

GUIDE TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS



ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

This document is designed to assist individuals applying for the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) with the City. Please only use this application if you have been asked to by the Planning and Zoning Staff. If you have any questions please contact the Planning and Zoning Division at cityplanning@dearborn.gov

In most situations the first step is to successfully complete the City's Commercial Intake or Permitting processes which are separate applications and review processes. Please contact the Planning and Zoning Division at CityPlanning@Dearborn.Gov before submitting an application if you have not completed either of these processes.

The following steps outline the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) process:

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SUBMIT APPLICATION TO PLANNING & ZONING DIVISION

The required application documents are:

1. \$525 residential property variance appeal fee, or \$1,025 commercial property variance appeal fee, or \$1,000 code interpretation review fee.
Fee includes one additional hearing if the case is tabled. Other additional hearings must pay for an additional hearing.
2. Site and Building plans must satisfy the requirements outlined in the Zoning Ordinance Section [Section 32.06\(B\)](#).
3. Proof of Property Ownership, and proof that all taxes & municipal bills are paid, and
4. Zoning Board of Appeals Affidavit signed by the property owner and/or applicant.
5. Any additional supplemental materials you would like submitted into the ZBA record. This may include a letter stating the reason for the variance appeal request.

Planning & Zoning staff will contact you if they require additional information and will schedule the request for the next available Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.

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ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

- The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA) requires all requests for variances and appeals to go in front of the Zoning Board of Appeals for a public hearing. As required by the Act, notifications will be sent to all properties within 300 feet of the subject property. These notifications will include the time, date, and place of the public hearing as well as a description of the request.
- The Zoning Board of Appeals may approve, approve with conditions, table, or deny the request.
- The Zoning Board of Appeals meets monthly (see page 2 of this document for the scheduled meeting dates and application deadlines).

Note: the applicant and/or designer must be in attendance for the ZBA meeting.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS DECISIONS

- If construction has not commenced within twelve months after the Zoning Board of Appeals grants a variance to permit the erection or alteration of a building, then the variance becomes null and void ([Section 32.05 E6](#)).
- Please note that any appeals from the denial of Zoning Board of Appeals decisions may be taken to the Wayne County Circuit Court ([Section 32.05 F2\(e\)](#)).

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The Zoning Board of Appeals 2026 meeting schedule and application deadlines are as follows:

Zoning Board of Appeals 2026 Meeting Schedule	Application Deadlines
Thursday, January 29	Monday, January 5, 2026
Thursday, February 26	Friday, January 30
Thursday, March 26	Friday, February 27
Thursday, April 30	Friday, April 3
Thursday, May 21	Friday, April 24
Thursday, June 25	Friday, May 29
Thursday, July 23	Friday, June 26
Thursday, August 27	Friday, July 31
Thursday, September 24	Friday, August 28
Thursday, October 22	Friday, September 25
Thursday, November 19	Friday, October 23
Thursday, December 17	Friday, November 20

The Zoning Board of Appeals shall consider whether the variance or appeal request meets the following criteria, as outlined in [Section 32.05 \(F\) \(1 & 2\)](#):

Criteria Applicable to Variances:

- Practical Difficulties (a)
- Substantial Justice (b)
- Public Safety and Welfare (c)
- Extraordinary Circumstances (d)
- Preservation of Property Rights (e)
- No Safety Hazard (f)
- No Impact on Land Values (g)
- Neighborhood Character (h)
- Light and Air (i)
- Promotes Orderly Development (j)
- Traffic Flow (k)
- No Nuisance Impacts (l)
- Impact on Adjacent Properties (m)
- Relationship to Adjacent Land Uses (n)
- Relationship to Master Plan Policies (o)

[Section 32.05 \(C\)](#) - When reviewing a variance request, in addition to the criteria listed above, the ZBA shall determine whether:

- Granting a deviation from the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance in a particular case will lead to uneven application of the Zoning Ordinance for all citizens.
- Undermine the values of these laws that are intended to provide orderly and predictable development within the community.
- Each request will be strictly scrutinized to prevent a negative impact on surrounding land uses and structures, and to preserve the citizenry's ability to rely on the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

Criteria Applicable to Appeals:

- Was arbitrary or capricious (a)
- Was based on erroneous finding of material fact (b)
- Constituted an abuse of discretion (c)
- Was based on erroneous interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance or law (d)