

Meeting Minutes

**Sycamore Township Board of Zoning Appeals
8540 Kenwood Road
Sycamore Township, Ohio 45236
Wednesday, September 24, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.**

Mr. John O'Shea
Mr. Michael Schwartz
Mr. George Ten Eyck
Mr. Karl Hoalst
Mr. Brian Weinel
Mr. Speeth - Alternate

Item 1.- Meeting Called to Order

Mr. O'Shea called the meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals to order on Wednesday, September 24, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Item 2.- Roll Call of the Board

Mr. O'Shea called the roll.

Members Present: Mr. Schwartz, Mr. O'Shea, Mr. Hoalst, Mr. Weinel

Alternate Present: Mr. Speeth

Members Absent: Mr. Ten Eyck

Staff Present: Jeff Uckotter, Kevin Clark, Jon Ragan

Item 3.- Pledge of the Allegiance / Opening Ceremony

Mr. O'Shea led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item 4.-Approval of Minutes

Mr. Schwartz moved to approve the June 18, 2025, meeting minutes. Mr. Weinel seconded the motion.

Mr. O'Shea called the roll:

Mr. O'Shea- YES
Mr. Schwartz- YES
Mr. Weinel- YES
Mr. Ten Eyck- ABSENT
Mr. Hoalst- ABSTAINED
Mr. Speeth - ABSTAINED

Item 5. Swearing in of Those Providing Testimony

Mr. O'Shea swore in all those providing testimony. Mr. O'Shea then explained variances, reviewed the meeting procedures, and discussed the process by which the Board of Zoning Appeals makes decisions on such requests.

Item 6.-Old Business

None

Item 7.-New Business

Case: BZA-2025-4
Applicant: Al Gammarino
Subject property: 3684/3700 E. Galbraith Road
Request: Appeal

Please see the Findings of Fact. Starting on page six (6), those documents will be attached to this document once they are approved.

Case: BZA-2025-5
Applicant: Robert Taylor
Subject property: 7540 Montgomery Road
Request: Variance Request

Mr. Ragan presented the case, stating that the applicant seeks to keep a four (4) foot fence in the defined front yard at 7540 Montgomery Road, that was installed without a zoning certificate. He stated that a violation letter was sent to the property owner on June 24, 2025. Mr. Ragan noted that the subject property is a corner lot located at the corner of Montgomery Road and Carroll Avenue acting as a gateway into the neighborhood. He stated that the four (4) foot Kentucky, four (4) board fence, projects approximately twenty-two (22) feet from the house into the front yard.

Mr. Ragan reviewed applicable code section 10-7.1 – No fence or wall shall be in any defined front yard. Mr. Ragan presented renderings of the fence and site plan to the board. He also read the *Corner Lot* definition, explaining how both Montgomery Road and Carroll Avenue are street facing, and therefore front yards.

Mr. Ragan reviewed Section 21-6: Standards to review a variance. Mr. Ragan stated that the fact that the property is a corner lot does not mean it's a practical difficulty. He also stated that unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty is not present in this case, nor does the applicant satisfy each of the standards set forth in Section 21-6. Mr. Ragan stated that the fence negatively affects the neighborhood's essential character as it blatantly violates the STZR.

Mr. Ragan stated that staff recommends the denial of the applicant's variance request to allow the four (4) foot fence in the front yard as shown.

Mr. Uckotter referenced the site plan presented to the board noting where the leading edge of the house is located (the leading edge of the house is the corner in which the fence is set off the house). Mr. Uckotter stated that due to driveway and garage access concerns, the applicant may propose the fence at the northern corner, however, this would be unsatisfactory because fencing would be in front of the house – in the front yard (Carroll Ave elevation).

Robert Taylor (7540 Montgomery Road) introduced himself from the podium as the applicant. Mr. Taylor stated that the fence was installed to protect his two (2) year old son, and he was unaware that the Carroll Ave elevation was considered his front yard. Mr. Taylor stated that he

did not get a zoning certificate for the fence. Mr. Taylor stated that he is requesting the variance for safety concerns, and his lot is unique because it is a corner lot, which is a hardship.

Mr. Taylor approached the site plan displayed on the projector screen. He pointed to the screen showing where his garage door is located under the house. Mr. Taylor stated that if the fence was moved back to the leading edge of the house, he would not be able to pull a car into his driveway and close the gate.

Mr. Ragan presented photos of the subject property, driveway, and existing fence to the board.

Referencing *21-7.7 Essential Character Of The Area*, Mr. O'Shea asked Mr. Ragan how the fence is detrimental to public welfare. Mr. Ragan stated that aesthetically, even with the opacity of the fence, it creates a tunneling effect while driving along Carroll Avenue. Mr. Ragan also noted that the fence can be seen from Montgomery Road.

Mr. Hoalst asked Mr. Taylor if he hired a contractor, and if so, did the contractor mention the need for a permit. Mr. Taylor stated that he hired a contractor, and the contractor left permitting up to him.

Mr. Weinell stated that if the fence was moved back, the applicant would still have a substantial backyard.

There was discussion between Mr. Taylor and Mr. Weinell on the logistics of pulling a car into the driveway and allowing an inward swinging gate to close.

Mr. Uckotter presented an alternative site plan created by staff to the board.

Mr. Schwartz moved to approve an alternate site arrangement with the condition that the two (2) existing fence sections coming off the leading edge of the house can remain. Starting at the western end of the two (2) sections of fence, the fence then runs south, parallel to the right-of-way line along Carroll Avenue to the rear property line. (See Exhibit A attached).

Mr. Uckotter voiced staff objection to the Schwartz proposal.

Mr. O'Shea seconded the motion.

Mr. O'Shea asked Mr. Taylor if the alternate site arrangement would accommodate his needs. Mr. Taylor stated "yes".

Mr. O'Shea called Roll:

Mr. Schwartz- YES

Mr. O'Shea- YES

Mr. Speeth- YES

Mr. Ten Eyck- ABSENT

Mr. Hoalst- YES

Mr. Weinell - NO

Item 8. Date of next meeting

Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at 6:00 pm.

Item 9.-Communication or Miscellaneous Business

Mr. Uckotter stated that due to the Findings of Fact from the previous case, the board will meet on October 22, 2025, even if there are no other applications to consider.

Item 10. – Adjournment

Mr. O'Shea made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Weinell.

Mr. O'Shea called Roll:

Mr. Schwartz- YES

Mr. O'Shea- YES

Mr. Speeth- YES

Mr. Ten Eyck- ABSENT

Mr. Hoalst- YES

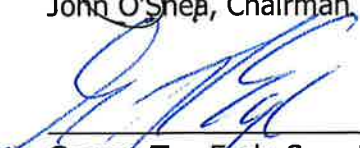
Mr. Weinell – YES

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Meeting minutes prepared by Jon Ragan



John O'Shea, Chairman



George Ten Eyck, Secretary

Exhibit A



The red line on the plan depicts the location of the fence approved in this variance as an alternative site arrangement. The location of the orange line depicts the location of the fence installed by right and in accordance with the STZR Section 10-7.1.