

ARTICLE 10: ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Section 10.01 – Zoning Board of Appeals

1. Creation and Membership:

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) shall perform its duties and exercise its powers as provided in Article 6 of Act 110, P.A. 2006, as amended, and in such a way that the objectives of this Ordinance shall be observed, public safety secured, and justice done. The Board shall consist of three (3) members, appointed by the Township Board.

- A. The first member shall be a member of the Township Planning Commission for the terms of his/her office.
- B. The remaining members must be selected from the electors of the Township residing outside of incorporated cities and villages and shall be representative of the population distribution and of the various interests present in the Township. One (1) member may be a member of the Township Board.
- C. An elected officer of the Township shall not serve as chairman. An employee or contractor of the Township Board may not serve as a member or an employee of the Board of Appeals.
- D. The Township Board may appoint not more than two (2) alternate members for the same term as regular members to the Zoning Board of Appeals. An alternate member may be called to sit as a regular member of the Zoning Board of Appeals in the absence of a regular member if a regular member is absent from or unable to attend one (1) or more meetings of the Zoning Board of Appeals or for a period of more than thirty (30) consecutive days. An alternate member may also be called to serve in the place of a regular member for the purpose of reaching a decision on a case in which the regular member has abstained for reasons of conflict of interest. The alternate member having been appointed shall serve in the case until a final decision has been made. The alternate member shall have the same voting rights as a regular member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- E. The terms of office for members of the Zoning Board of Appeals shall be for three (3) years, except for members serving because of their membership on the Planning Commission or the Township Board, whose terms shall be limited to the time they are members of those bodies. When members are first appointed, the appointments may be for less than three (3) years to provide for staggered terms. A successor shall be appointed not more than one (1) month after the term of the preceding member has expired. Vacancies for unexpired terms shall be filled for the remainder of the term.
- F. A member of the Zoning Board of Appeals may be removed by the Township Board for misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance in office upon written charges and after public hearing. A member shall disqualify himself or herself from a vote in which the member has

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a conflict of interest. Failure of a member to disqualify himself or herself from a vote in which the member has a conflict of interest constitutes malfeasance in office.

2. Meetings:

Meetings of the Board of Appeals shall be held at the call of the Chairman and at such other times as such Board may determine or specify in its rules or procedure. All hearings conducted by said Board shall be open to the public. The Board of Appeals shall adopt its own rules of procedure and keep a record of its proceedings showing the vote of each member upon each question, or if absent or failing to vote, indicating said fact; and shall file a record of its proceedings in the office of the Township Clerk, and shall be a public record. The concurring vote of a majority of the members of the Board of Appeals shall be necessary to reverse any order, requirement, decision, or determination of the Zoning Administrator, or to decide in favor of an applicant any matter upon which they are required to pass under this Ordinance or to effect any variation of this Ordinance.

The Board of Appeals shall not conduct business unless a majority of those Board of Appeals members qualified to sit for a particular matter are present to constitute a quorum, regardless of whether the members are regular members or alternate members.

3. Jurisdiction:

- A. An appeal concerning the administration of the provisions of this Ordinance may be taken to the Board of Appeals within the timeframe defined in the general rules and procedures adopted by the Zoning Board of Appeals. If such a timeframe is not specified, appeals shall be filed within thirty (30) days of the decision of the Zoning Administrator from which the appellant seeks relief.
- B. The ZBA may hear appeals made by any person who alleges he or she has been aggrieved by a decision of the Zoning Administrator.
- C. The ZBA may grant dimensional variances as provided for in **Section 10.01.5**. The ZBA shall not grant use variances.
- D. The ZBA may also interpret the location of zoning district boundaries and may interpret the provisions of this Ordinance.
- E. An appeal may be made by any person, firm or corporation, or by any Officer, Department or Board of the Township. The appellant shall file with the Board of Appeals, on blanks or forms to be furnished by the Zoning Administrator, a notice of appeal specifying the grounds for the appeal.
- F. The Zoning Administrator shall transmit to the Board of Appeals all the papers constituting the record upon which the action appealed from was taken. The final decision of such appeal shall be in the form of a resolution reversing, modifying or affirming, wholly or partly, the decision or determination appealed from. Reasons for the decision must be stated.

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- G. Any person may appear and testify at the hearing either in person or by duly authorized agent or attorney.
- H. The ZBA has no jurisdiction to hear appeals from Planning Commission decisions concerning site plan review, special approvals or planned unit developments.
- I. When the proposed use of land or use of a structure is not specified in this Ordinance, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall have the power upon written request of the property owner or zoning administrator to classify the unlisted property use. In determining the proper classification of an unlisted property use, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall consider the characteristics of the proposed unlisted property use in relation to similar and comparable uses listed in any zoning district and in relation to the requirements of the township master plan. Once classified, the unlisted property use is subject to all applicable regulations pertaining to similar uses in the zoning district in which placed, including the regulations pertaining to uses subject to special use permit approval, if classified as such a use by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

4. Stay:

An administrative appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals and an appeal of a decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals to circuit court stays all proceedings of the action appealed from, including the effectiveness of any zoning permit issued, unless the Zoning Administrator certifies to the Zoning Board of Appeals after such appeal has been filed that a stay would cause imminent peril to life or property, in which case the proceedings shall not be stayed, unless ordered stayed by the Zoning Board of Appeals or the circuit court. Provided, however, this section shall not apply to an administrative decision to take enforcement action for alleged violations of this Ordinance.

5. Variances:

- 1. Dimensional Variance Standards: The ZBA may grant dimensional variances when the applicant demonstrates in the official record of the hearing that the strict enforcement of this Ordinance would result in practical difficulty. To establish practical difficulty, the applicant must establish all of the following:
 - a) Strict compliance with area, setbacks, frontage, height, bulk or density would unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose, or would render conformity unnecessarily burdensome;
 - b) A variance would do substantial justice to the applicant as well as to other property owners in the district, and that a lesser relaxation would not give substantial relief and be more consistent with justice to others;
 - c) The plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances of the property;

d) The problem was not self-created.

6. Zoning Board of Appeals Submittal:

The applicant is required to submit six (6) copies of surveys, plans and data as required under **Article 6**, or other information deemed reasonably necessary for making any informed decision on his or her appeal.

7. Conditions of Approval:

The ZBA may impose such conditions or limitations in granting a variance as deemed necessary to protect the character of the area, as provided for in **Section 9.03**.

8. Exercising Powers:

In exercising the above powers, the Board of Appeals may reverse or affirm wholly or partly, or may modify the order, requirement, decision or determination appealed from and may make such order, requirement, decision or determination as ought to be made, and to that end shall have all the powers of the Zoning Administrator from whom the appeal is taken.

9. Miscellaneous:

No order of the Board of Appeals permitting the erection or alteration of a building shall be valid for a period longer than one (1) year, unless a building permit for such erection or alteration is obtained within such period and substantial construction has occurred.