



ADA TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MINUTES OF THE JUNE 3, 2025, REGULAR MEETING

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Tuesday, June 3, 2025, at 4:30 p.m., at the Ada Township Hall Assembly Room, 7330 Thornapple River Dr. SE, Ada, Michigan

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair McNamara called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Courtade, DeMarco, Ellixson-Andrews, McNamara, Nuttall

Members Absent: 0

Staff Present: Bajdek, Buckley, Said

Others Present: 17 members of the public

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Courtade, supported by Nuttall, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 6, 2025, REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Courtade, supported by Nuttall, to approve the May 6, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Request for the expansion of a non-conforming use, as well as side and rear yard setback variances, to allow for the construction of an addition to the existing building in the RP-1 zoning district, 6365 Knapp St. NE, Parcel No. 41-15-08-277-014, applicant Timothy S. Klaes, property owner Paragon C & I Property, LLC**

Tim Klaes, Applicant and owner of Paragon Construction, presented the request for expansion of the Paragon building and variances required to do so. He shared some history about himself and the Paragon business. He said that he purchased the building at 6365 Knapp Street in 2016 and went before the ZBA board and received approval of a continuation for a non-conforming use, allowing them to operate a construction business in that location.

Mr. Klaes explained that the company has grown over the past nine years and noted the need for additional space. He said Paragon is proposing to construct an addition to the existing building for interior storage of commercial flooring and similar materials, however to do the addition, Paragon needs a use variance and variances for dimensional setbacks. He noted that the building has always been used for commercial use even though it was zoned RP-1 (residential) some time ago.

Mr. Klaes clarified a few items addressed in the staff report and said they do not need the roofed overhang area and it will be removed from a revised drawing. The construction business will not create increased traffic and noise as he only has two full time staff in and out of the building, and he does not feel their operations have detracted from the enjoyment of the properties surrounding them. In summary, he said what we are proposing fits perfectly within the residential area.

Planning Director Said explained that the building/site was previously used as office/commercial use and in 2016 Mr. Klaes requested a use variance for a change in use to allow for the function as a construction business.

Said noted that though this site received previous approvals allowing for nonconforming uses, these requests were granted based on existing conditions of the property. The current request is not just a request for continuing use, but an expansion of a use that is not conforming to this area/zoning district. The applicant proposes to double the size of the business on this small parcel.

Said stated that Staff always desires moving toward conformance to zoning requirements and does not support this request based on the fact the request is not consistent with the applicable Standards for Variances.

McNamara opened the public hearing at 4:53 p.m.

Jonathan Arnold, 6410 Knapp Street, neighbor adjacent to Paragon building. Mr. Arnold said that he previously applied for a variance request for an accessory building on his property and was granted approval by the ZBA. He said his accessory building was an aesthetic improvement to the Knapp and Egypt Valley corner and that he supports any beautification improvements to the area. Mr. Arnold said that he feels that Paragon is a contribution to the area and the community, and he is in support of the building expansion request.

Lisa Tibble, 2435 Egypt Valley, said she lives behind the Paragon property. Ms. Tibble said she recently observed people placing the stakes for the proposed addition, and she did not want to see a big building in her backyard.

There was no other public comment and the public hearing was closed at 5:28 p.m.

There was ZBA discussion regarding allowed uses and setback requirements in the RP-1 zoning district (residential vs. non-residential), noted consideration that the RP-1 area is a low density, rural area per the Master Plan, and reviewed the Standard for Variances for this application. Courtade said he does not believe that this request complies with at least two of the three standards that the ZBA must apply. DeMarco inquired about the building location distance to neighbors.

Moved by Courtade, supported by Ellixson-Andrews, to deny the request for expanded use and setback variances, based on the findings of fact that the three Standards of Variances have not been satisfied. Roll call vote: Yes – 5; No – 0. Motion carried.

2. Request for a variance, front and side yard setbacks, to allow for a restroom expansion and associated canopy in the VR zoning district, 7490 Thornapple River Dr. SE, Parcel No. 41-15-34-176-002, applicant Progressive Companies, property owner Ada Township

Mike Oezer with Progressive Companies presented the request for variances. He shared an overview of the park project that Progressive is working on with Ada Township (transforming current Leonard Field into the Covered Bridge Park).

Mr. Oezer referred to the drawings of the proposed expanded restrooms and explained that the existing restrooms are undersized for the expanded park, therefore, he is proposing to increase one stall on each side and increase the capacity (code wise) to meet the uses in the park. He went over details on the 10-foot expansion and the proposed building layout, as well as a proposed canopy structure. He further explained that the addition impacts the front and side yard setbacks and requested variances allowing for the expansion.

Said summarized the Staff Report and noted that in Staff's view, this request meets the applicable Standards in Sec. 78-107. The front yard setback reduction is minimal (1.7 feet) and is across from an office property with minimal setbacks, while the side yard setback will have no impact on the adjacent property to the south, given the vegetation, higher elevation, and railroad tracks. Said stated that Staff has no objections to the approval of this request based on the findings of fact that the request is consistent with the applicable Standards for Variances.

McNamara opened the public hearing at 5:41 p.m. There was no public comment and the public hearing was closed.

Following brief ZBA discussion, it was moved by Courtade, supported by Nuttall, to approve the variances for a front yard setback of 13.3 and side yard setback of 11 feet to allow for restroom expansion, based on the findings of fact that the project meets the Standards for Variances. Roll call vote: Yes – 5; No – 0. Motion carried.

3. Request for a variance, front yard setback, to allow for attachment of the existing detached garage to the dwelling in the RR zoning district, 7161 Conservation St. NE, Parcel No. 41-15-21-276-012, applicant and property owners Matthew & Kaitlyn Baas

Matthew and Kaitlyn Baas presented their request for a variance, allowing them to attach their existing house and garage with the construction of a breezeway. Matthew explained that both the garage and part of the house are already located within the 50-foot setback and that there is no way to rebuild the garage in any other location on the property.

Said referred to the drawing/pictures and explained that the applicants have no control over the existing layout of the detached garage and the house and the proposed location of the enclosed connection/breezeway has more of a setback than the existing garage.

Said stated this request is a minor change and that there is significant amount of trees and vegetation along the front lot line of the property which provide screening for the proposed breezeway connection. He said Staff has no objections to the approval of this request based on the findings of fact that the request is consistent with the applicable Standards for Variances.

McNamara opened the public hearing at 5:49 p.m. There was no public comment and the public hearing was closed.

Ellixson-Andrews made a statement that he lives on Conservation Street also, but has no interest or connection to the applicants property. He does not feel there is any conflict of interest.

Moved by Nuttall, supported by Courtade, to approve the variance for a front yard setback of 28.8 feet to allow for the construction of a breezeway to connect with the home, based on the findings of the fact that the project meets the Standards for Variances. Roll call vote: Yes – 5; No – 0. Motion carried.

4. Request for a variance, rear yard setback, to allow for construction of a new dwelling in the VR zoning district, 7390 Thornapple River Dr. SE, Parcel No. 41-15-34-105-026, applicant and property owners Sean & Rene Growney

Rene and Sean Growney presented a variance request for a rear yard setback of 35-feet rather than the required 40-feet for a new single-family home. Rene explained that adjacent homes have 35-foot setbacks and the shorter driveway improves the aesthetics. She referred to the site plans, renderings, and narrative for supporting details.

Planner/Zoning Administrator Bajdek summarized the Staff Report and said the applicants propose to construct a new home with an attached garage on their property in the V-R zoning district. He noted that the property is unique as it is on an alley which is the only active alley in the Township.

Bajdek verified that the applicant is proposing a lesser rear yard setback to allow the home to align with neighboring homes that were recently constructed in immediate neighborhood with 35-foot rear yard setbacks (through variance approvals) for consistency purposes.

Bajdek concluded that though the request does not meet the exact letter of all three of the Standards for Variances, the details of this request may merit further consideration, due to planned utilization and proximity to the existing adjacent alley. As such, if the Zoning Board of Appeals determines, based on findings of fact that the above standards have been satisfied, Staff has no objections to approval of this request.

McNamara opened the public hearing at 5:55 p.m.

Jeff Visser, 589 River Street, homeowner across the alley from Growney's. He said he was granted a variance for the same setback about a year ago and is in support of the Growney's request. He said he would prefer to look at less concrete from across the alley.

Chris Czekai, 7365 Bronson, said he is a resident of the alley as well. He has reviewed the Growney's construction plans and he is in favor of the request. He feels the proposal will only enhance the neighborhood and downtown Ada.

Bajdek noted that the Planning & Zoning Department received four letters of support from neighbors:

Michael & Heather Garbaty, 7370 Thornapple River Dr.
Kirsetin Morello, 7380 Thornapple River Dr.
Gregory Morello, 7380 Thornapple River Dr.
Chris Czekai, 7365 Bronson St.

There was no other public comment and the public hearing was closed at 5:57 p.m.

There was brief ZBA discussion regarding the uniqueness of the property on the alley and reviewed history of the previous rear yard setback requirements.

Moved by Courtade, supported by Nuttall, to approve the variance for a rear yard setback of 35 feet for the attached garage as requested, based on the findings of the fact that the project meets the Standards for Variances. Roll call vote: Yes – 5; No – 0. Motion carried.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

Said reminded of the next ZBA meeting on July 1 and noted that Courtade and Nuttall notified they will be absent. The remaining three members confirmed that they will be at the meeting (to make a quorum).

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Ellixson-Andrews, supported by Courtade, to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo DeMarco, Ada Township Clerk

rs:eb