



WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP
Ingham County, Michigan

(517) 655-4161
985 East Holt Road
Williamston, Michigan 48895-9754

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

MEETING MINUTES

November 3, 2025, @ 7:00 PM, Small Conference Room, Township Hall

CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN: The meeting was called to order by Chair M. Kapp at 7:00 PM

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS: Mike Kapp, Joanie Mills, Jessie Schmidt, Lauren Babbage and Larry Doyle. Also attending: Planning Consultant Kristen Hatfield and Recording Secretary Barb Bidigare.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Motion by L Doyle to approve agenda as written, seconded by L. Babbage. All were in favor- motion carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Motion by L. Doyle to approve M. Kapp as Chair and L. Babbage as Vice Chair, seconded by J. Mills. All were in favor – motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 23, 2024: Motion by J. Schmidt to approve minutes as written, seconded by L. Doyle. All were in favor – motion carried

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT SUBJECT TO A HEARING AT THIS MEETING: Opened at 7:02 PM. There was no public comment and public comment was closed.

PUBLIC HEARING: Opened at 7:04 PM. Chair M. Kapp opened the public hearing and summarized the procedures/rules to be followed during the hearing. The applicant, Andrew Langenderfer, presented the main points of his application for a variance for 2002 Almond Road. Planner K. Hatfield presented OHM's Variance Review (Case 2025-08) dated October 7, 2025. Members of the public were given the opportunity to comment on application at 7:09 PM. There was no public comment and public comment was closed.

ACTION ON PENDING CASE: Discussion ensued on the case. Motion by L. Babbage to accept OHM's October 7, 2025 Variance Review as the ZBA's own assessment and conclusion, and approve the variance requested by the Langendorfers and as documented in the application file on record with the Township. Motion seconded by L. Doyle. All were in favor, motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS OF THE APPEALS BOARD: None

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by L. Doyle to adjourn, seconded by L. Babbage. All were in favor – motion carried. The meeting ended at 7:15 PM.



October 7, 2025

Zoning Board of Appeals
Wheatfield Township
985 E Holt Rd
Williamston, MI 48895

Subject: 2002 Almond Rd Variance Review (Case 2025-08)
Attention: Mike Kapp, ZBA Chair

Description of Application:	The applicant is requesting a variance from the setback requirement to construct an 864 SF addition to the principal structure which would encroach 10' into the required front yard setback.
Site Location:	The parcel is located on the northeast corner of Almond and Holt Roads.
Applicant(s):	Andrew & Callie Langenderfer 2002 Almond Rd Williamston, MI 48895
Zoning:	A-2, Agricultural-Residential
Application Date:	August 14, 2025

Dear Board Members:

We have completed our review of the above variance request to permit a building addition to encroach into the front yard setback at 2002 Almond Rd by ten (10) feet.

The opinions in this report are based on a review of the materials submitted by the applicant and conformance to Township plans and ordinance standards. In making a decision on this request, the Zoning Board of Appeals should apply appropriate standards in consideration of our review, additional comments from the applicant and any new information presented at the public hearing. Based upon a review of the submitted application and the dimensional variance criteria in the Ordinance, we offer the following comments for your consideration.

BACKGROUND



Subject parcel outlined in red (property lines are approximate).
Image from Ingham County GIS.

The property is in the A-2, Agricultural-Residential district and is a corner lot, meaning that it must meet the required front yard setback of one hundred (100) feet on the sides with frontage on both Almond and Holt Road. The lot is existing nonconforming as the minimum lot area in the A-2 district is five (5) acres; the applicant's parcel is two (2) acres in size. As part of their application, the Langenderfers included an aerial image of their lot with notes about existing conditions, most notably the substantial portion of the parcel along the northeast that has a very steep slope which makes building in that area impractical.



Sketch plan provided by the applicant which shows existing conditions and proposed location of the addition.

The applicants wish to build a twenty-four (24) by thirty-six (36) addition to their attached garage on the east side of the principal structure. They note that the yard immediately east of their home is level and is most suitable for the proposed building addition and subsequent expansion of their driveway. As noted above, the front yard setback in the A-2, Agricultural-Residential district is one hundred (100) feet. The applicants are requesting a ten (10) foot variance to construct the addition.

REVIEW COMMENTS

Sec. 16.7, Variances of the Zoning Ordinance states that, “the ZBA shall have the power to authorize specific variances from specific site development standards contained in this Ordinance, such as lot area and width requirements, building height and setback requirements, yard width and depth requirements, lot depth to width ratio requirements, off-street parking and loading space requirements, and sign requirements. The ZBA shall not have the power to authorize variances from requirements of this Ordinance pertaining to permitted uses of land in a District.” This request is for a dimensional variance.

Subsection (B), Standards lists seven (7) standards that the ZBA must use in evaluating the variance request. We note that per the Zoning Ordinance, **all** standards listed below must be met and any motion made by the ZBA should include evidence supporting each conclusion.

1. *That there are practical difficulties that prevent carrying out the strict letter of this Ordinance due to unique circumstances specific to the property such as its narrowness, shallowness, shape, or topography, that do not generally apply to other property or uses in the same district, and shall not be recurrent in nature. These difficulties shall not be deemed economic, but shall be evaluated in terms of the use of a particular parcel of land.*

Review Comment: The applicant’s lot is zoned A-2, Agricultural Residential. While the minimum lot area in the A-2 district is five acres, the applicant’s parcel is an existing, nonconforming lot that is only two acres in size. We note that the subject parcel is also a corner lot, and as such, it has two front yards: one along Almond Rd and one along Holt Road requiring a one hundred (100) foot front yard setback on the west and south sides. Finally, the applicant included a map and image with their application that shows presence of a low, unbuildable area along the northeastern portion of their property, preventing them from placing the addition to the rear of the existing structure.

Conclusion: The existing, nonconforming size of the parcel in addition to its location on a corner lot and the steep slope of the northeastern portion of the property all present practical difficulties that prevent carrying out the strict letter of the Ordinance and that do not generally apply to other properties in the same district, nor are they recurrent in nature. While this area along the northeastern portion of the applicant’s property *may* be buildable, requiring the applicant to build there would be unnecessarily burdensome.

2. *That the practical difficulty or special condition or circumstance is not a result of the actions of the applicant.*

Review Comment: As noted above, the practical difficulty, special condition and circumstance involves an existing, nonconforming lot that is smaller than the minimum lot required by the current ordinance, the parcel’s location on a corner and the presence of a low, unbuildable area to the rear of the existing structure. The applicants did not initiate a change to their parcel’s zoning, nor did they initiate a change to the standards of the Ordinance. To the best of our knowledge, the low, unbuildable area along the northeastern portion of the property was also not created by the applicant and appears to be naturally occurring.

Conclusion: The applicant’s requested variance is not the result of their actions, but rather, changes made to the Ordinance by the Township which resulted in a nonconforming lot that is

smaller than the current minimum parcel size, their location on a corner resulting in two front yards and a naturally occurring depression in the northeast area of their property.

3. *That the variance will relate only to property described in the variance application.*

Review Comment: The practical difficulty, special condition and circumstance described above are unique and to the best of our knowledge relate only to the property described in this variance application.

Conclusion: The requested variance is specific to the subject property.

4. *That the variance will be in harmony with the purpose of this Ordinance and the intent of the District, including the protection of public health, safety and welfare in general and vehicular and pedestrian circulation specifically.*

Review Comment: *Sec. 1.2, Purpose*, presents the purpose of the Zoning Ordinance as:

- 1) Regulating the use of land and structures to meet the needs of the state's citizens for food, fiber, energy, and other natural resources, places of residence, recreation, industry, trade, service, and other uses of land in accordance with the land's character and adaptability.
- 2) Ensuring that the use of land is situated in appropriate locations and relationships, to limit the inappropriate overcrowding of land and congestion of population, transportation systems, and other public facilities, to facilitate adequate and efficient provision for transportation systems, sewage disposal, water, energy, education, recreation, and other public service and facility requirements.
- 3) Promoting public health, safety, and welfare including the conservation of property values and natural resources including wooded areas, wetlands, and water resources.
- 4) Implementing the goals, objectives and policies of the Wheatfield Township Master Plan.

Table 3-1, Purpose of Zoning Districts, details the purpose of the agricultural districts in Wheatfield Township:

- 1) Provide opportunities for and encourage agriculture.
- 2) Retain land areas that are well suited for production of plants and animals useful to humans, due to soil, topographic and other conditions, or which support nearby agricultural operations such as wetlands and woodland stands.
- 3) Provide limited opportunities for low density residential lifestyles, with the most stringent limitations in the A-1 District.

The applicant's property is used for low density residential which is in harmony with both the purpose of the Zoning Ordinance and the intent of the district in which it is located.

Conclusion: The requested variance is in harmony with the purpose of the Ordinance and the intent of the A-2, Agricultural Residential district. We have found no evidence that the variance would negatively affect public health, safety and welfare in general and vehicular and pedestrian circulation specifically.

- 5) *That the variance will not cause a substantial adverse effect upon surrounding property including property values and the development, use and enjoyment of property in the neighborhood or District.*

Review Comment: The subject parcel is surrounded by A-2, Agricultural-Residential zoned property to the west, and A-1, Agricultural zoned properties to the north, east and south. The surrounding uses are agricultural or low density residential. We have found no evidence that this dimensional variance will cause any substantial adverse effect upon surrounding property including property values and the development, use and enjoyment of property in the neighborhood or District.

Conclusion: The requested variance will not adversely impact surrounding properties including their value, use and enjoyment.

- 6) *That strict compliance with the site development requirement in question would unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose, or would render conformity unnecessarily burdensome.*

Review Comment: As previously noted, strict compliance with the front yard setback from Holt Rd would render conformity unnecessarily burdensome as it would require them to build the addition on an area of the parcel that is not buildable, or easily buildable. The applicant included information in their submittal package which documents the topographic conditions of the parcel as well as the location of septic field, which are two conditions that limit where the proposed addition can be built.

Conclusion: Strict compliance with the front yard setback requirement of the Ordinance would render conformity unnecessarily burdensome.

- 7) *That the variance requested is the minimum amount necessary to overcome the inequality inherent in the particular property or mitigate the practical difficulty.*

Review Comment: Given the relatively modest size of the proposed addition (864 SF), this variance appears to be the minimum amount necessary to mitigate the practical difficulty of locating the proposed addition on or near the steep slope to the northeast and the septic drain field to the northwest.

Conclusion: The requested variance from the front yard setback is the minimum necessary to construct the addition to the principal structure.

RECOMMENDATION

After review of the requested variance against the standards of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and the Wheatfield Township Zoning Ordinance, we are of the opinion that the requested variances for **2002 Almond Road to allow an encroachment of ten (10) feet into the front yard setback from Holt Road, for the purpose of adding an addition to the principal structure be approved**, for the following reasons:

1. There are practical difficulties that prevent carrying out the strict letter of this Ordinance due to unique circumstances specific to the property.
2. The practical difficulties and/or special condition or circumstance are not a result of the actions of the applicant.
3. The variance will relate only to property described in the variance application.
4. The variance will be in harmony with the purpose of this Ordinance and the intent of the District, including the protection of public health, safety and welfare in general and vehicular and pedestrian circulation specifically.
5. The variance will not cause a substantial adverse effect upon surrounding property including property values and the development, use and enjoyment of property in the neighborhood or District.
6. Strict compliance with the site development requirement in question would unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose, or would render conformity unnecessarily burdensome.
7. The variance requested is the minimum amount necessary to overcome the inequality inherent in the particular property or mitigate the practical difficulty.

If you have any further questions, please contact us at (810) 215-0993.

Sincerely,
OHM Advisors



Kristen Hatfield, AICP
Planner



Justin Sprague
Principal