



City of Plymouth
Zoning Board of Appeals
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 7, 2025 - 7:00 p.m.

City of Plymouth
201 S. Main
Plymouth, Michigan 48170-1637

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Joe Elliott called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Elliott, Members Mike Devine, Robert Mengel, Rebecca Smith, and Alternate Mike Pappas.
Also present: Planning and Community Development Director Greta Bolhuis

2. CITIZENS COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

Devine offered a motion, seconded by Chair Elliott, to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2025 meeting.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Devine, Mengel, Smith and Elliott

ABSTAINED: Pappas

MOTION PASSED

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mengel offered a motion, seconded by Smith, to approve the agenda for the August 7, 2025 meeting.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Pappas, Devine, Mengel, Smith and Elliott

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Z 25-05, 261 S Main:** Chair Elliott presented the application for 261 S Main Street, where Steve and Renee Alexandrowski sought a non-use variance to place a ground sign less than five feet from the front property line. The property is zoned B-2, Central Business District. The ordinance mandates ground signs be at least five feet from the road right of way, but the Alexandrowskis' proposed sign was set back 0 feet, necessitating a 5-foot variance. Chair Elliott noted the front property line was about 2 feet from the sidewalk, with the sign not in the right of way.

Jennifer from Image360 presented the application, explaining that if the sign were placed 5 feet from the property line, it would be hidden by foliage and poorly visible. She proposed placing the sign 2 feet from the sidewalk and 15 feet from the driveway sidewalk.

Commissioner Smith disclosed that the applicant was her financial planner but didn't believe it would affect her ability to vote on the matter.

Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

Board Member Discussion

During deliberations, Commissioner Mengel highlighted that the ordinance was relatively new compared to the building's age, indicating that the issue was not self-created. He noted the difficulty of placing a conforming sign in the business district, supporting the variance request.

Commissioner Smith agreed, noting there was only 6 feet of space in front of the building. Commissioner Pappas observed that many neighboring properties were in similar situations.

Commissioner Devine supported the variance, noting that a wall-mounted sign wouldn't provide the same visibility. He appreciated that the sign would be 15 feet from the sidewalk's edge, allowing unobstructed views for vehicles exiting the parking lot.

Chair Elliott deemed the ordinance restrictions unreasonable as they restricted effective signage and noted that a similar variance was granted to Growth Works in 2019.

The board considered conditions such as maintaining the height and ensuring a consistent 15-foot distance from the sidewalk.

Motion

Commissioner Devine made a motion, seconded by Smith, to approve Z25-05 for a non-use variance for a ground sign located with a 0-foot front setback, with the condition that the size and location be as presented in the application.

Findings of Fact

The ordinance provides for a ground sign, but the setback requirements unreasonably restrict the size and location of the sign on this property, and that this is the most effective location and orientation for the signage on this property,

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Pappas, Devine, Mengel, Smith and Elliott

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

- b. **Z 25-06, 1405 Goldsmith:** Chair Elliott introduced the application for 1405 Goldsmith, where Ross Owens was requesting a non-use variance to locate a fence in the front yard. The property is zoned I-1, Light Industrial. The ordinance states that fences shall not be allowed within the front yard of any industry on sites less than 10 acres in size, so a variance was required.

Ross Owens, representing Happy Hounds (currently operating on Main Street), explained they were seeking a variance for a fence at their "potential forever home" on Goldsmith. The proposed fence would be a 6-foot-tall white vinyl fence.

Citizen Comments

A resident from the property behind the site expressed concern about the fence location. After viewing the plans, they were reassured that the fence would face Goldsmith and not impact their property.

Board Member Discussion

Commissioner Pappas highlighted the unusual "fence within a fence" scenario. Commissioner Mengel inquired if the building's setback was a self-created issue. Chair Elliott determined it wasn't a self-created hardship but a result of the varying setbacks on Goldsmith.

Commissioner Smith raised concerns about parking, specifically whether the handicapped spots would be impeded by the fence. It was clarified that the Planning Commission would address this during site plan review.

Commissioner Devine supported the variance, viewing the dog run as a function of the building (almost like an addition). He suggested the applicant consider landscaping.

Chair Elliott summarized that the building is located at the back of the lot with minimal distance to the rear yard setback; there's considerable variation in front setbacks on Goldsmith; the proposed fence wouldn't extend beyond neighboring buildings' front setbacks; and the fence is a core function of the business.

Motion

Smith offered a motion, seconded by Pappas, to approve Z 25-06 for a non-use variance to locate a fence in the front yard. The approval is conditioned with the fence having a minimum setback of 45 feet from the front property line.

Findings of Fact

The building is located at the back of the lot with minimal distance from the back of the building to the rear yard side setback, the fence does not extend into the setbacks of neighboring buildings, and having the fence is a core function of the business.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Pappas, Devine, Mengel, Smith and Elliott

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

8. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no board member comments.

9. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

City Commissioner Nick Moroz noted that he had shared comments from the previous ZBA meeting with the City Commission. He mentioned that discussions were ongoing regarding the right approach to address lot splits, minimum lot sizes, and front yard setbacks on corner lots.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Pappas offered a motion, seconded by Mengel, to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Pappas, Devine, Mengel, Smith and Elliott

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY