

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL  
31555 W. ELEVEN MILE ROAD  
JANUARY 14, 2025 – 7:30 PM**

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair O’Connell called the meeting to order at 7:42 P.M.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Jamil, Irvin, Khan, Lindquist, O’Connell, Rich, Vergun  
Alternate Injeti (for Case B)

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Zoning Supervisor Randt, City Attorney Morita, Recording Secretary McGuire

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION by Irvin, support by Khan, to approve the agenda as submitted.**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**4. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. ZBA CASE: 1-25-5747**

**LOCATION:** 31220 Verona St.

**PARCEL I.D.:** 23-04-126-028

**ZONE:** RA-1

**REQUEST:** A variance from the requirement that recreational equipment or trailers exceeding 6 feet in height may be stored only in the rear yard to store or park the recreational vehicle exceeding 6 feet in height in the front yard.

**CODE SECTION:** 34-5.7

**APPLICANT/OWNER:** Leonard Gringlas

**Facts of the case**

Zoning Supervisor Randt provided the facts of the case, describing the property in question as being located at 31220 Verona Street, south of 14 Mile Road, east of Drake Road, and west of Orchard Lake Road. He referenced the zoning district map and presented several views of the property, including an aerial view looking northeast, views of the applicant's house looking south, and perspectives showing the surrounding area, including neighboring properties on Stonegate Court and the distance between the applicant's house and the neighbor's property. There was also a photograph of the vehicle owned by the applicant.

**Applicant presentation**

Leonard and Charlene Gringlas were present on behalf of this application for a variance. Mr. Gringlas explained that they purchased the van as a second vehicle and also to use for travel. They were a two vehicle family, and in order to justify the cost of purchasing the van, which was used on a daily basis as well as for extended trips, they replaced their second car with the van.

The van is parked in the front driveway, as it is not feasible to park it on the side or rear of their home. They had not known the height was going to be an issue. Both neighbors on either side of their home have expressed no objections to the vehicle's presence, and others Mr. Gringlas spoke to also indicated no concerns. Parking the van in the driveway is their only practical option.

#### **Board asks clarifying questions**

In response to questions, Mr. Gringlas offered the following additional information:

- The van is normally sized except for the height and fits in a normal parking space.
- The roof height on the van is 103". However, there is an air conditioner and a solar panel in the center of the roof. At that point the height is approximately 11-12 inches taller.
- The van is too tall to be parked in the garage.
- The van cannot be parked in the rear yard because of the limited distance between the neighbor's home and the Gringlas home, the roof hangover, and the landscaping that is in place. There is not enough clearance or radius to allow the van access to the rear yard. There is also a steep grade in the rear yard; there was a lot of drainage that comes through there.

Member Lindquist noted that there was not a specific dimension attached to the variance request. City Attorney Morita explained that the variance is requesting relief on where the van can be parked and is not requesting a height variance. However, if the Board is inclined to grant the variance and doesn't want to allow a different height van in the future, the motion should be conditioned on the dimensions of the van as presented.

#### **Public comment**

Jeff Cohen, 31273 Verona, lived across the street from the subject site and had no problems with the van being parked in the driveway. He supported the variance request.

Member Vergun reported that there was an affidavit of mailing on file, with no returns. Three letters from nearby neighbors had been received, all of which were in support of granting the variance, and which Member Vergun passed around to the other Board members.

#### **MOTION**

After discussion and amendment, the following motion was made:

**MOTION by Irvin, support by Jamil, that in the matter of ZBA Case 1-25-5747, that the petitioner's request for a variance from the requirement that recreational equipment or trailers exceeding 6 feet in height may be stored only in the rear yard in order to store or park the recreational vehicle exceeding 6 feet in height in the front yard be GRANTED because the petitioner did demonstrate practical difficulties exist in this case in that he set forth facts which show that:**

1. **Compliance with the strict letter of the ordinance would unreasonably prevent the petitioner from using the property for a permitted purpose or would render conformity with the ordinance unnecessarily burdensome.**
2. **That the petitioner's plight is due to the unique circumstances of the property.**

**The motion acknowledges the need for accessibility, and while the vehicle is supposed to be placed in the back yard per ordinance, this is not a commercial vehicle but is an everyday car. The only issue is the height of the vehicle and having the petitioner make special accommodations to either park it in the garage or at the back side of the house is not, in this case, reasonable.**

**With the following conditions:**

- **The variance is limited to allow a van of the specific dimensions as listed in the application, with the inclusion of an air conditioner unit on top as described by the applicant also allowed.**
- **Because this variance is narrowly tailored to the precise dimensions of the vehicle being discussed (a Dodge Ram Van), and because the height of the air conditioner is not specifically known, the applicant is required to provide precise dimensions of the entire vehicle to the Zoning Supervisor tomorrow.**
- **This variance does not extend to other non-conforming vehicles, even if they are of the same or smaller height.**
- **This variance permits the parking of only one vehicle meeting the specified dimensions. No additional vehicles exceeding the allowed height are allowed under this variance.**

**Motion passed by voice vote 6-1 (Rich opposed).**

**B. ZBA CASE: 1-25-5748**

**LOCATION:** 29707 W. Ten Mile Rd.

**PARCEL I.D.:** 23-26-226-003, 008, 009

**ZONE:** (008, 009) RA-1, (003) RA-3

**REQUEST:** In order to build a 38,000-square-foot addition to an existing 33,800-square-foot building within the RA-1 and RA-3 Zoning Districts, the following variances are requested:

1. **A 1.250-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit a building addition to be 31.250 feet in height where 30 feet is the maximum height permitted in a RA-1 Zoning District**
2. **A 3.667-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.6.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit a building addition to be 28.667 feet where 25 feet is the maximum height permitted in a RA-3 Zoning District.**
3. **A variance from Section 34-5.13 of the Zoning Ordinance to permit a nonresidential use access driveway on a local street where such access is not permitted.**

**CODE SECTION:** 34-3.1.6.E, 34-3.1.4.E, 34-5.13

**APPLICANT:** Hisham Turk, Turk Architects

**OWNER:** Osman Habib, on behalf of the Tawheed Center

Member Khan and Chair O'Connell disclosed that they each had a conflict of interest in this case and were recused. Both Khan and O'Connell left the dais, and Vice-Chair Irvin assumed the Chair. Alternate Injeti joined the Board at this time.

On behalf of the Tawheed Center and the applicant Hisham Turk, Amy Doukoure, Staff Attorney, Council on American-Islamic Relations, asked for an adjournment for requests #1 and #2, and withdrew Request #3.

After discussion regarding meeting deadlines and schedules, the following motion was offered:

**MOTION by Rich, support by Jamil, that in the matter of ZBA Case 1-25-5748, 29707 W. Ten Mile Road, The Tawheed Center, Requests #1 and #2 are adjourned to a date certain of March 11, 2025, and Request #3 is withdrawn.**

**Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

City Attorney Morita explained on behalf of the public present that because the adjournment is to a date certain, the case will not be re-noticed. Neighbors should watch the website for the agenda to be posted shortly before the March 11 meeting date. Anyone with concerns about this request should put their concerns in writing and send their comments to the Board in care of Supervisor Randt.

Member Khan and Chair O'Connell rejoined the Board, and Alternate Member Injeti left the dais. Chair O'Connell resumed the Chair.

The Chair called a short recess at 8:27pm and reconvened the meeting at 8:34pm.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:**

None.

**6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES November 12, 2024**

**MOTION by Khan, support by Irvin, to approve the November 12, 2024 meeting minutes as submitted.**

**Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Irvin, support by Jamil, to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motion approved unanimously by voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Daniel Vergun, Secretary

/cem