



Town of South Kingstown Building Code Board of Appeal

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 4:30 PM
South Kingstown Town Hall, Building Official's Office
180 High Street, Wakefield, RI 02879
www.southkingstownri.gov

Michael Joyce, Chairman
Edward A. Melchiori
Thomas Gilchrist
Laura Krekorian
Vacancy

A. Call to Order

A meeting of the Building Code Board of Appeals for the Town of South Kingstown, County of Washington, in the State of Rhode Island was held at the Town Hall, 180 High Street, Wakefield on Tuesday, January 27, 2026.

Members Present: Edward A. Melchiori, Laura Krekorian and Thomas Gilchrist

Members Absent: Michael Joyce, Chairman

Also Present: James Gorman, Building Official; Richard Johnson, Deputy Building Official and Benjamin Barbera, Administrative Associate.

Mr. Gorman called the meeting to order at 4:34:04 pm. The necessary quorum was present.

The following petition was heard:

B. Agenda Items *Order can be subject to change*

- I. Petition of Stephen Demetrick, registered contractor. The applicant is seeking relief of **State Building Code (2021), Section 310.8 – Basement or Cellar Windows**: Except as may be otherwise provided for habitable or occupiable rooms, at least two (2) operable windows twelve inches (12 ") by thirty-two inches (32") nominal size shall be installed reasonably remote from each other. Security devices shall not unreasonably impede the use of these windows for light, ventilation or firefighting purposes. The applicant requests relief from provision requiring installation of basement windows. Owner is Hope Drury Leeson, 251 Ministerial Road, Wakefield, RI 02879.

Mr. Gorman read the appeal into the record.

The property being discussed at tonight's meeting is 411 Ministerial Road, South Kingstown, RI 02879.

The following documents were entered into the record:

- Plan Set (F101, F201, F501, S101, S102, S103, S104, A101, A102, A103, A201, A202, A301, A302, A303, A304, A501, A502, A503, A504, A505, A601, A602) prepared by Demetrick Housewrights and dated July 18, 2025.
- Application signed and dated January 8, 2026.

Stephen C Demetrick, registered contractor and the applicant, was present.

Mr. Demetrick states that in the plans that were reviewed he had missed a note about the basement requiring two windows per state building code. The reason for this oversight, Mr. Demetrick says, is because he has not put basement windows in a house in Rhode Island in 15 years. He goes on to say that for years the code for the basin windows was about ventilation and light from a basement window. The houses Mr. Demetrick builds are extremely energy efficient and windows in the basement are considered a liability. The same type of house has been built in Westerly and Charlestown and did not require windows in the basement. He is aware of the safety concerns by not having windows in

the basement, but this house will be all electric with no fossil fuels present.

It should be noted that construction of the home is well underway.

Discussions about the only egress being the stairs in the middle of the basement ensued.

Ms. Krekorian asked for more details about the basement plans, including the crawl space.

Mr. Demetrick says that he could pass this code by adding two basement windows, but they would be blocked from the outside or be difficult to access through a crawl space.

Board discussion of Building Code (2021) Section 310.8 ensued.

Ms. Krekorian mentions that even though there are no fossil fuels causing a fire, there is still wiring in the basement that causes a risk. She also mentions that it is allowed to have an unvented crawl space with no windows. There is both a basement and a crawlspace in this home.

Mr. Demetrick adds that this house has an energy recovery ventilator that runs through the whole house. If he was required to add windows to the basement, he would lose his other energy certificate.

Discussion of alternate ways of making the basement safe for firefighters and tenants ensued.

Mr. Demetrick states that the exact basement window that would be required would have to be specially made to meet the passive home and building code requirements. The custom window would have to be a triple pane, which is very hard to break in case of an emergency. The basement will not include any living space and is to be used mostly for storage. The windows would be tight to grade and window wells would be needed. This could create a liability by creating a pathway for water to get into the basement. Another option to pass the building code requirements would be to add a sprinkler system in the basement.

Ms. Krekorian mentions that the basement will not be habitable and that it is completely ventilated, like a crawl space that doesn't have an opening in it, which the code allows.

Mr. Demetrick asserts that only one part of the basement will be finished. There are 15 mm vapor barriers covering the floors and up the walls. Also included are two inches of EPS foam and the walls have thermax which is fire-resistant. The entire volume of air in this house is removed and replaced 100% every three hours.

The board then discussed a motion.

Whereas the following motion was made.

The Motion is as Follows:

A motion to grant the variance by Mr. Gilchrist and duly seconded by Ms. Krekorian

Motion passed unanimously; (Vote 3-0 in Favor)

(Mr. Melchiori -Aye, Ms. Krekorian -Aye, Mr. Gilchrist -Aye)

At a meeting held on January 27, 2026 for the Petition of Stephen Demetrick, registered contractor. The applicant was granted relief of State Building Code (2021), Section 310.8 – Basement or Cellar Windows: Except as may be otherwise provided for habitable or occupiable rooms, at least two (2) operable windows twelve inches (12 ") by thirty-two inches (32") nominal size shall be installed reasonably remote from each other. Security devices shall not unreasonably impede the use of these windows for light, ventilation or firefighting purposes. The applicant requests relief from provision requiring installation of basement windows. Owner is Hope Drury Leeson, 251 Ministerial Road, Wakefield, RI 02879.

Grounds for Decision:

The Board determined through discussions that the two (2) basement windows do not need to be installed, as the area under the house is constructed with a whole-house ventilation system and vapor barriers, which comply with the requirements of a non-vented crawl space.

C. Other Items

I. Adjournment

There was no other business to discuss.

Mr. Melchiori made the motion to adjourn, which was duly seconded by Ms. Krekorian.

All members were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30:57 pm.