

**Office of Code Enforcement and
Community Development**

28 Curran Drive
Athens, OH 45701
(740)592-3306
(740)594-6304 Fax
<http://www.ci.athens.oh.us>



City of Athens

ATHENS, OHIO

**Board of Zoning Appeals
Minutes
September 9, 2025**

Members present: Aaron Thomas, Rob Delach (elected Chairperson), Shay Myers, and Alicia Sweeney.

City Officials present: Lance Allison (Assistant Code Director)

The meeting was called to order on September 9th, 2025, at 7:00 pm at City Council Chambers, 8 East Washington Street, Third Floor, Athens, OH, by the active Chair of the Board of Zoning Appeals.

A video was played stating the policies and procedures of the board.

The Chairperson announced the cases on the agenda and swore in all who wished to testify in the hearings.

Hearings:

- 1. Case #25-10V 34 Elmwood Place Zone R1 Christopher and Allyson Thrasher / appellant**

Appellant is requesting a variance from ACC 23.03.11 (A)(1) to allow a 3 ft side setback where 5 ft is required.

The Chairperson asked the Assistant Director to give a report on the case. Lance Allison gave background information about the case.

Shay Myers asks for clarification on Ohio building code for walls less than 5 feet from a property line, and whether the zoning office uses this standard and enforces it.

Lance Allison confirms that the Code Office is a zoning office only and does not enforce building code.

The Chairperson invited the appellant and any representatives to speak.

Christopher Thrasher (appellant) stated that there is an existing garage on the property that currently has a three-foot set back and that he would like to rebuild it while using the existing foundation. He goes on to say there is a large old growth tree blocking construction and making it difficult to reach the five-foot setback requirement near the existing garage. Christopher Thrasher adds that he plans to add a small apartment on top of the proposed garage to house his aging parents.

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Aaron Thomas asked Lance Allison if the proposed apartment on top of the garage would change any of the things they are reviewing for code, or if it would still be focused on just the setback.

Lance Allison responded, saying that people are allowed to have those quarters for families, so the focus is still on just the setback.

The Chairperson read aloud an email from a neighbor of the appellant who was in support of the project the appellant was proposing.

Due to no attendance at the meeting the Chairperson waived general comments and opposition.

Findings:

- 1.) **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Yes.**
- 2.) **HARDSHIP AND DIFFICULTY: Yes.**
- 3.) **PRESERVATION OF EQUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS: Yes.**
- 4.) **MINIMUM VARIANCE: Yes.**
- 5.) **ABSENCE OF DETRIMENT: Yes.**
- 6.) **NOT OF A GENERAL NATURE: No.**

On a motion from Aaron Thomas, seconded by Alicia Sweeney, the board moved to grant a variance from ACC 23.03.11 (A)(1) to allow a 3 ft side setback where 5 ft is required for 34 Elmwood Place.

The Chairperson called for a vote: 4 votes for (Myers, Sweeney, Delach, Thomas) – 0 votes against. Motion Granted.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Approval of minutes from:

July 8th, 2025: The Chairperson proposed to change the “not of a general nature” finding from “yes” to “no”.

Alicia Sweeney moved to approve the minutes from July 8th, 2025 with the proposed amendment, Aaron Thomas seconded the motion. Approved by Aaron Thomas, Alicia Sweeney, Rob Delach, and Shay Myers.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 7:23 pm.

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Robert Delach, Chairperson

Date

David Riggs, Zoning Administrator

Date

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**Board of Zoning Appeals
Minutes
October 14, 2025**

Members present: Ben Lachman, Rob Delach (elected Chairperson), Paul Isherwood, Shay Myers.

City Officials present: David Riggs (Zoning Administrator)

The meeting was called to order on October 14th, 2025, at 7:00 pm at the Berry Conference Room, 8 East Washington Street, First Floor, Athens, OH, by the active Chair of the Board of Zoning Appeals.

The Chairperson announced the cases on the agenda and swore in all who wished to testify in the hearings.

Ben Lachman read the policies and procedures of the board.

Hearings:

1. Case #25-11V 61 Hudson Avenue Zone R1 Soo Braasch / appellant

Appellant is requesting a variance from ACC 23.04.01(B) to allow a non-owner-occupied short term rental in an R1 zone.

The Chairperson asked the Zoning Administrator to give a report on the case. Mr. Riggs gave background information about the case.

The Chairperson invited the appellant and any representatives to speak.

Soo Braasch (appellant) stated that she bought a house adjacent to 61 Hudson Avenue and that she hoped she could use 61 Hudson Avenue as a source of income as a short-term rental. She goes on to say that she is close by to monitor the property and make sure the property is well maintained and to make sure there would be minimal parties on the property. She explained that people renting the property would generate money for the local economy and that she is concerned that if there were long term renters they would cause damage to the property.

The Chairperson invited those in favor to speak.

John Wharton spoke of how Soo Braasch living close to 61 Hudson Avenue provides more oversight to prevent disruption to the neighborhood.

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Shelton King Shelberg spoke about how Soo Braasch's character makes her a good candidate for overseeing a short-term rental.

The Chairperson invited those in general comment to speak. No one came forward.

The Chairperson invited those in opposition to speak.

The Chairperson explained that there were 19 letters of opposition received and proposed that those in attendance read aloud their letters if they like. He went on to say that the letters were public record and were available upon request.

Alan Olsen (30 Meadow Lane) explained his concern for short term rentals impacts on the community.

Zach Grayman stated that he was concerned that approval of the variance would bring more short-term rentals to the market.

Zachary Martin and Lin (59 Hudson Avenue) read aloud the letter they sent in that stated their reasons for opposition.

The Chairperson explained a letter that was sent in which stated a request to be read aloud at the meeting. Paul Isherwood read the letter from Brian Palmers (8 North May Avenue) that stated he was concerned about loud guests and potential parking issues.

The Chairperson read aloud the names of the people who sent letters of opposition and their addresses.

Larry Lambert (76 South May Avenue) stated his opposition.

Soo Braasch gave a rebuttal explaining that due to 61 Hudson Avenue's small size and limited bedrooms it would not be possible to create much noise there.

The Chairperson closed the testimony from the floor.

There was discussion on details over duration of a possible variance for 61 Hudson Avenue, and possibilities of revoking approval of variances.

Findings:

- 1.) EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES: No.**
- 2.) HARDSHIP AND DIFFICULTY: No.**
- 3.) PRESERVATION OF EQUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS: No.**
- 4.) MINIMUM VARIANCE: No.**
- 5.) ABSENCE OF DETRIMENT: No.**
- 6.) NOT OF A GENERAL NATURE: No.**

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There was discussion on possible conditions that could be put on the case.

On a motion from Ben Lachman, seconded by Paul Isherwood, the board moved to grant a variance from ACC 23.04.01(B) to allow a non-owner-occupied short term rental in an R1 zone.

The Chairperson called for a vote: 0 votes for – 4 votes against (Lachman, Isherwood, Delach, Myers). Motion denied.

Case #25-12V 63 South Court Street Zone B2D David Kozar / appellant

Appellant is requesting a sign size variance from ACC 23.03.13(I)(1)(g) to allow 2 projecting signs (1 for Hotel Lostro & 1 for tenant -Playa Bowls) with a length of 4 ft where 3 ½ ft is the max permitted.

The Chairperson asked the Zoning Administrator to give a report on the case. Mr. Riggs gave background information about the case.

The Chairperson invited the appellant and any representatives to speak.

David Kozar (appellant) stated that the two signs are in line with code the allowed square footage and the height requirements, it just projects out 6 inches further than allowed. The reason for requesting a variance on size is due to trying to stay within the allowed square footage with the logo dimensions.

The Chairperson invited those in favor to speak.

David Riggs noted that John Wharton had previously stated his support, the Chairperson agrees.

The Chairperson invited those in general comment, or opposition to speak.

The manager of the Beckley building (across the street from the Lostro Building) was brought up and he explained how he was there to listen and learn.

The Chairperson closed the testimony from the floor.

Findings:

- 1.) EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Yes.**
- 2.) HARDSHIP AND DIFFICULTY: Yes.**
- 3.) PRESERVATION OF EQUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS: Yes.**
- 4.) MINIMUM VARIANCE: Yes.**
- 5.) ABSENCE OF DETRIMENT: Yes.**
- 6.) NOT OF A GENERAL NATURE: Yes.**

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On a motion from Paul Isherwood, seconded by Ben Lachman, the board moved to grant a sign size variance from ACC 23.03.13(I)(1)(g) to allow 2 projecting signs (1 for Hotel Lostro & 1 for tenant -Playa Bowls) with a length of 4 ft where 3 ½ ft is the max permitted.

The Chairperson called for a vote: 4 votes for (Lachman, Isherwood, Delach, Myers) – 0 votes against. Motion Granted.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Approval of minutes from:

September 9th, 2025: Due to lack of members from the September Board of Zoning Appeals meeting, the vote for the approval of the minutes has been delayed.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 8:33 pm.

Robert Delach, Chairperson

Date

David Riggs, Zoning Administrator

Date