



City of Plymouth
Zoning Board of Appeals
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 4, 2025 - 7:00 p.m.

City of Plymouth
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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: Chair Joe Elliott, Vice Chair Burrows, Members Mike Devine, Rebecca Smith, and Alternate Mike Pappas.

Absent: Member Robert Mengel

Also present: Planning and Community Development Director Greta Bolhuis

2. CITIZENS COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

Burrows offered a motion, seconded by Pappas, to approve minutes of the October 2, 2025 meeting.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Burrows, Devine, Smith, and Pappas

Abstained: Elliott

MOTION PASSED

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Smith offered a motion, seconded by Pappas, to approve the agenda for the December 4, 2025 meeting.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Pappas, Devine, Smith, Burrows, and Elliott

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Z 25-12, 1157 Penniman:** John (Jack) Wilson, the owner, is requesting non-use variances to construct an addition onto an existing porte-cochere (carport) and to rebuild a detached garage in the required setback. The property is zoned R-1, Single-Family Residential. Property owner Jack Wilson presented his case.

Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

Board Member Discussion

Board members expressed concerns about granting a 1-foot setback for a completely new structure, noting that while existing non-conforming structures could remain, new construction should meet current standards where possible. After discussion, the Board determined a 2-foot setback would be a reasonable compromise, allowing maintenance access while minimizing impact on existing vegetation.

Motion

Motion by Commissioner Devine, seconded by Commissioner Smith, to **approve** a 1-foot variance for the rear setback of the detached garage (allowing a 2-foot setback). The variance would apply to a maximum dimension of 25 feet from the east property line, parallel to the rear property line.

Findings of Fact

The existing structure is nonconforming with a 1-foot setback and that a 2-foot setback is more maintainable and a lesser variance than what is being requested.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Pappas, Devine, Smith, Burrows, and Elliott

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Board Member Discussion

Regarding the carport, the Board supported the increased square footage, continuation of existing setback, and location of the carport extension. However, due to safety concerns, they rejected the request for railings and door access, finding that such changes could present safety risks and encourage occupancy of the space. They suggested alternatives which may still allow for the movement of furniture.

Motion

Motion by Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Burrows, to **approve** variances allowing a carport up to 325 square feet in area, continuing the existing side setback, and allowing it to exist in the side yard setback on a lot greater than 60 feet wide.

Findings of Fact

The existing carport is nonconforming due to the historic conditions of the home and placement on the property, and the current size is not practical for modern use.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Pappas, Devine, Smith, Burrows, and Elliott

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion

Motion by Commissioner Devine, seconded by Commissioner Smith, to **deny** the variance request for a railing and a door accessing the top of the carport.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Pappas, Devine, Smith, Burrows, and Elliott

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

- b) **Z 25-13, 120 Wilcox:** Peter Poulos, the owner, is requesting non-use variances to construct an addition onto an existing home. The property is zoned R-1, Single-Family Residential.

Commissioner Devine recused himself due to involvement with the application.
Motion by Devine, seconded by Elliott, to allow Member Devine to abstain from this agenda item but remain in the room to present the variance request.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Devine, Pappas, Smith, Burrows, and Elliott

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Applicant Mike Devine presented the case. Devine explained the unique characteristics of the property, including an abandoned street that created an irregular lot shape. The homeowner maintains a triangle of city-owned land and county right-of-way adjacent to their property. The historic home's wraparound porch significantly impacts lot coverage calculations.

Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

Board Member Discussion

The applicant confirmed that this project is a remodel, not a tear down. The Board noted that if calculations were based on the property the homeowner maintains (rather than just legally owns), both FAR and lot coverage would meet ordinance requirements. The Board considered the impact of the large wraparound porch on the lot coverage calculation. The property's location next to a commercial gas station and major road was also considered.

Chair Elliott informed the applicant that there were only four members present to consider the case. He offered the applicant the opportunity to postpone until there was a full board present. The owner confirmed she was ok with proceeding.

Motion

Motion by Commissioner Burrows, seconded by Commissioner Smith, to approve the two variances for lot coverage (4.6%) and floor area ratio (0.027).

Findings of Fact

The lot is irregularly shaped due to a corner with a commercial gas station to the west and a major road with a large right-of-way to the north, and if calculations were based on property the homeowner maintains, both FAR and lot coverage would meet ordinance requirements.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Pappas, Smith, Burrows, and Elliott

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

c) **Clerical clarification of August 7, 2025 meeting minutes**

Staff sought clarification regarding a fence setback dimension from the August 7, 2025 meeting. The minutes stated the fence shall be "55 feet from the front property line", but review of the permit application, property survey, and meeting video indicated the minutes should say "45 feet from the front property line".

Motion by Chair Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Smith, to clarify the August 7, 2025 ruling that the information presented by the applicant is approved, and the dimension from the front property line to the fence is 45 feet, not 55 feet.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Pappas, Devine, Smith, and Elliott

Abstain: Burrows as he was not present at the meeting

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

7. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair Elliott announced this was his last meeting serving on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Board members thanked him for his leadership and service since 2016.

8. REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

There were no reports and correspondence to report.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Pappas offered a motion, seconded by Devine, to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

There was a roll call vote.

YES: Pappas, Devine, Smith, Burrows, and Elliott

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY