



MINUTES
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS - REGULAR SESSION
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2025, 4:00 PM

The Zoning Board of Appeals convened in regular session at 4:00 PM, August 20, 2025. Acting Board Chair Ballantini called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Matt Steinkoenig	Board Member	Present
Victoria Harris	Board Member	Present
Nikki Williams	Board Member	Present
Terry Ballantini	Acting Board Chair	Present
John Poling	Board Member	Present

City staff present included Jon Branham, Planner II; Marcus Ricci, Planner III; Alissa Pemberton, Planning Manager; George Boyle, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Kelly Pfeifer, Director of Development Services; and Billy Tyus, Senior Deputy City Manager

Public Comment

No public comment was provided.

Consent Agenda

Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion are listed and voted on separately.

Board Member Harris made a motion, seconded by Board Member Poling, to approve the item as submitted.

AYES: Ballantini; Harris; Williams; Poling, Steinkoenig

Motion carried (viva voce).

Item 4.A. Review and approval of the minutes of the June 18, 2025, regular meeting of the Bloomington Zoning Board of Appeals.

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 5.A. **V-05-25** - Public hearing, review, and action on a request submitted by Front & Center, LLC, for Variances from § 44-1205(B)(3) of the Zoning Code, to allow reduced required parking lot setbacks and § 44-1307(B)(1) and § 44-1307(C)(1) of the Zoning Code to allow reduced required parking lot landscaping in the D-1 (Central Business) District, for

the property located at 102 N. Center Street, 110 N. Center Street, and 120 N. Center Street. PINs: 21-04-337-060, 21-04-337-007, and 21-04-337-059.

Mr. Branham presented the staff report with a recommendation for approval. He reviewed the surrounding zoning and land uses. He described the existing conditions, including the intent of the Applicant to demolish the derelict buildings on the south and west areas of the site, and to replace them with a surface parking lot. He noted that many of the downtown parking lots have little to no landscaping as they were created prior to the implementation of current requirements. He also noted that, even with the relief requested by the Applicant, the lot would be improved as compared to the other existing lots by providing a partial level of the required landscaping. He stated that strict compliance with the standards would result in a reduction of approximately 30 parking spaces. He also reviewed the standards as outlined in the staff report.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini opened the public hearing.

Robbie Osenga (Applicant, 216 E. Grove Street), provided further background on the project and provided a summary of project goals.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini closed the public hearing.

The Board discussed the request and reviewed the standards.

Board Member Harris made a motion, seconded by Board Member Poling, to approve the item as presented.

Roll call

AYES: Ballantini; Harris; Williams; Poling, Steinkoenig

Motion passed.

Item 5.B. V-06-25 - Public hearing, review, and action on a request submitted by Front & Center, LLC, for Variances from § 44-1205(B)(3) of the Zoning Code, to allow reduced required parking lot setbacks and § 44-1307(B)(1) and § 44-1307(C)(1) of the Zoning Code to allow reduced required parking lot landscaping in the D-2 (Downtown Transitional) District, for the property located at 110 N. Madison Street. PIN: 21-04-337-002.

Mr. Branham presented the staff report with a recommendation for approval. He reviewed the surrounding zoning and land uses. He described the existing conditions, including the intent of the Applicant to demolish the derelict building on the site, and to replace it with a surface parking lot. He noted the similarities of this case to the previous case. He stated the parking lot use was expected to be temporary until a long-term redevelopment opportunity was identified. He also reviewed the standards as outlined in the staff report.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini opened the public hearing.

Robbie Osenga (Applicant, 216 E. Grove Street), provided further background on the project. He noted the project would tie into the existing adjacent City parking lot. He also

noted the northeast corner would include a portion of the existing façade as a historic marker to be incorporated into the landscaping.

Board Member Poling inquired about the long-term maintenance of the site. Mr. Branham stated it would be maintained by the City.

Board Member Steinkoenig inquired whether there would be any parking restrictions. Mr. Branham stated it would be similar to the existing adjacent lot regarding payment requirements.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini closed the public hearing.

The Board discussed aspects of the request and reviewed the standards.

Board Member Steinkoenig made a motion, seconded by Board Member Williams, to approve the item as presented.

Roll call

AYES: Ballantini; Harris; Williams; Poling, Steinkoenig

Motion passed.

Item 5.C. V-07-25 & V-08-25 - Public hearing, review, and action on a request submitted by Farnsworth Group and Jason Stephens (owner), for Variances from § 44-403 (Table 403B) of the Zoning Code, to allow reduced Rear Yard setback requirements in the R-2 (Mixed Residential) District for the properties located at 1 Stone Mill Court and 2 Stone Mill Court, PINs: 15-32-355-031 and 15-32-355-032.

Mr. Branham presented the staff report with a recommendation to deny. He reviewed the surrounding zoning and land uses. He also reviewed each standard as outlined in the staff report, noting the standards which had been met and unmet, in the staff's opinion. He identified that the Applicant has also addressed each standard for the Board to review and consider. He highlighted the site plans and where the setback encroachments would be located.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini opened the public hearing.

Greg Troemel (Applicant Representative, 2709 McGraw Drive), provided further background on the project and a brief history of changes to the project. He provided handouts, entered into the minutes as "Applicant's Exhibits A-C". He identified the limited buildable areas of the lots due to easements and the cul-de-sac. He noted a letter of support (Exhibit C) from the adjacent property owner.

Board Member Harris requested clarification regarding the width of the street at the cul-de-sac. Mr. Troemel stated the width meets Code requirements but explained the lots at the front of the property are narrower on a cul-de-sac than on a regular street.

Board Member Poling requested clarification regarding items on Exhibit A (site plan). Mr. Troemel explained details of the submittal.

Board Member Poling inquired: if this is approved, would there be further requests for relief by the Applicant? Mr. Troemel again reviewed the property development history and stated no further relief would be requested.

Board Member Harris inquired: if this is approved, would it set a precedent? Mr. Branham stated it would be important to identify the reasons and be specific, which could be noted in the minutes.

Board Member Steinkoenig acknowledged the importance of the letter from the adjacent neighbor and the distance from structures on the neighbor's property.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini closed the public hearing.

The Board discussed several aspects of the request and reviewed the standards. They noted the minimal impact of the request and stated the standards had been met.

Board Member Harris made a motion, seconded by Board Member Williams, to approve the item as presented.

Roll call

AYES: Ballantini; Harris; Williams; Poling, Steinkoenig

Motion passed.

Item 5.D. V-09-25 - Public hearing, review, and action on a request submitted by Farnsworth Group and Holy Trinity Church (owner), for Variances from § 44-1205(B)(3) of the Zoning Code, to allow reduced required parking lot setbacks and § 44-1307(B)(1) and § 44-1307(C)(1) of the Zoning Code to allow reduced required parking lot landscaping in the B-1 (General Commercial) District, for the property located at 802 N. Main Street. PIN: 21-04-132-014.

Mr. Branham presented the staff report with a recommendation for approval. He reviewed the surrounding zoning and land uses and existing site conditions. He described the nature of the Variance request was to provide additional parking on the property. He noted the significant parking space reduction which would occur if all landscaping requirements were applied. He also noted that greenspace at the site would still increase from approximately 400 square feet to 4,000 square feet. He also reviewed the standards as outlined in the staff report.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini opened the public hearing.

Neil Finlen (Applicant Representative, 2709 McGraw Drive), provided further background on the project and provided a summary of project goals. He explained a code-compliant lot would result in a reduction of approximately 60 parking spaces, while the proposed lot would provide 87 spaces and improve the existing greenspace.

Robbie Osenga (216 E. Grove Street), spoke in support of the project. He noted the importance of Holy Trinity's property as a gateway to downtown and how important it was to improve the site from the current condition.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini closed the public hearing.

The Board discussed aspects of the request and reviewed the standards.

Board Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Board Member Poling, to approve the item as presented.

Roll call

AYES: Ballantini; Harris; Williams; Poling, Steinkoenig

Motion passed.

Item 5.E. V-10-25 - Public hearing, review, and action on a request submitted by Prairie Signs, for approval of a Variance from § 3-403A of the Advertising Sign Code, to allow an increased total sign area in the P-1 (University) District, on the property commonly known as 302 E. Emerson St. PIN 14-33-404-021.

Ms. Pemberton presented the staff report with a recommendation to deny. She stated the request is to replace the existing limestone sign with an electronic sign. She reviewed the size requirements that were permitted and the size of the current request. She reviewed the surrounding zoning and land uses. She also reviewed the standards as outlined in the staff report.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini inquired whether the City would be exploring updating the Sign Code in the future. Ms. Pemberton confirmed.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini opened the public hearing.

Ken Frost (Applicant, Illinois Wesleyan University, 1312 Park Street) provided further background on the project.

Jordan Smith, (Prairie Signs, 1215 Warriner Street, Normal, IL) provide additional information regarding the details of the sign. He stated there would be auto-dimming features for the sign using a photocell and an internal clock.

Board Member Poling requested that the Applicant be sensitive to the neighbors and ensure proper dimming was provided.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini inquired about advertising on the sign.

Mike Wagner, (Illinois Wesleyan University, 1312 Park Street) stated there would be no commercial advertising on the sign. He identified an agreement with the Shirk Center that prohibits commercial advertising.

Acting Board Chair Ballantini closed the public hearing.

The Board discussed several aspects of the request and reviewed the standards.

Board Member Poling made a motion, seconded by Board Member Williams, to approve the item as presented.

Roll call

AYES: Ballantini; Harris; Williams; Poling, Steinkoenig

Motion passed.

New Business

There was no new business reported.

Adjournment

Board Member Harris made a motion, seconded by Board Member Poling, to adjourn the meeting.

AYES: Ballantini; Harris; Williams; Poling, Steinkoenig

Motion carried (viva voce).

The Meeting Adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Terry Ballantini

Terry Ballantini, Acting Board Chair

Jon Branham

Jon Branham, Staff Liaison