



**Town of Lancaster, Massachusetts**  
***Office of Community Development and Planning***

**LANCASTER BOARD OF APPEALS**  
***VARIANCE APPLICATION***

***This application consists of several sections. Please read through the entire application before proceeding:***

- 1) Instructions
- 2) Form A – Application for Hearing
- 3) Form B – Variance
- 4) Form C – Certified List of Parties in Interest
- 5) Form D – Revenue Certification
- 6) Important Information on Variances

**Associated Fees**

<i>Variance</i>	\$150.00 for a single-family dwelling
<i>Application Fee:</i>	\$250.00 for a multi-family dwelling or commercial property
<i>Advertising Fee:</i>	\$80.00
<i>Mailing Fee:</i>	\$8.10 per abutter + \$15.00

Checks should be made payable to the *Town of Lancaster*.

**Important Contact Information**

Office of Community Development and Planning	978-365-3326 Ex. 1074
Zoning Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector	978-365-3326 Ex. 1079
Fax	978-368-4009
Email:	<a href="mailto:planning@lancasterma.net">planning@lancasterma.net</a>

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

### **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

- Obtain application forms from the Community Development and Planning Office located at the Town Hall on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Application forms are also available online at <http://www.ci.lancaster.ma.us>.
- Complete applicable forms and required exhibits (see Zoning Bylaw for specifics).
- Complete and have Assessor certify list of Parties in Interest (Form C).
- Complete and have Town Collector certify Revenue Certification (Form D).
- Submit payment through the website <https://www.ci.lancaster.ma.us/board-appeals>
- Send PDF copy of application materials and all relevant documents to [planning@lancasterma.net](mailto:planning@lancasterma.net)
- File with Town Clerk completed signed application and forms
  - Staff will complete this task unless notified otherwise.
- Applicants will be notified of public hearing date.
- The Board's rules should be reviewed prior to hearing.
- Additional exhibits may be submitted at hearing.
- Do not attempt to discuss case with Board members.
- Applicant must appear personally or by an authorized representative.
- Approved permits allowing use of construction will not take effect until appeal periods expire, the decision is recorded, and proof of recording is submitted to the Community Development and Planning Office.

**NOTE: Please submit a complete application. Applications deemed incomplete will not be acted upon.**

## SITE PLAN CHECKLIST

A site plan must accompany each application, petition or appeal to the Board for projects involving new construction. This check list provides a summary of the site plan contents as specified in the Board's Rules and Regulations. The Rules and Regulations are available online at [www.ci.lancaster.ma.us](http://www.ci.lancaster.ma.us) and at the Community Development and Planning Office.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** By checking the "No" box on any of the items listed below, *the applicant is requesting that Board consider granting a waiver* of strict compliance with the Rules and Regulations. Please note that if this waiver requested is not granted, the hearing process may be continued until the Site Plan is completed.

Provided YES	Provided NO	Site Plan Requirement
		Minimum Drawing size of 8.5" x 11"
		Drawn to scale with scale noted
		Property lines and boundaries
		Name and address of record owner
		Names and locations of adjacent streets
		North arrow
		Zoning district and any zone lines in vicinity of project
		Existing and proposed buildings or additions including number of stories and height of all structures
		Paved areas, existing and proposed parking or loading spaces
		Existing utility lines including septic and underground structures
		Locations of structures on adjoining property
		Lot area and dimensions, including setbacks where new construction or additions are proposed

The Board may also require that additional drawings or drawing content be provided specific to the application. This may include items such as site topography or existing and proposed building elevations. The applicant should consider providing this type of information with the initial application if it will help the Board better understand the basis of the requested findings.

**FORM A**  
**APPLICATION FOR HEARING**

TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE TOWN OF LANCASTER:

I, the undersigned respectfully petition your Honorable Board for a hearing upon Applicant's Request for [variance, special permit, comprehensive permit, appeal].

- (1) Applicant \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Address Telephone
- (2) Owner \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Address Telephone
- (3) If there is an option to purchase; the name and address of the prospective purchaser \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) The record Title stands in the name of: \_\_\_\_\_ whose address is \_\_\_\_\_ by a Deed duly recorded in the Worcester District Registry of Deeds, Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_ OR Land Court Title Certificate # \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) Said premises are situated in a District classified under the Zoning By-Law of the Town of Lancaster as: \_\_\_\_\_
- (a) Location of property affected \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Assessor's Book \_\_\_\_\_, Parcel \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) State what is located on premises (e.g. number, type and use of buildings; type of vegetation, etc. \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) State in full what Applicant desires to do upon the properties: \_\_\_\_\_

Received and Filed:

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Town Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Owner

**FORM B (Variance)**

**REQUESTS FOR FINDINGS OF FACT IN  
SUPPORT OF PETITION FOR VARIANCE**

Petitioner hereby requests that the Board, upon public hearing and after review of the evidence submitted, find as follows in support of the Petition for Variance:

1. The Petitioner, \_\_\_\_\_, whose address is \_\_\_\_\_, is the (owner) (lessee) (optionee) of certain land situated at \_\_\_\_\_ in the Town of Lancaster and more particularly described in a deed recorded with the Worcester District Registry of Deeds, Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_.

If Petitioner is not the owner, complete the following:

The owner of said land is \_\_\_\_\_ whose address is \_\_\_\_\_

2. Said land is situated in a district classified under the Lancaster Zoning By-Law as \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Presently located on the premises is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. The Petitioner(s) desire(s) to use said premises as follows: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Petitioner requests a variance from the application of the following section(s) of the Zoning By-Law: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Petitioner alleges that each of the requirements for the grant of a variance set forth in G.L. c. 40A, Section 10 have been satisfied for the following reasons (attach extra sheets if necessary):

(A) A literal enforcement of the provisions of the Zoning By-Law would involve substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, to the Petitioner for the following reasons:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(B) Said substantial hardship is owing to circumstances relating to the soil condition, shape, or topography of such land or structures for the following reasons:

---

---

---

(C) Said substantial hardship especially affects said land or structures, but does not affect generally the zoning district in which it is located, for the following reasons:

---

---

---

(D) Desirable relief may be granted without detriment to the public good, for the following reasons:

---

---

---

(E) Desirable relief may be granted without nullifying or substantially derogating from the intent or purpose of the Town of Lancaster Zoning By-Law for the following reasons:

---

---

---

7. (Applicable only to use variances) Grant of the requested use variance is authorized by Section 220-61.F of the Lancaster Zoning By-Law as follows:

(A) Such variance shall be applied only to existing structures, including their adaptation for the intended purpose, in the following respects:

---

---

---

(B) The proposed use or activity is one which is beneficial to the community at large, or to its existing public or semi-public institution, in the following respects:

---

---

---

(C) No reasonable alternative is provided in the By-Law for the location of the proposed use, in the following respects:

---

---

---

---

Signature of Petitioner

---

Signature of Owner

**FORM C**

**CERTIFIED LIST OF PARTIES IN INTEREST**

OWNERS NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: \_\_\_\_\_

MAP & PARCEL: \_\_\_\_\_

**The following is a list of all parties of interest, as defined by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 11.**

**PARTIES IN INTEREST shall mean the Petitioner, abutters, owners of land directly opposite on any Public or Private Street or way and abutters to the abutters within 300' of the property line, even though said land is in another city and/or town, and the Planning Boards of Lancaster and contiguous towns.**

	NAME	LEGAL MAILING ADDRESS (ZIP)
APPLICANT:		
OWNER:		
AGENT/ATTORNEY:		
	LANCASTER PLANNING BOARD	
	HARVARD PLANNING BOARD	
	BOLTON PLANNING BOARD	
	CLINTON PLANNING BOARD	
	LEOMINSTER PLANNING BOARD	
	SHIRLEY PLANNING BOARD	
	LUNENBURG PLANNING BOARD	

## ABUTTERS CERTIFICATION

LEGAL MAILING  
ADDRESS (ZIP)

[illegible]

DATE:



**FORM D**

**REVENUE CERTIFICATION**

Application/Petition/Appeal of

1. Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Owner: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Property: Assessors Map \_\_\_\_\_ Parcel \_\_\_\_\_

Pursuant to G.L. c. 40D, Section 57, and the General By-Laws of the Town of Lancaster, the undersigned applicant hereby certifies as follows:

- 1) The following named persons, firms or corporations constitute the complete list of all parties having an ownership or proprietary interest in the property or use subject to the above-entitled application.
- 2) Each of the below listed parties have complied with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Town of Lancaster in that they have not neglected or refused to pay any local taxes, fees, assessments, betterments or other municipal charges for not less than a twelve month period.

NAME OF  
INTERESTED PARTY

ADDRESS

OWNER:

APPLICANT:

OTHER:

Signed under the pains and penalties of perjury,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

CERTIFIED BY TOWN OF LANCASTER TOWN COLLECTOR

\_\_\_\_\_

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON VARIANCES***

A variance is a license or permit granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals ("ZBA") to use land or existing structures or to build and maintain structures in a manner which would otherwise violate the Lancaster Zoning by-laws. A variance is intended to prevent (a) inequities resulting from unique circumstances affecting the land or structure, or (b) the effective confiscation of property by the application of bylaws which prohibit virtually any practical use, or (c) substantial hardship which would otherwise result from strict compliance with the zoning bylaws.

There are two types of variances. "Use" variances allow one to use land or structures in a manner which is not permitted under the zoning bylaws. A "dimensional" variance permits land to deviate from the zoning bylaws with respect to lot size, frontage, setback and height requirements. A "use" variance cannot be granted by the ZBA unless the zoning bylaws expressly permit such a variance.

The authority of the ZBA to grant a variance is extremely limited, and the applicant has the burden of satisfying the legal prerequisites for the grant of a variance. For this reason, the applicant must very carefully and completely explain in Section 6 (and in Section 7, if applicable) of Form B (Requests for Findings of Fact) how each of the legal requirements for relief are applicable to the applicant's Petition. If each of the requirements for the grant of a variance set forth in Section 6 (A-E) of Form B is not satisfied, the ZBA is without authority to find in favor of the applicant's Petition.

Each of the following requirements contained in Section 6 is equally important, and all must be addressed by the applicant. The explanations provided by the applicant on the Form B must permit the members of the ZBA to reasonably reach all of the following conclusions:

- (A) The denial of the Petition will cause substantial hardship to the petitioner, such as a substantial financial loss or the inability to use the land or structure for any purpose; and
- (B) The land or structure is affected by unusual soil conditions, (e.g. a boggy area), shape (e.g. a pie-shaped lot); or topography (e.g. severe sloping); and
- (C) The circumstances which affect the land or structure for which relief is requested are unique to that property and do not generally affect other properties within the same zoning district; and
- (D) The requested variance does not alter the essential character of the neighborhood in which the affected property is located; and
- (E) Any deviation from the zoning bylaw is not substantial and does not significantly detract from the zoning plan for the district in which the property is located.

By addressing all of the legal requirements for a variance in your Petition, you will significantly increase the likelihood of a favorable result.