

ARTICLE VIII: 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 the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act 110, of Public Acts of 2006, 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 five (5) members, appointed by the Township Board.

- 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 as specified to serve as a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals in the absence of a regular member if the regular member will be unable to attend 1 or more meetings. An alternate member may also be called to serve as a member for the purpose of reaching a decision on a case in which the member has abstained for reasons of conflict of interest. The alternate member 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 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 hear and decide the following interpretation matters:
 - 1) To determine the meaning of zoning ordinance provisions when ambiguity exists in those provisions.
 - 2) To classify a proposed use of land or use of a structure that is not expressly provided in this Ordinance (an unlisted property use). In determining the proper classification of an unlisted property use, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall consider the characteristics of the proposed unlisted property use in relation to similar and comparable uses listed in any zoning district and in relation to the requirements of the township master plan. Once classified, the unlisted property use shall be subject to all applicable regulations pertaining to similar uses in the zoning district in which placed, including the regulations pertaining to uses subject to special use permit approval, if classified as such a use by the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- 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 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.
- H. The ZBA has no jurisdiction to hear appeals from Planning Commission decisions concerning special approvals, planned unit developments, or stop or suspend temporarily.
- I. Unlisted Property Uses
When the proposed use of land or use of a structure is not specified in this Ordinance, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall have the power upon written request of the property owner or zoning administrator to classify the unlisted property use. In determining the proper classification of an unlisted property use,

the Zoning Board of Appeals shall consider the characteristics of the proposed unlisted property use in relation to similar and comparable uses listed in any zoning district and in relation to the requirements of the township master plan. Once classified, the unlisted property use is subject to all applicable regulations pertaining to similar uses in the zoning district in which placed, including the regulations pertaining to uses subject to special use permit approval, if classified as such a use by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

4. Stay:

An administrative appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals and an appeal of a decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals to circuit court stays (or suspends) all proceedings of the action appealed from, including the effectiveness of any zoning permit issued, unless the Zoning Administrator certifies to the Zoning Board of Appeals after such appeal has been filed that a stay would cause imminent peril to life or property, in which case the proceedings shall not be stayed, unless ordered stayed by the Zoning Board of Appeals or the circuit court. Provided, however, this section shall not apply to an administrative decision to take enforcement action for alleged violations of this Ordinance.

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.
- 4) 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.
- 5) 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.

6. Zoning Board of Appeals submittal: *(amended July 7, 2016)*

The applicant is required to submit six (6) copies and a digital PDF copy of surveys, plans and data as required under Article VI: 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 9.03 – 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. Public Hearing: Notice Requirements:
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 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 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 fifteen (15) days before the public hearing.

 - D. In addition to the above notice requirements, when the matter before the Zoning Board of Appeals involves a specific parcel, a notice stating the nature of the appeal, interpretation request, or 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, not less than fifteen (15) days before the public hearing.

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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 two (2) years, 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 two (2) years 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.