CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF HIGHLAND
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
APPROVED MINUTES
March 19, 2025

The meeting was held at Highland Township Auditorium, 205 N. John St, Highland, MI, 48357.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

David Gerathy, Chair - absent
Michael Borg, Vice Chair
Anthony Raimondo, Secretary
Michael Zeolla, P.C. Liaison
Peter Eichinger
Robert Hoffman
Gary Childs
Chuck Benke – Alternate
Jacob Probe – Alternate

Kariline P. Littlebear, Zoning Administrator

Visitors: 5

Vice Chair Borg welcomed the public to the meeting and reviewed the procedures for addressing the Board, stating that four affirmative votes are required to approve a variance. If a variance is approved, the applicant has one year to act upon the variance.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. CASE NUMBER: 25-04
   ENFORCEMENT:
   ZONING: LV – Lake and Village Residential District
   PARCEL #: 11-11-234-011
   PROPERTY ADDRESS: 2106 Jackson Blvd
   APPLICANT: Mary Aja
   OWNER: Mary Aja
   VARIANCE REQUESTED: A 19-foot variance from the calculated 34-foot front yard setback to 15-feet provided; (Sec. 9.02.B.a.)
   This request is for the construction of a house, attached garage, and uncovered deck.

Vice Chair Borg introduced the case and asked if the applicant was present and, if so, to please step up to the podium.

Discussion from the Applicant:
Mary Aja, applicant, and Brian Gally, Bella Custom Homes of Clarkston, the contractor for the applicant, went over the case as presented noting the engineers report regarding the deterioration of the existing structure.

Discussion from the Public:
Roger Althouse, 2559 Jackson Blvd, spoke in favor of granting the applicants request stating that it will improve not only her lot but also the neighborhood as a whole.

Vice Chair Borg read into record a letter of support from William and Cynthia Grant at 2098 Jackson Blvd, a letter of support from Dave Thomson at 4525 Highland Hills Dr, a letter of support from Dave Thomson, Jr. at 2141 Jackson Blvd, a letter of support from David and Stacie Edington at 2118 Jackson Blvd, and a letter of support from Pauline and Richard Toffoli at 2072 Jackson Blvd.

Discussion from the Board:
Mr. Eichinger stated that after visiting the site it seems like a minimum request though he noted a concern about making the driveway only 15 feet deep.
Mr. Raimondo asked for clarification of how the setbacks for the LV district are calculated by the Zoning Administrator. Mrs. Littlebear went over her calculations based on zoning ordinance Section 9.02.B.
Mr. Borg asked for clarification regarding the proposed engineered septic system. Mr. Gally explained that he worked with Kieft Engineering to make sure that the proposed system meets the standards required by the Oakland County Health Division (OCHD). Mr. Borg then asked for clarification regarding the location of the septic system and neighboring wells. Mrs. Littlebear explained that OCHD requires a minimum isolation distance of 50 feet between a well and a septic system. In this case, the neighbor's well is approximately 60 feet from the proposed septic and shown on the site plan. The other neighbor's well is even farther from the proposed system and so was not included on this site plan.
Mr. Zeolla noted that there is only one house within 200 feet of this property that has a garage within the front yard setback.
Mr. Eichinger noted that all along Jackson Blvd, though not necessarily within the 200-foot radius, there are many residences as well as garages that are within the front yard setback.
Mr. Hoffman stated that this project will enhance the neighborhood but also noted that this project involves putting in a brand new engineered septic system which will improve the health of the lake itself.
Mr. Borg noted that this is an LV lot of record, at 40 feet wide it is exceptionally narrow, OCHD has approved the engineered septic system, the neighboring wells are far enough from the proposed septic system, the existing structure is compromised and cannot be remodeled per the engineer, the side yard setbacks meet the zoning requirements, and the front yard variance could be minimized or unnecessary if the attached garage was eliminated.
Mr. Raimondo stated that a practical difficulty is the extreme narrowness of the parcel at only 40 feet wide, the practical difficulty was not created by the applicant, the request would not be detrimental to the neighborhood, the request is the minimum necessary,

Motion:
Mr. Childs made a motion in Case #25-04, parcel # 11-11-234-011, commonly known as 2106 Jackson Blvd, to approve a 19-foot variance from the calculated 34-foot front yard setback to 15-feet provided for the construction of a house, attached garage, and uncovered deck. Mr. Hoffman supported the motion.

Facts and Findings:
This existing LV parcel of record is exceptionally narrow.
The practical difficulty is not self-created.
The location of the engineered septic system presents an additional difficulty.
The presence of a new engineered septic system will improve the health of the lake for the community.
The request has been designed to require the minimum necessary variance.
The request will not be detrimental to the community.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Eichinger-yes, Mr. Hoffman-yes, Mr. Raimondo-yes, Mr. Zeolla-yes, Mr. Benke-yes, Mr. Borg-yes, Mr. Childs-yes (7 yes votes). The motion passed and the variance was approved.

Motion:
Mr. Raimondo made a motion in Case #25-04, parcel # 11-11-234-011, commonly known as 2106 Jackson Blvd, to approve a Final Decision. Mr. Hoffman supported the motion, and it was approved with a unanimous voice vote.

MINUTES:
Mr. Eichinger made a motion to approve the minutes of February 19, 2025, as presented. Mr. Zeolla supported the motion, and it was approved with a unanimous voice vote.

DISCUSSION:
Mrs. Littlebear informed the board of the number and type of variance requests coming up at the next two meetings in April.

ADJOURN:
At 8:09 p.m., Mr. Hoffman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Childs supported the motion, and it carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Raimondo
AR/kpl