

**Town of Amherst
Variance Appeal Hearing
Minutes**

Date: September 17, 2026
Time: 4:30 pm
Location: Council Chambers, Town Hall

Members Present Mayor Robert Small
 Deputy Mayor Charlie Chambers
 Councillor Dwayne Ripley
 Councillor Hal Davidson
 Councillor Kathy Wells (via Zoom)
 Councillor Nic Furlong
 Councillor Terry McManaman

Staff Present Jason MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer
 Andrew Fisher Director, Planning & Economic Development
 Torben Laux Development Officer
 Sean Payne, Marketing & Communications Officer
 Natalie LeBlanc, Municipal Clerk

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1. **CALL TO ORDER**
Mayor Small called the appeal hearing to order.
 2. **TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT**
Mayor Small gave the Territorial Acknowledgement.
 3. **Variance Appeal - 69 Lower LaPlanche Street**
Councillor Furlong declared a conflict of interest.

3.1 **Staff Report**
 Andrew Fisher reviewed his presentation, included in the agenda package, stating a 7.5% minimum lot area variance was granted for the property at 69 Lower Laplanche Street to permit the construction of a nine-unit apartment building. As is the process for variances, surrounding property owners were notified of the variance and given an opportunity to appeal the Development Officer's decision to Council. Two written appeals were received.

3.2 **Council Questions / Comments**
 Councillor Ripley noted his concern with the signs and shrubs that seem to obstruct the view when exiting Lower Laplanche Street onto Laplanche; however, other than this he did not see an issue with the variance itself being issued as he doesn't see a significant difference between the six units permitted as of right and the nine units being proposed. Speaking to one of the comments in the written appeals included in the agenda package, he added that the proposal is not a typical construction and that it would not be a long construction period.

Councillor McManaman also spoke to the signs obstructing the view, adding that better arrows need to be painted on Laplanche Street along this stretch of street.

Councillor Davidson does not feel that this portion of Laplanche Street and the variance issued are related, adding this intersection was already an issue before this variance was issued.

Councillor Wells agreed she did not see a long construction period.

Deputy Mayor Chambers also believes removing the signs and improving the street markings could help improve this intersection.

3.3 Public Questions / Comments

Sally Cove indicated she co-owns 74 Lower Laplanche Street with her mother where they have been for 71 years. Further to her written appeal, she has several concerns, first noting that everyone is hung up on the signs and shrubs however she believes the real issue is the blind spot when exiting Lower Laplanche Street onto Laplanche Street. She believes this proposed development has the potential to double the number of residents on this street.

She expressed several concerns with the intersection of Laplanche Street and Lawrence Street noting she is an avid walker and has come close to being hit. The sidewalk ends abruptly which forces people walking to cross unsafely, especially when there is traffic entering and exiting Robbs Complex. She asked about the crosswalk study the Town had conducted and if this crosswalk was considered during that study, as she believes it currently leads to a curb. She feels this is a busy intersection that is more difficult to maneuver if cars are parked on the street. She feels the yield sign is confusing and has witnessed people screaming and giving the finger. She feels adding nine units will only compound the issues here, especially because it is at the beginning of the street and feels anyone who travels on Lower Laplanche knows how difficult it can be to exit onto Laplanche Street, and that adding nine more units would likely mean more children and dogs which will only add to the issues.

Speaking to staff's presentation, she wondered when the last time was that work was done on the infrastructure in this area, adding they experience drainage issues in the winter when the trucking company plows their snow behind house on Lower Laplanche Street. She added Lower Laplanche Street is usually only plowed once following a snowfall and is rarely salted. There is no room for garbage trucks, oil trucks and other large vehicles to turn around. She wants to know if the Town will look into these issues before permitting this development as she feels these are long term problems.

The CAO responded, agreeing most of the concerns expressed are not directly related to the proposed development or the variance issued, however added he is noted everything she has said and will look into her concerns.

Jeff O'Neill, property owner at 78 Lower Laplanche Street, spoke further to his written submission appealing the variance. He stated that Lower Laplanche Street is a very narrow and even one car parked on the side of can have an impact. He too spoke to the blind spot as you exit Lower Laplanche Street onto Laplanche, and to the crosswalk at the intersection of Laplanche and Lawrence.

He also noted that off road vehicle users travel Lower Laplanche Street frequently when accessing the trail behind Robbs Complex. He is also concerned with guest overflow parking at the proposed development, adding that the sidewalk along Laplanche Street ends abruptly and he has witnessed a child be stranded there unsure of where to go. He spoke to the flooding, and the snow that gets piled up at the end of Lower Laplanche Street by the plow, a lot of which he feels is mitigated by the proposed lot currently being vacant. He is primarily concerned with the additional vehicles and new driveway and the chaos he feels it will create.

Sally Cove spoke again to Jeff O'Neill's point about the ATV's and snowmobiles using Lower Laplanche Street as a route to the trail behind Robb's Complex.

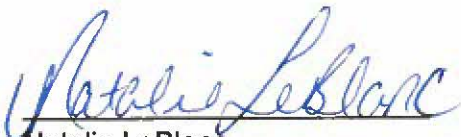
The applicant, Mikail Mansour, spoke at this time, noting the existing concerns and stating that from his perspective he felt asking for the 7.5% was reasonable as it is a very small variance. He is also proposing 14 parking spots, 3 more than the 11 required, adding some tenants may not have a vehicle, some may have two, however he believes there will be spots for guest parking. He spoke to the design of the building, noting it will be constructed in Amherst and delivered to the site, it will be compact and not take up much space on the lot, adding it will take approximately 3 to 4 days to lay the foundation, and only six to seven hours to erect the building with services being connected over the next couple of weeks which should not be disruptive. He spoke to the rental properties indicating the rent will not be too cheap or too expensive, and that he intends to rent the bachelor apartments for \$995, the one-bedrooms for \$1,200 and the two-bedrooms for \$1,400.

Sally Cove spoke again, asking if anyone has ever lived next to apartments. She assumes he will be a good landlord, adding her mother is 93 years old and does not deserve to be disrupted. She also asked where the garbage bins will be placed, to which Mikail replied they will be hand bombing the garbage.

Councillor Davidson spoke again agreeing with the concerns of the intersection and that this is a public works and traffic authority issue, he doesn't believe this proposal will cause any extra issues however does feel a request should be put into the traffic authority to look at the intersection issues identified.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Small adjourned the hearing.



Natalie LeBlanc
Municipal Clerk



Robert Small
Mayor