



Zoning Variance (ZBA) Application

Submit Applications to City Hall

Street Address: 114 North Kidd Street Ionia, MI 48846

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 496 Ionia, MI 48846

Ph: (616) 527-4170 Website: www.ci.ionia.mi.us

Date of Application: _____

Permit Fee: \$250

This application will require action by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and a Public Hearing. Applications must be submitted at least four weeks before the intended Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. The ZBA meets on the first Monday of the month at 6:30 P.M. following submittal of an application for a variance.

Applicant Information

Applicant's Name: _____ Interest in Property: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Owner's Name (If different from above): _____

Project Information

1. Section of Zoning Ordinance that a variance, interpretation, or appeal is being requested: _____
2. Type of Variance (check one): Sign Use Non-Use (Dimensional)
3. Description of Request: _____

4. Address of Property: _____
5. Parcel Number: _____
6. Legal Description: _____

7. Zoning District: _____
8. Size of Parcel: _____

Signatures

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Property Owner's Signature: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY	Application #: _____
___ Fees Paid: _____	
Date Advertised: _____	Date of Meeting: _____
Action Taken: _____	
Comments: _____	

Signature: _____	Date: _____

Zoning Board of Appeals Process

I. Meeting Dates

The Zoning Board of Appeals meets on the first Monday of the month at 6:30 P.M. following submittal of an application for a variance. Meetings are held in the city council chambers at the City Hall.

II. Processing Period

An application for a variance to the Zoning Board of Appeals usually takes 30 days to process.

III. Application Procedures

Whenever an application for an appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals is filed, the following steps are taken in processing the application:

- 1) An application for an appeal is submitted to the City Manager or his/her representative along with the required fee(s). The application must be signed by the owner(s) of the property for which the application has been submitted. The fee covers the cost of mailing notices to property owners and occupants of properties within 300 feet of the applicant's property, and the cost of holding a hearing.

Applications should also be accompanied by an accurate drawing illustrating the requested variance or other appeal.

- 2) The City Manager, in conjunction with the Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals, sets a public hearing date.
- 3) Written notices of the request for an appeal and date of the hearing are mailed to the owners of property and/or occupants within 300 feet of the subject property, and to the applicant. This mailing list is taken from the most recent City tax roll. This notice is mailed at least 15 days before the hearing date.
- 4) A hearing on the appeal is held, at which time the applicant may appear in person or by agent or attorney. The Board also accepts comments or questions from the audience. The Board may either approve, deny or table a request. The Board may impose conditions in granting a variance request.
- 5) A copy of the Zoning Board of Appeals decision is sent to the applicant and to the City Zoning Administrator. The terms of the approved appeal are incorporated in any permit subsequently issued by the Zoning Administrator.
- 6) An appeal of the decision of the Zoning Board of Appeals may be made to the Circuit Court of Ionia County as provided for by State of Michigan law. An appeal cannot be filed with the City Council or Planning Commission.
- 7) The activity authorized by the appeal must be underway within one year of the date granted by the Board or the variance will no longer be valid.

IV. Criteria for Granting a Variance or Other Appeal

The Zoning Board of Appeals treats each variance request individually and approves or denies each variance request on its own merits.

In order for the Board of Appeals to grant a variance, the applicant must demonstrate to the Board that he/she meets all of the following standards provided in Section 1244.05 of the City Zoning Ordinance.

Section 1244.05(b) - Standards for Variance Approval

The To authorize a variance from the strict application of the provisions of this Chapter, the Zoning Board of Appeals must find that “where by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness, shape or area of a specific piece of property at the time of enactment of this Chapter or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary or exceptional conditions of such property, the strict application of the regulations enacted would result in peculiar or exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional undue hardship upon the owner of such property.”

The Board shall also find that “such relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent and purpose of this Chapter.”

In granting a variance, the Board may attach conditions regarding the location, character and other features of the proposed uses as it may deem reasonable in furtherance of the purpose of this Chapter.

Section 1244.05(c)(8) - General Standards for All Appeals to Zoning Board of Appeals

In consideration of all appeals and all proposed variations to this Chapter, the Board shall first determine that the proposed variation will not:

- a) Impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property.
- b) Unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets.
- c) Increase danger of fire or endanger public safety,
- d) Unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within surrounding area.
- e) Impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Ionia.

Sign Variance Standards

Each variance request is reviewed individually and approved or denied based on its own merits. Sign variance requests are reviewed according to the standards contained in Section 1234.18(c) of the City Code.

The applicant shall read the standards, listed below, and provide responses to each standard as to how the request meets the standard. The Board shall only grant a variance from the provisions of the ordinance when it finds based on the evidence presented to it that all of the following standards have been met.

Standard 1

There are practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships that will exist if the variance is not granted. The appellant must demonstrate that the alleged practical difficulty or hardship, or both, are exceptional and peculiar to the appellant's situation and result from conditions which do not generally exist throughout the City.

Standard 2

The fact that other larger signs constructed under prior sign ordinances exist in the area shall not be sufficient reason to declare practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship.

Standard 3

The practical difficulty or hardship is not self-created.

Standard 4

The terms "practical difficulties" and "hardships" shall relate to the use of a particular parcel of land. "Practical difficulty" or "hardship" shall not be deemed solely economic, such as the cost of the sign, the size of the sign, or the fact that the sign has already been constructed. The fact that the sign is only available in a standardized size and/or material (example: franchised business signs) shall not constitute a "practical difficulty" or "hardship."

Standard 5

The practical difficulty or hardship which is alleged to result from a failure to grant the variance must include substantially more than mere inconvenience or the mere inability to attain a higher financial return.

Standard 6

It must be demonstrated by the appellant that granting the variance will result in substantial justice being done, while consideration is given to the impacts on the public health, safety and welfare.

Standard 7

It must be demonstrated by the appellant that granting the variance will result in substantial justice being done, while consideration is given to the impacts on the public health, safety and welfare.

Use Variance Standards

Prior to the ZBA hearing on a request for a Use Variance, the Planning Commission shall consider such request and forward a report to the ZBA. The Planning Commission shall consider the Master Plan, ability of the property owner to use the property for a use already permitted under the existing zoning classification, the effect of the request on the essential character of the neighborhood, and other such factors that the Planning Commission shall deem relevant.

The applicant shall read the standards, listed below, and provide responses to each standard as to how the request meets the standard. The ZBA may only grant a use variance in cases where there is reasonable evidence of unnecessary hardship in the official record of the hearing. Unnecessary hardship may be found if all of the following standards are met:

Standard 1

That the building, structure, or land cannot be reasonably used for any of the uses permitted by right or special approval in the zone district in which it is located.

Standard 2

That the condition or situation of the specific piece of property or the intended use of such property for which the variance is sought is not so general or recurrent a nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation for such conditions or situations. Unique circumstances include: exceptional narrowness or shape of a specific property on the effective date of this chapter, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary situation on the land, building or structure or by reason of the use or development of the property immediately adjoining the property in question, the literal enforcement of the requirements of this chapter would cause unnecessary hardship.

Standard 3

That the proposed use would not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

Non-Use (Dimensional) Variance Standards

The applicant shall read the standards, listed below, and provide responses to each standard as to how the request meets the standard. The ZBA may only grant a non-use variance in cases where there is reasonable evidence of practical difficulty in the official record of the hearing. Practical difficulty may be found when all of the following standards have been met:

Standard 1

That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the property in question that do not apply generally to other properties in the same zoning district.

Standard 2

That the condition or situation of the specific piece of property for which the variance is sought is not of so general or recurrent nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation for such conditions or situations. Unique circumstances include: exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape of a specific property on the effective date of this chapter, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary situation on the land, building or structure or by reason of the use or development of the property immediately adjoining the property in question, the literal enforcement of the requirements of this chapter would involve practical difficulties.

Standard 3

That such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right similar to that possessed by other properties in the same zoning district and in the vicinity. The possibility of increased financial return shall not of itself be deemed sufficient to warrant a variance.

Standard 4

The variance will not be significantly detrimental to adjacent property and the surrounding neighborhood.

Standard 5

The variance will not impair the intent and purpose of this ordinance.

Standard 6

That the immediate practical difficulty causing the need for the variance request was not created by action of the applicant.
