



BOARD OF VARIANCE/PARKING VARIANCE BOARD – SUMMARY MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, March 10th, 2026

TIME: 1:15 PM

PLACE: Townhall, Main Floor, City Hall

PRESENT: Gilbert Tan – Board Chair

Peter Gee

Elizabeth MacKenzie

Namtez Sohal

ABSENT: Leah Karlberg

SECRETARY: Louis Ng

Assistant

SECRETARY: Carmen Lau

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Bosnjak, Supervisor (Director of Planning’s Representative)

Sonia Erichsen, Manager (Director of Planning’s Representative)

On March 10th, 2026 - The Appellants for the following sites appealed the City's decision (Director of Planning's written decision) **issued by the City's Development Services:**

707 East 61st Avenue – Board's summary minutes and decision

Appeal Description:

Appealing the decision of the Director of Planning who refused Development Application No. DP-2025-00731 and a request to permit interior and exterior alterations and adding a new Secondary suite to this existing single detached house site.

Scope of work includes:

- 1. Converting a portion of the attached-garage into new living space (new habitable area)*
- 2. Adding a carport to the rear of the house*
- 3. Expanding and enclosing a rear sundeck (sunroom addition)*
- 4. Removing a laundry room and a kitchen from the garage.*

Development Application No. DP-2025-00731 was refused for the following reasons:

-Non-compliance to the proposed development does not comply with Section 3.2.1 (Density and Floor Area) of the R1-1 District Schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law that affect this site.

-Non-compliance with Section 3.2.2.6 (Rear yard) of the R1-1 District Schedule; the proposed development does not comply with the regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law that affect the site.

-Non-compliance with Section 3.2.2.7 (surface coverage) of the R1-1 District Schedule; the proposed development does not comply with the regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law that affect the site.

Technical Information:

Permitted FSR (R1-1):	0.60 (2,130 sq. ft.)
Existing non-conforming:	0.66 (2,358 sq. ft.)
Proposed:	0.65 (3,170 sq. ft.) [As per DP-2025-00731.]
1,040 sq. ft. or 49 % over maximum permitted	
812 sq. ft. or 34 % over existing	

Required Rear Yard: 35.10 feet
Existing: 22.87 feet
Proposed: 10.99 feet [As per DP-2025-00731.]

Permitted Site Coverage: 0.50 (1,775 sq. feet)
Existing: 0.44 (1,558 sq. feet)
Proposed: 0.54 (1,846 sq. feet) [As per DP-2025-00731.]

Discussion:

Rohit Sandeep Kumar was present to speak in support of the appeal.

At the request of the Chair, the appellant agreed to dispense with the reading of the submission, which had been in the Members' possession prior to the meeting.

The appellant's initial comments were that his parents have medical issues, as well as his child that have autism. They spend a lot of time on the deck and would like the Board to grant the variance.

The Director of Planning's Representative

Ms. Erichsen's initial comments were that this came to the Director of Planning by way of complaint. The complaint was a work without permit. Since the floor area is over, and there is work without permit, along with stairs in the side yard, the Director of Planning is unable to support the appeal.

The Board Chair stated that the Board's site office received four (4) letters in Support and (0) letter in opposition to this appeal.

The Chair stated that if there were any interested parties in the audience who wished to speak to this appeal, they should raise their hand to be recognized and when recognized, state their full name and address and spell their surname for the record.

There were no comments.

Final Comments:

Ms. Erichsen's final comments were that given that there is no site specific hardship, the Director of Planning opposes this appeal.

The appellant's final comments were that he is the only person working full time in the house hold. He would like the Board to grant his appeal.

This appeal was heard by the Board of Variance on March 10th, 2026 and was ALLOWED IN PART, thereby overturning the decision of the Director of Planning who refused Development Application No. DP-2025-00731 and APPROVED interior and exterior alterations and adding a new Secondary suite to this existing single detached house site, and subject to the following conditions:

- (1) that the Board of Variance ONLY approved the lower floor additions (carport addition and the Secondary suite in the attached garage were approved);
- (2) the Board of Variance did NOT approve the sunroom addition (enclosed sundeck) and shall be 'REMOVED entirely' (and only an 'open sundeck' above the new carport was approved);
- (3) the rear stairs (can not be within the side yard) must be re-located to a compliant location – and with the correct permitted distance from the side yard property line; and
- (4) that the Owner(s) are required to obtain ALL City permits within one-year from the board's March 10th, 2026 decision – and shall otherwise comply with the requirements and regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning.

Board's summary and decision based on the following:

-The majority of the Board members voted 3-0 in support of the appeal in part, and found a site hardship to warrant a zoning relaxation – as the house was originally built in 1985. Majority of the board members ONLY allowed the lower floor additions and the rear sunroom addition (or the enclosed sundeck) must be removed due to its bulk and massing. Board members did not accept the proposed FSR and density to 0.89 (89%).

- The City's representative also confirmed that the proposed density & FSR was 0.89 FSR (at 3,170 sq. feet) and the permitted FSR is now 0.60 (60%) under the new R!-1 by-law. Removing the sunroom addition will be a reduction of FSR from 3,170 sq. feet to approx. 2,750 sq. feet (to 77%).

-The Board's site office received four (4) Support signatures from the neighbourhood and no (0) opposition / concerns from the neighbourhood. On March 10th, 2026 - The following sites were reviewed by the Board of Variance and Zoning variances were reviewed ONLY for the specific regulations ('NOT' an appeal of decision).

288 Robson Street – Board’s summary minutes and decision

Appeal Description:

Appealing the decision of the Director of Planning who refused Development Application No. DP-2025-00924 and a request to permit interior alterations and a change of use from an existing barber shop into new Cannabis Retail Store at this existing mixed-use building site.

Development Application No. DP-2025-00924 was refused for the following reasons:

-The proposed development does not comply with the regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law that affect the site.

-Objections received from neighbouring property owners.

Discussion:

Michelle Rochon and Susan Guthrie were present to speak in support of the appeal.

At the request of the Chair, the appellant agreed to dispense with the reading of the submission, which had been in the Members' possession prior to the meeting.

The appellant’s initial comments were that this area is underserviced and there are no other cannabis stores within 400 meters.

The Director of Planning’s Representative

Mr. Bosnjak’s initial comments were that this is to provide a change of use from a barber shop to a cannabis shop. There is a cannabis shop 283 meters away, and there are also schools 24 meters, 164 meters, and 184 meters away. The Director of Planning does not see a site specific hardship, and will defer to the Board for their decision.

The Board Chair stated that the Board's site office received thirty three (33) letters in Support and a petition with one hundred and thirty five (135) signatures, and ten (10) letters in opposition to this appeal.

The Chair stated that if there were any interested parties in the audience who wished to speak to this appeal, they should raise their hand to be recognized and when recognized, state their full name and address and spell their surname for the record.

There were no comments.

Final Comments:

Mr. Bosnjak's final comments were that the Director of Planning refused this due to schools and another cannabis store within 300 meters nearby.

The appellant's final comments were that the site specific hardship is due to the urban limitations.

This appeal was heard by the Board of Variance on March 10th, 2026 and was DISALLOWED.

Board's summary and decision based on the following:

-This appeal did NOT have a majority of the Board members' votes to support the granting of the appeal (and the final decision was a 'tie vote' and a 2-2 decision), and the majority of the board members did not find a site hardship to approve a new cannabis store at 288 Robson Street. The board upheld the Director of Planning's decision and that this location (at 288 Robson Street) did not meet the minimum required distance of 300m from several nearby schools. Therefore, the appeal was 'disallowed' and denied on March 10th, 2026.

-The City's representative stated that the Director of Planning's refusal was based on the following reasons: Objections from the neighbourhood, distances at less than 300m to several nearby schools, and also at less than 300m to an existing, approved cannabis store at 1078 Mainland Street (which is located at approximately 283m away).

-The City's measured distances from property line to property line or 'as-the-crow flies' distances to these nearby schools at less than 300m to: At 24m away from Lowell High School; and at approx. 164m away from Westside School.

-The Board's site office received thirty-three (33+) Support letters and a petition with over 135+ support signatures from the Appellants, and the board also received ten (10) Opposition letters from the neighbourhood (from the City's mailout / postcard notices prior to the meeting).

#1 – 955 Nicola Street – Board's summary minutes and decision

This appeal was heard by the Board of Variance on March 10th, 2026 and was ALLOWED, thereby DELETING Condition 1.1 from the prior-to approval letter issued under Development Application Number DP-2025-00816, and APPROVED change the use from an existing barber shop into a new limited food retail use on the ground floor within Unit #1, at 955 Nicola Street located at this existing mixed-use building site, and subject to the following condition:

(1) that the development shall otherwise comply with the requirements and regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning.

Board's summary and decision based on the following:

-The majority of the Board members voted 4-0 in support of the appeal and found a site hardship to allow the land-use change from an existing barbershop to a new limited-food retail use at Unit #1, 955 Nicola Street. The Board Chair also explained to both the City and to the Appellants at the meeting - and that even if the board supports and/or grants the appeal - the City of Vancouver (and/or the Mayor and City Council) ultimately has the final signing authority to approve and issue the required DP & BU permits for this change of use.

-The Board's site office received two (2) petitions with thirty-eight (38) Support signatures and three (3) support letters from the neighbourhood, and no (0) opposition letters from the neighbourhood.

On March 10th, 2026 – The following sites were reviewed by the Board of Variance and **Zoning variances were reviewed ONLY for the specific regulations ('NOT' an appeal of decision).**

4375 Ross Street – Board's summary minutes and decision

Appeal Description:

Requesting relaxations of the Density & FSR (Floor Area) and Rear Yard regulations of the R1-1 District Schedule and a request to permit exterior alterations to keep/retain a covered sundeck on the main floor at the rear of this existing one-family dwelling site (Related to Development Application No. DP-2025-00980).

Discussion:

Arthur Tse, Terence Tse, and Susan Voong were present to speak in support of the appeal.

At the request of the Chair, the appellant agreed to dispense with the reading of the submission, which had been in the Members' possession prior to the meeting.

The appellant's initial comments were that the deck sits above the garage that fits about 2 vehicles, which is attached to the home. In 1994, they had a cover built over the deck and had no issues with it, until their neighbour made a complaint. They were able to obtain 9 support letters from their neighbours.

The Director of Planning's Representative

Ms. Erichsen's initial comments were that this came to the attention to the Director of Planning by way of complaint. The covered deck had been in place for a long time. The Director of Planning is unable to support the appeal, and will defer to the Board for their decision.

The Board Chair stated that the Board's site office received nine (9) letters in Support and one (1) letter in opposition to this appeal.

The Chair stated that if there were any interested parties in the audience who wished to speak to this appeal, they should raise their hand to be recognized and when recognized, state their full name and address and spell their surname for the record.

Tej Sandhu (Neighbour, next door from 4381 Ross Street) attended and spoke in opposition to the appeal with overlook and privacy concerns due to the unauthorized covered sundeck at 4375 Ross Street.

Final Comments:

Ms. Erichsen's final comments were that they caution hedges for privacies as hedges grows into trees and it can cause issues down the road.

The appellant's final comments were that they have family members that requires the covered deck for their way of living.

This appeal was heard by the Board of Variance on March 10th, 2026 and was ALLOWED, thereby granting zoning relaxations of the Density & FSR (Floor Area) and Rear Yard regulations of the R1-1 District Schedule and APPROVED exterior alterations to retain a covered sundeck at the rear of this existing one-family dwelling site (Related to Development Application No. DP-2025-00980), and subject to the following conditions:

(1) That the Owners are required to install a new Privacy Screening on the 'South' side of the approved covered sundeck and must be permanently installed behind the sundeck's railings, and shall be a 'full-height' design (from the base of the sundeck to the underside of the approved aluminum cover). And must meet the following requirements:

(1a). The privacy screening must be installed along the full-depth of the deck (or the full-length of the sundeck – except for the stair access opening), and must be on the 'South Elevation' side and located between 4375 Ross Street and 4381 Ross Street (to mitigate 'privacy and overlook' concerns submitted by the Owner of 4381 Ross Street);

(1b). The privacy screening shall be a 'full-height' design (Designed with safety concerns in mind - and to prevent anyone and especially children from climbing up the proposed privacy screening); and

(1c). The 'final design' of the privacy screening must be to the satisfaction of the Board of Variance. Note: Hedges and/or planters (as privacy screening) was not recommended by the Director of Planning at the Appeal Hearing of March 10th, 2026.

(2) that the Owner(s) are required to obtain the City's Development & Building permits within one-year from the board's March 10th, 2026 decision – and shall otherwise comply with the requirements and regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning.

Board's summary and decision based on the following:

-The majority of the Board members voted 3-1 in support of the appeal and found a site hardship to warrant a zoning relaxation. Majority of the board members were in support of the owners to retain the covered sundeck built in 1994 (and the house was built in 1988). The board members imposed a condition - and the Owners of 4375 Ross Street are required to install a permanent 'full-height, privacy screening' (from the base of the sundeck to the underside of the aluminum cover) and along the covered sundeck's side between 4375 Ross Street and 4381 Ross Street to mitigate the 'privacy and overlook concerns' submitted by the adjacent owners from 4381 Ross Street.

- The City's representative confirmed that the new proposed floor area overage will be at 0.71, at approx. 2,625 sq. feet (minus the permitted covered porch area exemption of 288 sq. feet allowance). The Director of Planning's rep. further stated that from VanMaps (City's record) shows that the cover was installed / constructed after 1994 and therefore unable to support the appeal.

-The Board's site office received a petition with nine (9) Support signatures and two (2) support letters/emails from the neighbourhood, and one (1) opposition letter with privacy and overlook concerns from 4381 Ross Street (the adjacent/immediate neighbour).

On March 10th, 2026 - The following site(s) were reviewed by the Board of Variance and **renewals and extensions were granted as required by Development Services.**

307 (303) West Hastings Street

This appeal was heard by the Board of Variance on March 10th, 2026 and was ALLOWED, thereby granting an amendment and modified condition #1, and granting permission to retain the Cannabis Store (Cannabis land-use renewal) at this existing site for a further period of time, and subject to the following conditions:

- (1) that the approval is for the exclusive use of "1504683 B.C. Ltd." and operating the business as "Cannabis Culture Headquarters" via trademark license and sublease with 'Jodie Giesz-Ramsay's company 1168699 B.C. Ltd.', and approved to do business as (DBA) "Cannabis Culture".
- (2) that the limited-time approval expires on January 16th, 2031;
- (3) that the Board may grant an extension to the time-limit on or before January 16th, 2031.