

City of Dearborn
Zoning Board of Appeals
Thursday, January 29, 2026
Minutes

Called to Order: 5:33 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Glen Green (Chair), Samera Ajami (Vice-Chair), Hassane Fadlallah (Secretary), Tim Muflihi, Mona Hammoud.

Technical Advisors: David Breneau, Zoning Administrator; Massara Zwayen, Assistant Planning Manager; Adam Mourtada, City Attorney.

Approval of Minutes. Motion by Commissioner Ajami, supported by Commissioner Hammoud, that the minutes of the previous regular meeting of Thursday, December 11, 2025 are approved as recorded. Motion carried unanimously.

Appeal #26-101

Consideration of a request of Ali Rizk, on behalf of Telford Property LLC, for a variance to accommodate a medical office, the property size being 40ft wide, 100ft deep, 0.09 acre, in the (BA) Local Business zoning district:

1848 North Telegraph Road

Breneau read the Staff report dated January 29, 2025. Factors to consider on the variance request: The applicant owns an existing 2,400 sq ft building on a 0.09-acre site on the northbound side of North Telegraph Road south of Ford Road. The most recent use of the building was for retail, which was legal-nonconforming due to insufficient parking. Proposed is to use the building as a physical therapy office with a few interior renovations. The required off-street parking for the physical therapy per Article 4 of the Zoning Code is 13 spaces, rendering the physical therapy more nonconforming for parking than the previous retail use. The immediate area has a wide variety of businesses. Parking signs on most of the neighboring buildings indicate insufficient off-street parking in the vicinity. The North Telegraph local service drive has on-street parking in front of most of the neighboring businesses.

Applicant said the space was nonconforming retail prior to this, they sold wheelchairs and mobility equipment, they left in February of last year; this proposed tenant is a physical therapy, they have a practice in Allen Park; 90% of their patients are pick up and drop off by independent medical transportation, this should alleviate patient parking in the area; the business requires 2 to 3 employees at a time, they see one patient at a time; they are open three days a week from 9 to 5; this is better than any potential retail that can go in there because they control the traffic, who comes in and out; there are four parking spaces in the back, the front has on two street parking spaces; the practical difficulty is that this is an existing site; the business has a low traffic volumes; the difficulty was not created by the tenant.

Green asked the legal nonconforming for retail, it is 12 spaces required? But we have

four; the proposed use requires 13 spaces, but we only have four; the parking available in front of the building, this is a pass-through lane, this has two spots in front of the building.

Ajami said those two street spots are available if not taken by the other tenants

The business owner (Joanne Ismat) said they are by appointment, they only have one PT at a time and the transportation does not stay, so it won't be a problem.

Fadlallah asked if they see one patient at a time and if they use the transportation.

Ismat said one or two patients and the majority of them use the transportation.

Green said does the transportation wait for the patient.

Ismat said no because they have other clientele and they communicate with the patient.

Green asked how long does a session last.

Ismat said 45 minutes to an hour.

Green asked if there is on street parking along Doxtator, it looks like there are three spots.

Breneau said yes.

Hammoud said it has four spaces.

Green said so there are a couple spots in front, four spaces in the back, is the entrance in the back or the front?

Applicant said the front, the transportation should pull into the service drive, drop off the patient, leave and then come back.

Ajami asked if there is a car parked directly in front of the business, can the transportation still drop them off?

Applicant said they can go to the back.

Fadlallah said it would be a good idea to let the transportation company know they can take patients to the back if need be.

Ajami suggested asking the police about posting a limited parking sign in the front.

Applicant said he thought of that but did not know the process.

Zwayen said the service lane is part of the Telegraph Road right-of-way, which is MDOT.

Ajami said so it is not local control.

Hammoud asked how does this physical therapy differ from others.

Applicant said a lot of the patients are car accident, they call the transportation because they cannot drive due to their injuries, or they might not have a vehicle; other physical therapies deal with injuries where the patient can still drive themselves.

Hammoud asked if the business would be advertised for transportation.

Applicant said the patients' doctors arrange both the physical therapy and the transportation.

Ismat said the patients sometimes find their own transportation through their insurance.

Hammoud asked if a patient can drive themselves would they be able to come.

Ismat said their practice does not have that arrangement.

Hammoud asked how many employees.

Applicant said typically there is a physical therapist and a physical therapist assistant, the owner is there for the books.

Muflihi asked about the 2030 Telegraph that they own, how many parking spaces.

Breneau said 4.

Muflihi asked about having the employees park there.

Applicant said if that is what is required they can do that but they do not anticipate needing it.

Ajami said she has seen where a lot of businesses have share rides for employees, carpooling, Uber, Lyft, which would help alleviate the parking.

Ismat said she does that with her assistant; the parking is stacked, the doctor is there the whole day and does not leave, while we can't count eight spots, it still works, and the employees can also park at Cabinets to Go.

Green said we cannot count on the parking lot next door.

Breneau said depending on whether you are approving this appeal, the Ordinance does not distinguish different types of medical, so it could be a dental office, general practitioners, or therapy; all are covered under medical office; the Board could consider a condition limiting this to a therapy office to avoid a general practitioner with 30 patients.

Applicant said that is a good point, this versus an urgent care, which are very busy, while both are classified as medical use there is a big difference in parking and traffic.

Green said we recognize the current nonconforming for retail requires 12 spaces, this requires 13, which is not significant; there are a few other issues that bear on this: there

are additional spaces available in the right-of-way, there is on-street parking on the side street; this is one of the least intensive uses for this property; it should be limited to a therapy office, and not general medical; the parking will be self-limiting, if people can't find parking they will stop making appointments.

Public comment: None

Outside correspondences: An email from a nearby resident opposing the request (on file).

RESOLUTION. Motion by Commissioner Fadlallah, supported by Commissioner Ajami, for the reasons and subject to the facts, representations and stipulations stated on the record during the public hearing, to **CONDITIONALLY APPROVE** the variance detailed below:

Sec. 4.01 C9 Reduce the number of required off-street parking spaces from 13 spaces to 4 spaces. Zoning requirement: 13 parking spaces. Proposed: 4 parking spaces is **APPROVED** (DZO 32.05, F.1. B, D, E).

The **CONDITION** is as follows: Use of the property shall be limited to a physical therapy office; general medical offices shall not be permitted.

This motion is conditioned on the petitioner's continuous compliance with all applicable ordinances, codes, laws and statutes; and, the petitioner must perform all work under plans, permits and final inspections approved by the City of Dearborn.

Motion carried unanimously.

Other Business

Election of Officers

Chair: Fadlallah

Nomination by: Ajami Support by: Muflihi

Outcome: Motion carried unanimously

Vice Chair: Green

Nomination by: Fadlallah Support by: Muflihi

Outcome: Motion carried unanimously

Secretary: Ajami

Nomination by: Hammoud Support by: Green

Outcome: Motion carried unanimously

Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Ajami, supported by Commissioner Fadlallah, to adjourn the hearing. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:10 p.m.