

Article 8.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Section 8.01 Zoning Board of Appeals

1. Creation and Membership:

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) shall perform its duties and exercise its powers as provided in Section 18 of Act 184 of Public Acts of 1943, as amended, and in such a way that the objectives of this Ordinance shall be observed, public safety secured, and justice done. The Board shall consist of three (3) members and (2) alternate members.

- A. The first member shall be a member of the Township Planning Commission for the terms of his/her office.
- B. The remaining members must be selected from the electors of the Township residing outside of incorporated cities and villages and shall be representative of the population distribution and of the various interests present in the Township. One (1) member may be a member of the Township Board.
- C. An elected officer of the Township shall not serve as chairman. An employee or contractor of the Township Board may not serve as a member or an employee of the Board of Appeals.
- D. The Township Board may appoint not more than two (2) alternate members for the same term as regular members to the Zoning Board of Appeals. An alternate member may be called to sit as a regular member of the Zoning Board of Appeals in the absence of a regular member if a regular member is absent from or unable to attend two (2) or more consecutive meetings of the Zoning Board of Appeals or for a period of more than thirty (30) consecutive days. An alternate member may also be called to serve in the place of a regular member for the purpose of reaching a decision on a case in which the regular member has abstained for reasons of conflict of interest. The alternate member having been appointed shall serve in the case until a final decision has been made. The alternate member shall have the same voting rights as a regular member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

2. Meetings:

Meetings of the Board of Appeals shall be held at the call of the Chairman and at such other times as such Board may determine or specify in its rules or procedure. All hearings conducted by said Board shall be open to the public. The Board of Appeals shall adopt its own rules of procedure and keep a record of its proceedings showing the vote of each member upon each question, or if absent or failing to vote, indicating said fact; and shall file a record of its proceedings in the office of the Township Clerk, and shall be a public record. The concurring vote of a majority of the voting members of the Board of Appeals shall be necessary to reverse any order, requirement, decision, or determination of the Zoning Administrator, or to decide in favor of an applicant any matter upon which they are required to pass under this Ordinance or to effect any variation of this Ordinance.

The Board of Appeals shall not conduct business unless a majority of those Board of Appeals members qualified to sit for a particular matter are present to constitute a quorum, regardless of whether the members are regular members or alternate members.

3. Jurisdiction:

- A. An appeal concerning the administration of the provisions of this Ordinance may be taken to the Board of Appeals within the timeframe defined in the general rules and procedures adopted by the Zoning Board of Appeals. If such a timeframe is not specified, appeals shall be filed within thirty (30) days of the decision of the Zoning Administrator from which the appellant seeks relief.
- B. The ZBA may hear appeals made by any person who alleges he or she has been aggrieved by a decision of the Zoning Administrator.
- C. The ZBA may grant variances as provided for in *Section 8.01.5 Variances*.
- D. The ZBA may also interpret the location of zoning district boundaries and may interpret the provisions of this Ordinance.
- E. An appeal may be made by any person, firm or corporation, or by any Officer, Department or Board of the Township. The appellant shall file with the Board of Appeals, on blanks or forms to be furnished by the Zoning Administrator, a notice of appeal specifying the grounds for the appeal.
- F. The Zoning Administrator shall transmit to the Board of Appeals all the papers constituting the record upon which the action appealed from was taken. The final decision of such appeal shall be in the form of a resolution either reversing, modifying or affirming, wholly or partly, the decision or determination appealed from. Reasons for the decision must be stated.
- G. Any person may appear and testify at the hearing either in person or by duly authorized agent or attorney.

4. Stay:

An appeal shall stay all proceedings in furtherance of the action appealed from unless the Zoning Administrator certifies to the Board of Appeals, after notice of appeal shall have been filed with him, that by reason of facts stated in the certificate, a stay would, in his opinion, cause imminent peril to life or property, in which case the proceedings shall not be stayed otherwise than by a restraining order which may be granted by the Board of Appeals or by the Circuit Court, on application, on notice of the Zoning Administrator and on due course shown.

5. Variances:

A. Dimensional Variances: The ZBA may grant dimensional variances when the applicant demonstrates in the official record of the hearing that the strict enforcement of this Ordinance would result in practical difficulty. To establish practical difficulty, the applicant must establish all of the following:

- 1) The need for the requested variance is due to unique circumstances or physical conditions of the property involved that do not apply generally to other properties in the surrounding area, such as narrowness, shallowness, shape, water, or topography and is not due to the applicant's personal or economic hardship.
- 2) The need for the requested variance is not the result of action of the property owner or previous property owners (self-created).
- 3) That strict compliance with regulations governing area, setback, frontage, height, bulk, density or other dimensional requirements will unreasonably prevent the property owner from using the property for a permitted purpose, or will render conformity with those regulations unnecessarily burdensome.
Whether granting the requested variance would do substantial justice to the applicant as well as to other property owners in the district, or whether granting a lesser variance than requested would give a substantial relief to the property owner and be more consistent with justice to other property owners.
- 4) That the requested variance will not cause an adverse impact on surrounding property, property values, or the use and enjoyment of property in the neighborhood or zoning district.

B. Use Variances:

The ZBA may grant use variances when the applicant demonstrates in the official record of the hearing that the strict enforcement of this Ordinance would result in unnecessary hardship. To establish unnecessary hardship, the applicant must establish all of the following:

- 1) The building, structure or land cannot be reasonably used for any of the uses permitted by right or by special approval in the zoning district in which it is located.
- 2) The need for the requested variance is due to unique circumstances peculiar to the applicant's property and not due to general neighborhood conditions.

- 3) The proposed use of applicant's property will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.
 - 4) The need for the requested variance is not the result of actions of the property owner or previous property owners (self-created).
6. Zoning Board of Appeals submittal:
The applicant is required to submit four (4) copies of surveys, plans and data as required under Article 4: Site Plan Review, or other information deemed reasonably necessary for making any informed decision on his or her appeal.
7. Conditions of Approval:
The ZBA may impose such conditions or limitations in granting a variance as deemed necessary to protect the character of the area, as provided for in *Section 7.03 –Conditions*.
8. Exercising Powers:
In exercising the above powers, the Board of Appeals may reverse or affirm wholly or partly, or may modify the order, requirement, decision or determination appealed from and may make such order, requirement, decision or determination as ought to be made, and to that end shall have all the powers of the Zoning Administrator from whom the appeal is taken.
9. Notice of Hearing:
Following receipt of a written request concerning an appeal of an administrative decision, a request for an interpretation of the zoning ordinance or a request for a variance, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall hold a public hearing, after giving the following applicable notice:
- A. For an appeal of an administrative decision, a notice stating the time, date, and place of the public hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the township and shall be sent to the person filing the appeal and to the zoning administrator or other administrative agency or official whose decision is being appealed no less than five (5) and nor more than fifteen (15) days before the public hearing.
 - B. For a request seeking an interpretation of the zoning ordinance, a notice stating the time, date, and place of the public hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the township and shall be sent to the person requesting the interpretation no less than five (5) and nor more than fifteen (15) days before the public hearing.
 - C. For a variance request, a notice stating the nature of the variance being requested and the time, date, and place of the public hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the township and shall be sent to the person requesting the variance no less than five (5) and nor more than fifteen (15) days before the public hearing. In addition, a notice stating the nature of the

variance being requested and the time, date, and place of the public hearing shall be sent by first class mail or personal delivery to all persons to whom real property is assessed within 300 feet of the boundary of the property in question and to the occupants of all structures within 300 feet of the boundary of the property in question.

10. Miscellaneous:

No order of the Board of Appeals permitting the erection or alteration of a building shall be valid for a period longer than twelve (12) months, unless a building permit for such erection or alteration is obtained within such period and substantial construction has occurred.

No order of the Board of Appeals permitting the use of a building or premises shall be valid for a period longer than twelve (12) months unless such use is established within such period; provided, however, that where such use permitted is dependent upon the erection or alteration of a building, such order shall continue in force and effect if a building permit for said erection or alteration is obtained within such period of erection or alteration is started and substantial construction has occurred.