

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, June 2, 2025**

**6:30 PM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Richard Clough, Chair  
Tad Schrantz  
Adam Burke  
Zach LeRoy, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Evan Clements, Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Edward Guyot, Vice Chair

**I) Introduction of Board Members**

Chair Clough called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and explained the procedures of the meeting. Roll call was conducted. Chair Clough stated that alternate member Zach LeRoy is a voting member tonight.

**II) Minutes of the Previous Meeting: May 5, 2025**

Mr. Schrantz made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 5, 2025. Mr. Burke seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**III) Unfinished Business**

Chair Clough asked if there was any unfinished business. Mr. Clements replied no.

**IV) Hearings**

- A) **ZBA-2025-04: Petitioner, Timothy Russett, represented by Jonathan Collado of HDA Architects, Inc., Rome, GA, requests an Expansion of a Non-Conforming Use, for property located at 686 Court St., Tax Map #228-008-000-000 and is in the High Density District. The Petitioner is requesting an Expansion of a Non-Conforming Use of a veterinary hospital per Article 26.7.1 of the Zoning Regulations**

Chair Clough introduced ZBA-2025-04 and asked staff to provide background information.

Evan Clements, Planner, stated that the subject parcel is an existing 4.2-acre lot located on the western side of Court St., approximately 2,500 feet from the Cheshire Medical Center roundabout. He continued that the property abuts the Ashuelot River to the rear and contains an existing 7,106 square foot one-story building that serves as the location of the Court St. Veterinary Hospital. Associated site improvements on the property include two street access points with driveways and a parking lot that wraps around the building with a total of 33 parking spaces. The existing non-conforming use of the property is a veterinary hospital, which is considered an “animal care facility use”, per Section 8.3.2.B of the Land Development Code (LDC). The use is considered non-conforming as an animal care facility, as an animal care facility is not normally allowed in the High Density District.

Mr. Clements continued that in 1984, the property received approval from the ZBA for a Change of Non-Conforming Use from a tree service business to a veterinary hospital. In 1989, the property received approval from the ZBA for the Enlargement of a Non-Conforming Use to build an addition, and in 2020, the property received another approval for an Enlargement of a Non-Conforming Use. Surrounding uses include a child daycare center with Early Childhood Education to the west; multi-family residential, dentist office, and healthcare facility to the north; and mixed-use commercial and office to the east. To the south on the other side of the river is the manufactured housing park and some City-owned conservation land.

Mr. Clements continued that for application analysis, he has the definition of “animal care facility,” which is, “*An establishment that provides care for domestic animals, including veterinary offices, for the treatment of animals where such animals may be boarded indoors during their convalescence and pet grooming facilities. An animal care facility does not include kennels or animal training centers.*” The parking requirements, if the Board was inclined to approve this request this evening, will be met with the expansion. The Zoning Ordinance requires three parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. The proposed addition would bring their demand up to 27 parking spaces, and as he said, they currently have 33 on site. Mr. Clements continued that for the approval standards for this application there are three criteria. (First), such expansion or enlargement would not reduce the value of any property within the zoning district nor otherwise be injurious, obnoxious, or offensive to the neighborhood. (Second), there will be no nuisance or serious hazard to vehicles or pedestrians. (Third), adequate and appropriate facilities will be provided for the proper operation of the proposed use. If the Board is so inclined to approve this request this evening, the recommended motion is as follows:

*“Approve ZBA-2025-04 for the Expansion of a Non-Conforming Use for property located at 686 Court St., Tax Map #228-008-000-000, as shown on the plan identified as ‘Court Street Vet Hospital,’ prepared by HDA Architects, Inc., at a scale of one inch equals 30 feet, dated May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and in the application and supporting materials received on May 16, 2025 with no conditions.”*

Chair Clough asked if Board members had any questions for Mr. Clements. Hearing none, he asked to hear from the Petitioner.

Peter Hill stated that he is here in Jonathan Collado's stead. He continued that he is the president of HDA Architects, from Rome, GA. [Court Street Veterinary Hospital] is an important business in the community that they [HDA Architects] are helping to bring into a state-of-the-art service delivery system. They feel that it is a win-win for both the animal hospital and the community. The renovation and addition they are doing inside will allow some additional services, including important physical therapy services for post-surgery animals. They are also taking out a service that would be considered a high-volume retail service, which is grooming. Removal of the grooming service will eliminate some traffic. They are bringing in more medical-based services, adding some exam rooms so they can see a few more customers per hour, and adding a physical therapy facility with an underwater treadmill and a recovery area.

Mr. Hill continued that they are doing a little bit of internal renovations in the procedure area and adding offices. Modern veterinary facilities, to recruit and retain good staff, need offices for their doctors, a break room, and other spaces for HR functions, which is what the (renovations) are. It is an L-shaped building, and they will fill in the notch of the L. It is only 1,000 square feet of floor plan, although it is on two floors. It is a small addition. No part of the building will be any closer than the part of the building that is closest to the road. That is, they are not encroaching any closer to the road than it already exists on the site. They are kind of squaring off the building. From a context and massing standpoint, like many buildings in small-town America, it was built as a very small building and then added onto repeatedly.

Mr. Hill continued that there are many choices for building materials and styles. There are sliding windows, casement windows, projection windows, hung windows, and fixed windows. Everything they put in new will have a homogenous, fixed window appearance, for modern building sciences that they are doing today. They are keeping the New England-style siding and cornice soffit fascia detail. They are bringing that element forward just as it exists right now. They will not tamper with the low roof to the right. They are gentrifying the building a little bit, moving the front entrance to the front of the building instead of the side, adding a covered area with stone elements to make it the focal point, and putting some heavy timber framing in the peak of the gables. Thus, they are bringing the whole thing out but creating a focal point on the front, bringing the siding around, using the same materials that are already there.

Chair Clough stated that Mr. Hill addressed the first and second criteria. He asked Mr. Hill to briefly touch on each of the criteria.

*1. Such expansion or enlargement would not reduce the value of any property within the zoning district, nor otherwise be injurious, obnoxious, or offensive to the neighborhood.*

Mr. Hill stated that this will be a betterment to the property, and a betterment to the neighbors and the community. He continued that they are improving the current look. Right now, there is

brick, concrete, siding block, and siding. They will unify that, by bringing the siding around, hiding part of the concrete block. The existing brick will remain, and then it will just be the siding, the stone element, and the focal point element.

*2. There will be no nuisance or serious hazard to vehicles or pedestrians.*

Mr. Hill stated that they are making no change to the site, fundamentally. The parking lot is not changing. They are making the building handicapped accessible by putting in the new entrance. It will be a betterment for anyone who has a mobility impairment, and they will be able to get in the front door barrier-free. Right now, all the other entrances have a step of some sort, and they have to bring a ramp for anyone who is in a wheelchair or cannot make the step. The (renovations) will be a betterment for clients and for staff.

*3. Adequate and appropriate facilities (i.e. water, sewer, streets, parking, etc.) will be provided for the proper operation of the proposed use.*

Mr. Hill stated that the new area they are adding is not a significant demand either on water or sewer. He continued that they are adding a few sinks in the exam rooms, and everything else is already existing. They will have a little bit more electrical demand. Part of the building was run on propane, and they will get rid of that as a dual fuel source and be all electric. Capacity is very small.

Chair Clough asked if anyone had questions for the applicant.

Mr. LeRoy stated that Mr. Hill made many references to the façade. He asked if Mr. Hill had any renderings of the elevations. Mr. Hill replied yes, he can show those.

Mr. Hill showed the ZBA the elevations and stated that they are bringing forward the gable element and the cornice. He showed where they will add the focal point of the entrance with heavy timber appointments on it. He showed the New England-style steep roof, 12-inch soffit, bird-box-type cornice detail that will be repeated. He showed where the stone entrance will be, and the existing brick that will remain. He continued that all the new windows will be fixed. He showed the side of the building where there is block, and continued that where there is an overhead door, they will put in a glass wall. This goes into the physical therapy portion and will be a barrier-free entrance, so if someone needs to come in with a dog on a scooter or in a carrier, they will be able to get through.

Mr. Hill showed the ZBA the 3-D portion, showing how they are bringing the plane out to align with the other plane. He continued that this shows the front, how it will come out. It is a very minor addition. Most of the work is being done internally, to bring in the services they need.

Chair Clough thanked Mr. Hill and asked if the Board had questions. Hearing none, he asked for public comment, in support or in opposition.

Mr. Clements stated that he wants to note for the record that he handed two pieces of paper from the applicant's own application to provide as reference for their presentation.

Hearing no public comment, Chair Clough closed the public hearing and asked the Board to deliberate.

Mr. Schrantz stated that based on the three criteria for the Non-Conformance, the presentation addressed any concerns he might have had about the project. He continued that everything seems to fit within the Zoning Ordinance. He does not have any questions or additional comments.

Mr. Burke stated that he agrees. He continued that the application meets all three approval standards, so he has no concerns with the application itself.

Mr. LeRoy stated that he agrees. He continued that it would have minimal impact, if any, to Court St. and the surrounding areas. It will be the same usage and the same traffic patterns. It will even be improved, aesthetically, from the street.

Chair Clough stated that he agrees with all of that. He continued that normally, the Board would talk about each criterion, but they are all so closely related that he does not think they need to discuss each individually. They will vote on each one individually, however.

Mr. Schrantz made a motion for the Zoning Board of Adjustment to approve ZBA-2025-04, the Expansion of a Non-Conforming Use for property located at 686 Court Street, Tax Map #228-008-000-000, as shown on the plan identified as "Court Street Vet Hospital," prepared by HDA Architects, Inc., at a scale of one inch equals 30 feet, dated May 5, 2025 and in the application and supporting materials received on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 with no conditions. Mr. LeRoy seconded the motion.

*1. Such expansion or enlargement would not reduce the value of any property within the zoning district nor otherwise be injurious, obnoxious, or offensive to the neighborhood.*

Met with a vote of 4-0.

*2. There will no be no nuisance or serious hazard to vehicles or pedestrians.*

Met with a vote of 4-0.

*3. Adequate and appropriate facilities (i.e. water, sewer, streets, parking, etc.) will be provided for the proper operation of the proposed use.*

Met with a vote of 4-0.

The motion to approve ZBA-2025-04 passed with a vote of 4-0.

**V) New Business**

**VI) Staff Updates**

**A) Master Plan – Future Summit**

Mr. Clements stated that the Future Summit, the celebration and unveiling of the draft Master Plan, is tomorrow from 5:00 to 7:00 PM at Heberton Hall at the library. He continued that he highly recommends coming. There will be food, childcare, a presentation, interactive activities, and the chance to go over the draft plan and do a final round of prioritization on what goals the City should work on first. People can come without needing to register in advance, although it would be helpful for anyone planning to utilize the childcare to let staff know ahead of time.

**B) Board Data Collection**

Mr. Clements stated that this is coming along well. He continued that staff has only looked back a year or so. This will be something they will keep track of moving forward. If he has time at some point, he will try to go back and do a little more historical analysis, but at least for now, they have something set up so they know what data will be collected. He will send that out (to ZBA members) before the next meeting so everyone can see where they are at.

**C) Annual City Council Report**

Mr. Clements stated that the annual City Council report will be in July. He continued that the Council is hoping for a letter from the chair, or Chair Clough can go to a meeting and give a presentation in person. He will get Chair Clough that data tracking sheet soon, to explain what has been going on with the ZBA. Chair Clough replied yes, they can get together on that.

**VII) Communications and Miscellaneous**

Chair Clough stated that the Southwest Regional Planning Commission's annual meeting is tomorrow night from 5:00 to 7:00 PM.

**VIII) Non-Public Session (if required)**

**IX) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Clough adjourned the meeting at 6:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Corinne Marcou, Board Clerk