

WALNUT TOWNSHIP, FAIRFIELD COUNTY, OH - BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS (BZA)  
11420 Millersport Rd., Millersport, OH 43067  
**HEARING #25-127 MEETING MINUTES**  
NOVEMBER 13, 2025 – 7:00 PM

**Board of Zoning Appeals members present/absent:**

Members present - Alex Fant, Martha Snavelly, Mark Helms, Ken Rienschield, Shirley Perkins, Alternate

**Zoning Inspector:** Mike Berry – present

**Members of the Board absent:** Keri Melfi

**List of members of the public present, from sign-in sheet:**

1. Elizabeth Knox 5399 Alder Road, Thornville, OH
2. Tim Ouseley, 5399 Alder Road, Thornville, OH
3. Fairfield County Sheriff's Deputy

The pledge of allegiance was recited and after Chair Fant gave special thanks and recognition to our Veterans in attendance; in particular our zoning inspector, Mike Berry.

**Advertised purpose of the hearing:** Applicant Elizabeth Knox is requesting an 8' variance in order to complete a 68' x 40' home. In addition, she is requesting a reduction in the front yard setback from 25' to 15' on a corner lot.

**Chair administered the oath to all members addressing the Board of Zoning Appeals. Chair administered the oath to all members addressing the Board of Zoning Appeals. Swearing in of ALL members of the public that intend to speak by the Chair:** Chair stated. Any member of the public intending to speak or think they may want to speak during these proceedings shall rise to be sworn in. Please raise your right hand and repeat "*I state your name, agree to tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth during these proceedings, so help me God*".

**Information provided to the Board of Zoning Appeals prior to the proceedings:**

**Exhibit # 25-127 - A (4 pgs.):** Zoning Application

**Exhibit #25-127- B – (1 pgs.)** Auditor's Site Survey

**Exhibit #25-127- C – (1 pgs.)** Site Setback

**Exhibit #25-127 – D – (1 pgs.)** Notice to Property owners

**Exhibit #25-127- E – (1 pgs.)** List of Property owners (contiguous)

**Exhibit #25-127 – F – (2 pgs.)** Proposed house photos

**Exhibit #25-127 – G – (2 pgs.)** Additional proposed photos produced at hearing by applicant

**Discussion:** Chair Fant asked the applicant to explain the request for variance. Elizabeth Knox stated that they purchased a corner lot with 25' from the road. She wants to build a 68 x 40 barn with a 6 ft. front porch, 8ft. back porch and swimming pool. They are building on an empty lot.

For the record, Chair Fant said that they are considering a 6,000 ft. structure. Ms. Knox stated that would include the barn and the house. She stated the house is 40 ft., back porch is 8 ft. front porch is 6 ft., the swimming pool is 6 ft. with 3 ft. of concrete on either side of the pool, so 72 ft.

Mr. Rienschield wanted to confirm the 8ft. being on Alder or Juniper. Ms. Knox replied Alder.

Chair Fant asked if there were any questions from or for the board. There were none.

Is the applicant asking for a variance dealing with? The Chair's comments are in red:

- I. **Area Variance**: If the applicant is asking for a variance in the area requirements of the Code (size, setbacks, etc.), a variance should be granted if strict adherence results in practical difficulties with the use of the property. To determine if there is a practical difficulty, using the variance application and testimony from the applicant at hearing, review the following:

- a. In granting an Area Variance, the Board shall determine that one or both of the following factors are met by the request:
  - i. The conditions upon which an application for a Variance is based are particular to the subject property with respect to the physical size, shape or other characteristics of the premises or adjoining premises, differentiating it from other premises in the same district; or “you have a standard lot, but it is unique in the way the zoning is written in that this is a corner lot, so
  - ii. The Variance would result in an improvement of the property that is more appropriate and more beneficial to the community than would be the case without granting of the Variance. “in this case, we do have a new home, it will have a garage, a driveway, a front porch and that makes it beneficial to the community.”
- b. In granting an Area Variance, the Board shall also determine that all of the following factors are met by the request:
  - i. The essential character of the neighborhood would not be substantially altered, and adjoining properties would not suffer a substantial detriment as a result of the Variance; “I don’t think we will have this with one setback.”
- c.
  - i. The spirit and intent behind the subject zoning requirement would be observed and substantial justice done by granting the Variance; “we still have a front yard setback and still have a side setback.”
  - ii. The Variance is not substantial and is the minimum necessary to afford relief to the applicant and achieve an appropriate and beneficial improvement of the property; and “
- d. The Variance would not adversely affect the delivery of governmental services (e.g., water, sewer, garbage). “we don’t think that will be affected.”
- e. In granting an Area Variance, the Board shall also consider the following factors:
  - i. Whether the property owner purchased the property with knowledge of the restriction; “if you were one lot over, you wouldn’t need a variance.”
  - ii. Whether the property in question will yield a reasonable return or whether there be any beneficial use of the property without the variance;
  - iii. Whether the property owner’s predicament feasibly can be obviated through some method other than a Variance. “the fact is, you could. Even if you moved the house further away from Alder .”

Before the motion was voted upon, Ken Rienschield asked the Chair for an Executive Session. The Board entered into Executive Session at 7:16 p.m. The Board entered back into session at 7:24 p.m. Chair asked for a motion to approve the 10’ setback from Alder alone, which was asked for. Chair Fant said that they needed to be clear on the variance, and said they are not approving variance for the front setback on Juniper, only on Alder. That would require coming back for another variance.

Chair Fant stated that they needed to make sure there was a 25ft. setback from the property line and that the applicants may have to reappear for another variance and that it was possible that variance could be scrutinized closely.

Chair Fant asked for a Motion to Approve Variance Application #25-127, Martha Snavelly made a motion to approve, Mark Helms seconded the motion for approval on Juniper Rd. only.

**Roll call: Fant, - Yes, he approves the 10 ft. setback from Alder - Helms, - Yes, for the reasons stated, - Snavelly – Yes, for the reasons stated - Rienschield – Yes, for the reasons stated, Perkins – Yes, for the reasons stated.**

**Applicant’s proposed variance Application #25-127 with 5 yes votes.**

**Adjournment:** At 7:29 p.m. Chair Fant asked for a motion to adjourn, Martha Snavelly made a motion to adjourn, Ken Reinschild seconded the motion. The motion passed with 5 yes votes.

Minutes Recorded By: Patricia McLoughlin