev Zoning Ord, 2017.

355 Walnut Street - <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/902460>

Land Use Held; Public Hearing Continued 7-0 (Councilor Golden Not Voting) on 01/06/26

Action: Land Use Approved 8-0; Public Hearing Closed

Note: Cat Kemmet, Deputy Chief Planner joined the committee to discuss the request to construct a mudroom and entry landing, extending the nonconforming front setback and FAR at 355 Walnut Street. The addition will increase the FAR from 0.57 to 0.58 and extend the nonconforming front setback from 0.9 feet to 7.9 feet. Ms. Kemmet noted that the project aims to improve the living conditions by providing a mud room to prevent cold air and moisture from entering the house.

Jana Zislis, the petitioner explained the need for the mud room to address cold drafts and provide storage for outdoor gear. The design aims to be modest and practical, using matching siding, trim, and roofing to fit with the existing house. The project will not affect parking, driveways, or shared access and will be built directly on the duplex lot. Ms. Zislis shared the attached images of the proposed addition.

The public hearing was opened.

Councilors noted that the petitioner needs to ensure that they will stay below the 30% lot coverage to avoid the need for further amendments.

Councilors expressed their support for the project.

Councilor Lucas motioned to close the public hearing.

The Committee reviewed the draft council order. Councilor Lucas motioned to approve which passed unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Kelley, Chair