

MINUTES OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING OF THE CITY OF GROSSE POINTE WOODS HELD ON MONDAY, APRIL 13, 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 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Bryant.

Roll Call: Mayor Bryant  
Council members: Brown, Gafa, Granger, Koester, McConaghy, Motschall  
Absent: None

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

**Motion** by McConaghy, seconded by Gafa, that all items on tonight’s agenda be received, placed on file, and taken in the order of appearance including the following listed below and the documents received prior to the meeting:

- 1) Variance Review (04/08/26) - City Planners Mangan/Smith
- 2) Zoning Board of Appeals Application (02/26/26)
- 3) Site Plans (03/24/26)
- 4) Memo 04/08/26 - Building Official Collins
- 5) Memo 04/08/26 - Director of Public Safety Kosanke
- 6) Email 04/02/26 - Public Comment
- 7) Affidavit of Property Owners Notified with List & Parcel Map
- 8) Affidavit of Legal Publication

Motion carried by the following vote:

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

THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS THEREUPON OPENED AT 7:32 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 BRANDEN MCRILL, 20195 MACK AVENUE (LOLA’S TACO BAR), WHO IS REQUESTING A USE VARIANCE, PER SECTION 50-4.9.A.6 TO UTILIZE A WALK-UP WINDOW FOR EMPLOYEE-ONLY SERVICE. DUE TO NONCOMPLIANCE WITH THE ZONING ORDINANCE, A VARIANCE IS THEREFORE REQUIRED.

City Planner Mangan provided an overview of the Petitioner’s requests in accordance with the variance review dated April 8, 2026.

Councilmember Brown addressed concerns of foot and bike traffic for the proposed location. She suggested including a stipulation to require additional training for staff and signage to offer safe conditions.

Councilmember Granger commented with similar concerns including motorcycles at parking meters that occupy some of the sidewalk space needed for pedestrians. She suggested more yellow painting on the curbs to enhance safety for the area.

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

- Branden McRill, 565 Lochmoor Blvd., Owner of Lola’s Taco Bar

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

- Donna O’Keefe, 1593 Torrey Rd., Planning Commission Member
- Mike Ellis, 740 Anita St., Planning Commission Member

Branden McRill addressed the comments from those opposed to the variance request.

Councilmember Brown commented on the fact that one of the purposes to implement the Social Districts was to enhance the walkability of Mack Avenue. However, due to the lack of interest from the local businesses, the city will not be implementing the Social Districts this year.

Councilmember Granger stated the concern, if approving the window variance tonight, would it set a precedence making it difficult to deny similar requests in the future? City Attorney Romer replied that when you open up a permission and have circumstances that mirror the same situation, it would be difficult to argue against what you already approved.

Councilmember Granger also addressed the seats available to the parking spaces required. City Planner Mangan confirmed there are adequate parking spaces.

Councilmember Koester was supportive of the variance request and suggested that after the summer, an evaluation should be implemented to gauge any issues or concerns that may arise if approved. There was a consensus of the Zoning Board of Appeals to implement an evaluation on October 1, 2026.

The petitioner, Branden McRill, wanted to state for the record that he explicitly intends to use the window only for the approved use and nothing else at this time.

**Motion** by Gafa, seconded by Brown, that the public hearing be closed at 8:07 p.m. PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Motion** by Gafa, seconded by Granger, that the Zoning Board of Appeals approve the requested use variance for an employee-only service window at 20195 Mack Avenue (Lola’s Taco Bar), subject to the following conditions:

1. Window service is limited to employee use only; no customer ordering, point-of-sale, or pick-up is permitted.
2. The use of the window is restricted to on-site employees of Lola’s Taco Bar only; no third-party delivery service is permitted to use the window.
3. Signage must be posted to the effect: *“For Employee-Only Use, No Customer or Delivery Service.”*
4. No menu boards, speakers, lighting, or ordering features are permitted.
5. The previously proposed awning on north elevation is removed.
6. The City reserves the right to direct the applicant to modify the window operations to address any potential impacts, should this need arise.
7. An evaluation shall be reviewed on October 1, 2026, regarding the viability of the service window.

The above recommendation of approval is based on the following findings:

- A. The Ordinance does not distinguish between customer-facing outdoor service and internal operational features, limiting reasonable restaurant operations.
- B. The request is driven by ordinance limitations, not applicant action.

- C. The proposal reflects modern service practices, not an expansion of use.
- D. The proposal avoids the negative impacts the Ordinance intends to prevent (e.g., congestion, noise, etc.).

Motion carried by the following vote:

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

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

**Motion** by Gafa, seconded by Brown, that tonight's meeting minutes be immediately certified.

Motion carried by the following vote:

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

**Motion** by Brown, seconded by Koester, that tonight's meeting be adjourned at 8:10 p.m.  
**PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Paul P. Antolin  
City Clerk