



# Land Use Committee Report

## City of Newton In City Council

**Tuesday, March 24, 2026**

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

**Also Present:** Councilor Malakie

**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 March 24, 2026, Land Use Meeting can be found at the following link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gy7uF\\_W2i1c&list=PLqJiDbsvfNjUwMJnmuRsKZOBf\\_K9kq5C7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gy7uF_W2i1c&list=PLqJiDbsvfNjUwMJnmuRsKZOBf_K9kq5C7)

**#118-26 Request to further extend nonconforming FAR and lot coverage at 199 Otis Street**  
CHRIS BIERLY petition for SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL, to construct a one-story 333 square foot detached accessory building to be used as a home office further extending the existing nonconforming FAR and lot coverage at 199 Otis Street, Ward 2, Newton, on land known as Section 24 Block 12 Lot 17D containing approximately 26,571 sq. ft. of land in a district zoned SR1 . Ref: Sec. 7.3.3, 3.1.3, 3.1.9, and 7.8.2.C.2 of Chapter 30 of the City of Newton Rev Zoning Ord, 2017.

199 Otis Street – <https://newtonma.portal.opengov.com/records/908997>

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

**Note:** Sondria Berman, Senior Planner joined the committee to discuss the petition to construct a one-story 333 square foot detached accessory building to be used as a home office further extending the existing nonconforming FAR and lot coverage at 199 Otis Street. The proposed accessory building will be located at the rear of the property, behind the existing primary dwelling, and will require a tree permit prior to issuing a building permit.

Chris Bierly, the homeowner joined the discussion including his design team. Mr. Bierly explained that he has letters of support from the direct abutters. The design team emphasized the importance of preserving existing trees and integrating the new structure into the natural environment.

The public hearing was opened and with no member of the public wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Councilors expressed their support for the project. It was noted that this is a minimally invasive project and will be beneficial for the homeowner.

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

**#119-26 Request for a special permit to allow an oversized dormer, extending a nonconforming 3.5 story structure, and to further extend nonconforming FAR at 25-27 Lewis Street**

WILLIAM SCHWIETERMAN petition for SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL, proposes to create habitable space in the attic level with relief for an oversized dormer, to alter and extend a nonconforming 3.5 story structure, and to further extend nonconforming FAR at 25-27 Lewis Street, Ward 1, Newton, on land known as Section 13 Block 02 Lot 08, containing approximately 4,772 sq. ft. of land in a district zoned MR1 . Ref: Sec. 7.3.3, 1.5.4.G.2.b, 3.2.3, 3.2.11 and 7.8.2.C.2, of Chapter 30 of the City of Newton Rev Zoning Ord, 2017.  
25-27 Lewis Street – <https://newtonma.portal.opengov.com/records/910324>

**Action:** Land Use Committee Approved 7-0 (Councilor Kelley opposed) ; Public Hearing Closed

**Note:** Zach Melcher, Planning Associate joined the discussion to discuss the request to create habitable space in the attic level with relief for an oversized dormer, to alter and extend a nonconforming 3.5 story structure, and to further extend nonconforming FAR at 25-27 Lewis Street. The property is described as a two-family dwelling in an MR-1 district, with the proposed dormer exceeding the maximum allowed width by 92.4%. The proposed dormer will increase the non-conforming FAR from 0.69 to 0.85, where 0.58 is the maximum allowed. The site is deemed an appropriate location for the oversized dormer, and the proposed project will not adversely affect the neighborhood.

The design team from Rosemont Design explained the need for additional habitable space in the attic. They presented presents the site plan and elevation drawings, showing the proposed dormer and its alignment with existing windows.

Councilors expressed their support for the project because it would not adversely effect the neighborhood.

A councilor noted their concerns regarding about the significant increase in FAR and the design of the dormer.

The public hearing was opened and with no member of the public wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

The council reviewed the draft council order. Councilor Leary motioned to approve which passed 7-1 with Councilor Kelley opposed.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Andrea Kelley, Chair**