

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
09-21-26 – 23

MINUTES OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING OF THE CITY OF GROSSE POINTE WOODS HELD ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2026, IN THE COUNCIL/COURTROOM OF THE ROBERT E. NOVITKE MUNICIPAL CENTER, 20025 MACK PLAZA DR., GROSSE POINTE WOODS, MICHIGAN.

The meeting was called to order at 7:22 p.m. by Mayor Bryant.

Roll Call: Mayor Bryant
Council members: Brown, Granger, Koester, McConaghy, Motschall
Absent: Gafa

Also Present: City Manager Como
City Attorney Walling
Treasurer/Comptroller Schmidt
City Clerk Antolin
Director of Public Services Kowalski
City Planner Mangan

Motion by Brown, seconded by McConaghy, that Councilmember Gafa be excused from tonight's meeting.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Brown, Bryant, Granger, Koester, McConaghy, Motschall
No: None
Absent: Gafa

Motion by Brown, seconded by McConaghy, to accept the agenda as presented and for purposes of the Zoning Board of Appeals hearing, that the following items be presented to, and received by, the Zoning Board of Appeals for consideration:

- 1) Variance Review (09/17/26) - City Planner Mangan (Haw)
- 2) Zoning Board of Appeals Application (08/25/26)
- 3) Survey (08/13/26)
- 4) Demolition Plan
- 5) Proposed Building Elevations
- 6) Receipt of Payment
- 7) Affidavit of Property Owners Notified w/ List & Parcel Map
- 8) Affidavit of Legal Publication

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Brown, Bryant, Granger, Koester, McConaghy, Motschall
No: None
Absent: Gafa

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
09-21-26 – 24

THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS THEREUPON OPENED AT 7:24 P.M. FOR A ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS HEARING UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF MICHIGAN ZONING ENABLING ACT PA 110 OF 2006, MCL 125.3101 ET SEQ, TO HEAR THE APPEAL OF LAURA THIBAUT AND BRIAN GATLIFF, 19961 NORTON COURT, WHO ARE REQUESTING TWO VARIANCES FOR THE REAR AND SIDE YARD SETBACKS.

City Planner Mangan provided an overview of the Petitioners' request in accordance with the variance review dated September 19, 2026, and clarified questions from City Council.

The applicants, Laura Thibault and Brian Gatliff, request two variances for the residential lot at 19961 Norton Court in order to construct an addition (new bedroom and bath) to their single-unit residence. The proposed addition, however, would encroach into the minimum required rear yard and side yard setbacks.

The subject site is zoned the R-1D, One-Family Residential District and is an interior lot. The applicants request the following variances, pursuant to the City's Zoning Ordinance:

Code Section	Ordinance Requirements		Proposed	Requested Variance
Sec. 50-3.1.D	Minimum rear yard setback	28.0'	22.5'	5.5'
Sec. 50-3.1.D	Minimum side yards	16.0' (total of two)	15.0'	1.0'

Per Section 50-7.15.I.1, the Zoning Board of Appeals may grant a dimensional variance only upon a finding that compliance with the restrictions governing area, setbacks, frontage, height, bulk, density, or other dimensional provisions would create a practical difficulty. A finding of practical difficulty, based on competent, material, and substantial evidence on the record, shall require the petitioner to demonstrate that all conditions are met.

The Chair asked if anyone from the audience wished to speak in favor of the proposed request. The following individuals were heard:

- Brian Gatliff, Petitioner

The Chair asked if anyone from the audience wished to speak in opposition to the proposed request. No one wished to be heard.

Motion by Motschall, seconded by Granger, that the public hearing be closed at 7:29 p.m. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Councilmember Granger received clarification that the easement is calculated with the 5 ft. variance and the Zoning Ordinance update will allow similar minor variances to be handled administratively.

Motion by McConaghy, seconded by Granger, that the Zoning Board of Appeals concur with the City Planner's recommendation and **approve** the requested 5.5-foot rear yard variance and the 1.0-foot side yard (total of two) variance to Section 50-3.1.D based on the following findings of fact for 19961 Norton Ct.:

1. Strictly following the current R-1D zoning requirements for the rear yard setback would prevent the applicant from functionally expanding and improving their single-unit home.
2. The proposed addition is consistent with the intent of the R-1D One-Family Residential District, which encourages single-unit, detached residential development and is a permitted, by-right use.
3. The proposed addition remains proportional to the overall massing of the home and surrounding residences.
4. Approval of the variances upholds the spirit and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, maintains neighborhood character, and protects public health and safety.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Brown, Bryant, Granger, Koester, McConaghy, Motschall
No: None
Absent: Gafa

Nobody wished to be heard under **New Business/Public Comment**.

Motion by Motschall, seconded by Granger, that tonight's meeting minutes be immediately certified.

Motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Brown, Bryant, Granger, Koester, McConaghy, Motschall
No: None
Absent: Gafa

Motion by Motschall, seconded by Koester, to adjourn tonight's ZBA meeting at 7:35 p.m.
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
09-21-26 – 26

Respectfully submitted,

Paul P. Antolin
City Clerk