

**New Castle City Board of Adjustment
January 7, 2026 – 6:30 p.m.
1 Municipal Boulevard, New Castle, DE**

Members Present: Mayor Valarie W. Leary, Chair
Steve Zorrer
Assunta Scarpitti
Angel Ramos
Robert Irwin

Also Present: Michael Hoffman, Esq., City Solicitor
Christopher Rogers, City Planner
Jeff Bergstrom, City Building Official

Mayor Leary convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Mayor Leary read the Application Notice into the record:

BOA 2025-6 – An application has been filed by New Castle Self Storage LLC, (Owner & Applicant), for a property located in the DG Zoning District at 300 W 7th St, New Castle, DE 19720, Tax Parcel No. 21-014.00-396, seeking a special use exception for the following use, expand existing self-storage facility to construct three additional storage buildings, (1) 24' x 52' (approx. 1248 sq. ft.), (2) 24' x 100' (2400 sq. ft.), and (3) 20' x 150' (3000 sq. ft.) City Code §230-21.1(D).

Mr. Hoffman stated that the Hearing Record contains the following items:

- Exhibit 1: The Board of Adjustment Meeting Agenda for January 7, 2026.
- Exhibit 2: The Board of Adjustment Notice of Public Hearing for January 7, 2026.
- Exhibit 3: Two pictures confirming posting of the yellow sign for the Hearing.
- Exhibit 4: The Board of Adjustment Application for 300 West 7th Street including the Applicant's submitted exhibits and pictures of the property.
- Exhibit 5: December 5, 2025 letter from the Planning Commission Chair with Planning Commission recommendation on the Application.
- Exhibit 6: Affidavit of Public Application dated December 17, 2025 from The Weekly.

At Mayor Leary's request, Roger Truemper, Esquire, introduced himself as representative for the Applicant, as well as the Applicant, Ryan Mariano, the Applicant's father, William Mariano, and Julian Pellegrini from Pelsa Engineering.

The following individuals were sworn in by Mr. Hoffman:

- Ryan Mariano
- William Mariano
- Julian Pellegrini

Mr. Bergstrom stated that:

- The Application is for an expansion of the existing use of the mini-storage buildings.
- The Applicant first joined the two parcels because they could not build the units across a property line.
- The Applicant has a survey showing the approximate locations of the buildings and the elevations of the property.
- Mr. Bergstrom stated he believes the original intent of City Council was to permit this site to be maxed out with mini-storage buildings.
- If the Board of Adjustment confirms the Application, the Applicant must receive Site Plan approval from the Planning Commission before a Building Permit can be issued.

Mr. Truemper submitted the following exhibits to the Board:

- Site Plan
- Photographs of the facility

Mr. Truemper stated that:

- The property is in the DG Zoning District that allows for self-storage if it was in use prior to the code, which it was.
- An expansion was approved in 2021, and this is a further expansion.
- The property was two parcels and the Applicant did a re-subdivision in the eastern portion of the property to create one parcel.

Mr. Truemper identified the location where the proposed buildings would be placed and the sizes of the proposed buildings as stated in the Application.

Mr. Truemper stated that according to the Code, the primary consideration is visual screening, and explained the current screening:

- The eastern part of the property has a 5' tall wall that runs almost the entire length of the South Street side of the property.
- The rear of the property is the railroad track area and there is an existing chain-link fence.
- The fence on 7th Street is made up of building facades, 6' black metal fencing, and 42 arborvitae evergreens that are approximately 6'-7' high.

Mayor Leary called for Public Comment in favor of the Application.

There being none, Mayor Leary called for Public Comment against the Application.

There being none, Mayor Leary called for Public Comment that is neutral on the Application.

There being none, Mayor Leary read a comment submitted in writing from Mr. John A. DiMondi into the Record.

In response to questions from the Board, the Applicant stated:

- Rear Fencing – Fencing companies have inspected the rear fencing the Applicant would like to have the back fencing repaired or replaced in the future; however, there are no immediate plans to address that section of fencing.
- Emergency Access – With respect to emergency vehicle access, the Applicant stated the City informed him that preliminarily, the Building Official and Fire Marshall did not find anything amiss. Mr. Bergstrom added that the fire department would not pull a truck between the buildings; noting that the lane starts out at just over 20’ and it is over 16’ at the back, which is more than enough for adequate firefighting. He further stated that they are non-combustible buildings; adding, however, that fire walls are sometimes required.
- Appearance – The proposed metal storage units are being supplied by the same manufacturer as the existing units, and they will match the existing units in color and material.
- Location – The units will be behind the white house. The Applicant also stated their fence was pulled away from the white house.

In response to a request from Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Truemper addressed the Generic Factors, stating that the expansion:

- Does not materially change the area.
- Is in harmony with the area.
- Does not produce any hardship.
- Is not contrary to the public interest.
- Does not adversely impact the Code.

There being no further questions from the Board, Mayor Leary called for a motion to close the public record.

A motion to close the public record was made by Mr. Irwin. The motion was seconded by Ms. Scarpitti and was unanimously passed.

Mayor Leary called for a motion to approve the Applicant’s request for a Special Use Exception to expand the existing self-storage facility to construct three additional businesses.

A motion was made by Mr. Zorrer to approve the Application as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Scarpitti.

Mr. Hoffman stated that the code includes built-in conditions (site plan approval and screening) but the Board can add additional conditions at its discretion.

Mr. Hoffman recommended that the Board specify Factors A-G in §230-21.1(D)(4), and speak generally on the General Factors in the motion.

Mr. Irwin stated he would approve the Application having found that Factors A-G in §230-21.1(D)(4) and the General Factors in §230-57(B)(1)(a)-(c) have been met.

Mr. Zorrer stated he would approve the Application based on the reasons outlined by his colleague, Mr. Irwin.

Ms. Scarpitti stated she would approve the Application based on the reasons outlined by her colleague, Mr. Irwin.

Mr. Ramos stated he would approve the Application based on the reasons outlined by his colleague, Mr. Irwin.

Mayor Leary stated she would approve the Application based on the reasons outlined by her colleague, Mr. Irwin.

The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Leary called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Irwin and was seconded by Ms. Scarpitti. The motion was unanimously carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer