

**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS  
CITY OF WILLOUGHBY  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2025  
PUBLIC HEARING MEETING  
MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Mike Maniche; Mike Yutzy; Phil Davis; Joe Palmer, Chairman

**ABSENT:** Mike Ross

**OTHERS:** Mike Lucas, Law Director; Vicki Grinstead, Secretary

**Chairman Palmer called the regular meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.**

Chairman Palmer advised the participants of their right to be heard in person or by attorney present and/or proffer evidence present and examine witnesses and the subpoena of evidence and/or witnesses. Chairman Palmer advised the participants that the board has five members of which a majority of the board is needed to grant an appeal. Chairman Palmer stated all five members of the board are not present this evening and the applicants need a majority or three votes to pass their appeals. If an appeal is denied the applicant(s) has thirty days to file an appeal with the Lake County Court of Common Pleas. The appeal application, the letter of the meeting notification, the letter of non-compliance and the list of names and addresses of adjoining property owners within the required distant of the appellant were noted into the record.

Chairman Palmer informed the applicants that there are only four of the five members present this evening and asked if they wished to proceed and they all said yes.

**MINUTES**

**August 27, 2025**

Mr. Maniche moved to approve the Board of Zoning Appeals public hearing meeting minutes for August 27, 2025 as submitted and Mr. Yutzy seconded.

**ROLL CALL:** Yeas: Mr. Maniche; Mr. Davis; Mr. Yutzy; J. Palmer, Chairman  
Nays: None  
Absent: Mike Ross

**Motion Carried: APPROVED**

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Betty Kendall**  
997 Peach Blvd.  
(Rep.- Joe Kendall)

**Accessory parking in front  
yard**

**City of Willoughby  
Board of Zoning Appeals  
Minutes  
September 10, 2025**

Chairman Palmer stated the applicant cited practical difficulty numbers 1, 2, 3, 6 & 7 on the application for appeal and noted all items that were in the packet including a letter from Betty Kendall authorizing Joe Kendall to speak on her behalf.

Chairman Palmer asked if there was anyone who wished to speak for this appeal. Mr. Kendall, 38290 Hurricane Dr., Willoughby, OH 44094 was sworn in to speak for this appeal.

Mr. Kendall said they would like to upgrade their gravel driveway to concrete for safety and aesthetic reasons. They are not asking for an expansion of the driveway but just to replace what has been existing for years. It will also increase the property values and enhance the neighborhood. He said it would not negatively impact adjacent properties. He understands the purpose of the ordinance but this driveway has served the same purpose for decades and wants to just improve the surface and honor the spirit of the ordinance while recognizing the reasonable use of the property as it has always existed. He respectfully requests the boards approval.

Chairman Palmer referred to the rendering provided and asked for confirmation that the pad will have a depth of 40' and a width of 25', and the edge of the pad would be 2' off the property line, and Mr. Kendall said that is correct.

Chairman Palmer asked if the large vehicle shown in the rendering is still there and Mr. Kendall said yes. He said it is not before this board but that is not permitted and may come up in the future. Mr. Kendall said if it is an issue they will move it.

Mr. Davis asked if the pad in the rendering is already paved as concrete and Mr. Kendall said no, it is gravel. Mr. Davis wanted to know if the parking spot to the north where the car is parked will remain after the driveway is paved and Mr. Kendall said absolutely not.

Chairman Palmer asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak for this appeal (x3) and there was no one.

Chairman Palmer asked if there was anyone who wished to speak against this appeal (x3) and there was no one.

Mr. Yutzy moved to grant a variance to C.O. 1131.10(a) to allow accessory off-street parking in the front setback instead of the allowable accessory parking only in a rear yard; citing C.O. 1109.09(b) for the Kendall residence, 997 Peach Blvd., Willoughby, OH 44094 and Mr. Maniche seconded.

ROLL CALL:           Yeas:   Mr. Davis; Mr. Yutzy; Mr. Maniche; J. Palmer, Chairman  
                              Nays:   None  
                              Absent: Mike Ross

**Motion Carried:    APPROVED**

**New residence**  
595 Orchard Rd.  
(Rep.- Randy Savage, JRS Homes)

**Rear yard setback**

**City of Willoughby**  
**Board of Zoning Appeals**  
**Minutes**  
**September 10, 2025**

Chairman Palmer stated the applicant cited practical difficulty numbers 1 & 3 on the application for appeal and noted all items that were in the packet. He noted an error on the Letter of Noncompliance for C.O. 1131.08 that should read, creating a deficit of 2.07' instead of .07'.

Chairman Palmer asked if there was anyone who wished to speak for this appeal. Mr. Savage, 2175 N. Bay Dr., Willoughby, OH 44094 was sworn in to speak for this appeal.

Mr. Savage said he is speaking on behalf of Roy and Shirley Franks. He submitted a packet with site plans and renderings into record (dated 9-10-25, Exhibit "A"). He said the existing house on the property was built in 1937 and is approximately 25x32 feet wide and is a single story 800 sq. ft. home. In 2024 a large tree fell on this home, causing over 50% damage and needs to be demolished. They are proposing a two-story home to replace it. The current house sits farther north and west and is 5' off the property line to the east, which the city engineer considers to be the rear yard. The front of the existing home faces north but the proposed house would face west (or toward the driveway). The new house is approximately 22x48 and will sit farther back to the north and west and would provide more open space (approximately 15') between it and the neighboring home to the south. There is also a garage that will be demolished.

Chairman Palmer said they are asking to continue the non-conforming use of this lot and Mr. Savage said yes. Mr. Savage said the revised plans (dated 8-28-25, page 2) moved the south side of the house back an additional 5' for a total of 10' and added a porch.

Mr. Davis said the compass rose is incorrect on the rendering and they are referring to the directions incorrectly and Mr. Savage confirmed this. Chairman Palmer said going forward the "revised site proposal" in record and dated 9-10-25; the top will be north and bottom south. The 10' setback is to the south.

Mr. Yutzy had questions regarding what Mrs. Brooks measured and what she considered the rear of the property verses what Mr. Savage presented. Chairman Palmer said it changes the rear setback from 2.1' to 5.6,' creating a deficit of 7.9' instead of the original 11.4.' Mr. Davis wanted to clarify if the west elevation is the front of the home because Mrs. Brooks letter cites a front yard but the porch presumably defines the front yard, which is on the north elevation. Chairman Palmer said a porch is not always necessarily on the front of the home.

Chairman Palmer asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak for this appeal. Mr. Roy Franks, 635 Orchard Dr., Willoughby, OH 44094 was sworn in to speak for this appeal.

Mr. Davis noted that Mr. Franks lives nearby and asked if he intends to live in the new home. Mr. Franks said he lives to the south of this lot and this was his mother's home back in the 80's but he now owns it. His brother or son may occupy the home in the near future. He said he was told that the front yard was adjacent to the street (both north and west) and all the way around the corner.

Mr. Franks said from the north it will be pushed south, from the west it will be closer east; from the east it will still be 5' from the neighbors lot, but it will be 16.5' from the house, diagonally across from house to house, and this is changing from 10'. He said from his house, on the south portion of the lot, instead of 10' between the house and garage, it will now be 15'.

Chairman Palmer asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak for this appeal (x3) and there was no one.

**City of Willoughby  
Board of Zoning Appeals  
Minutes  
September 10, 2025**

Chairman Palmer asked if there was anyone who wished to speak against this appeal. Mr. Ken Kreisler, 13161 Woods Hole, Chardon, OH 44024 said he owns the house to the east of this property (593 Orchard Rd.).

Mr. Kreisler said the back of the house they are proposing will be 5' from the property line. Chairman Palmer said the Building Department is figuring the building envelope is diagonally at the south eastern corner of the property and that is how they are determining what their variance numbers will be. He gave Mr. Kreisler one of the site plan packets to keep. Chairman Palmer said the new home will not be any closer to the eastern property line.

Mr. Kreisler said building this large of a home will not fit into the neighborhood. He's also concerned about grading and water coming onto his property. He said the home previously built by Mr. Savage was built at a higher grade and drains into his backyard. He said the city told him to put a sewer in but it gets clogged with leaves causing the water to rush into their backyard. His concern is that the same thing will happen with this new house. Chairman Palmer said Willoughby's Building code states you cannot shed water onto neighboring properties and Mr. Kreisler said they got away with it already. He said this is not before this board but he should speak with the contractor to make sure he captures the water from that lot. He asked if this is Mr. Kreisler's primary residence and he said no, it is a rental, but his daughter will be moving in.

Chairman Palmer asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak against this appeal. Chairman Palmer read into record a letter in opposition to this variance, because of the size of the home and the small lot, from Mayor Fiala on behalf of resident Margaret (Peggy) Donelan, 656 Chestnut Rd. dated September 9, 2025.

Chairman Palmer asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak against this appeal (x3) and there was no one.

Mr. Yutzy moved to grant a variance to C.O. 1131.06(c) and allow a 5.6' rear yard setback, creating a deficit of 7.9' instead of the allowable 13.5' rear yard setback; citing C.O. 1109.09(b) for a new residence to be built by JRS Homes, 595 Orchard Rd., Willoughby, OH 44094 and Mr. Maniche seconded.

ROLL CALL:       Yeas:    Mr. Yutzy; Mr. Maniche; Mr. Davis; J. Palmer, Chairman  
                      Nays:    None  
                      Absent: Mike Ross

**Motion Carried:    APPROVED**

Mr. Yutzy moved to grant a variance to C.O. 1131.08 and allow a 17.93' front yard setback, creating a deficit of 2.07' instead of the allowable 20' front yard setback; citing C.O. 1109.09(b) for a new residence to be built by JRS Homes, 595 Orchard Rd., Willoughby, OH 44094 and Mr. Maniche seconded.

ROLL CALL:       Yeas:    Mr. Maniche; Mr. Davis; Mr. Yutzy; J. Palmer, Chairman  
                      Nays:    None  
                      Absent: Mike Ross

**Motion Carried:    APPROVED**

**City of Willoughby  
Board of Zoning Appeals  
Minutes  
September 10, 2025**

**Chase Bank**

36212 Euclid Ave.

(Rep.- Jessica Ruff, Ruff Neon Sign & Lighting)

**Wall signs, west, side & south**

Chairman Palmer stated the applicant cited practical difficulty numbers 1, 2, 4 & 8 on the application for appeal and noted all items that were in the packet.

Chairman Palmer asked if there was anyone who wished to speak for this appeal. Ms. Ruff of Ruff Neon Sign & Lighting, 295 W. Prospect St. Painesville, OH 44094 agent for Chase Bank was sworn in to speak for this appeal.

Ms. Ruff said under the code only one wall sign is permitted. Chase is asking for three additional wall signs each measuring 36.87 sq. ft. She said one sign is on the south elevation along the Robinhood Dr. which is the secondary frontage for the multi-tenant parking lot, one sign on the east elevation facing Lowe's and the primary parking area, and one sign on the west elevation, which fronts the primary artery into the parking lot to and from Euclid Ave. This variance is needed because the visibility from Robinhood Dr. is significantly obstructed by adjacent buildings. Granting signs on both the south and east elevations would give northbound drivers two clear opportunities to identify the branch.

Chairman Palmer said Robinhood Dr. is 500' away and do they need their signs to be seen from that far away. Ms. Ruff said she meant from Euclid and Robinhood. The additional signage will improve wayfinding. This request is consistent with other businesses in the area. It enhances motorist and pedestrian safety by providing clear advanced identification of the site. The signage is designed with the size and scale of the building and aligns with Chase's national branding standards.

Ms. Ruff said granting this variance will not be detrimental to public health or safety; it will not harm surrounding properties and will not hinder the orderly development of the area. She cited some examples of other buildings in the area with similar signage. Chairman Palmer said the signs you are proposing are all the same size but are the neighboring building signs you are citing all the same size on all sides as well. Ms. Ruff said she is not 100% certain of that.

Chairman Palmer agrees there are two access points onto this property and it makes sense to have signage for these. He is not sure how the west elevation is going to help, or the south elevation which faces Lowe's parking lot. He said none of the other smaller, other type of signs are being discussed this evening. Ms. Ruff said they do have a 40 sq. ft. monument sign in the northern area in the parking lot. Chairman Palmer said they do have other various signs for this site but are not before this board.

Chairman Palmer's concern is these signs are all the same size across all four sides of this building and this would set a precedent. He said she could amend her request to accept the north and east elevation signs and possibly modify the other elevations to be smaller in scale. This is just his opinion and would like the other board members to weigh in.

Mr. Maniche said he does not think any of this is necessary. Chase is the largest bank in the country and these signs will not affect their business one bit and there are in front of this board trying to change the zoning. He said customers go to the bank many times and know where it is located and where the entrances are. The sign

**City of Willoughby  
Board of Zoning Appeals  
Minutes  
September 10, 2025**

facing Robinhood is not necessary because it is too far away. He feels there is no hardship presented. They would not lose any customers or money over not having these signs.

Mr. Yutzy said he agrees that the two main entrance signs are a reasonable ask. Ms. Ruff said they are below what they are allotted in square footage for the entire building.

Chairman Palmer suggested she table this and come back with a proposal that is not precedent setting.

Mr. Davis said there are two wall signs on Chase Bank's existing building. Even though the Chairman may wish to allow four signs if two were smaller, he does not favor four signs, however two signs seem to be a common practice, including the current Chase Bank. He said they do a thriving business and two signs should suffice.

Ms. Ruff would like to table her variance appeal until the next meeting of September 24, 2025.

Mr. Maniche moved to table a variance to C.O. 1163.06(b) for Chase Bank, 36212 Euclid Ave., Willoughby, OH 44094 and Mr. Yutzy seconded.

ROLL CALL:           Yeas:     Mr. Davis; Mr. Yutzy; Mr. Maniche; J. Palmer, Chairman  
                              Nays:     None  
                              Absent:  Mike Ross

**Motion Carried:     TABLED**

**Board of Zoning Appeals**  
(Joe Palmer, Chairman)

**Go to monthly meetings  
instead of semi-monthly  
beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting  
October of 2025**

Chairman Palmer moved to approve the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) meetings go to monthly meetings, instead of semi-monthly, beginning the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month starting October 8, 2025 and Mr. Davis seconded.

Mr. Davis said he would like a guideline or something similar per his email: *If BZA Secretary determines that BZA likely has 4 or more cases pending for the next regular monthly meeting, and any additional cases would lead to an undesirably long meeting, a second meeting for that month should be scheduled. Chairperson shall give BZA and related Staff a minimum of 4-week advance notice of a special second meeting in any single month.*

Chairman Palmer asked what is an unreasonably long meeting. Mr. Davis said it would be the Chairmans discretion. Chairman Palmer said anything over ninety minutes is rare for this board. The average hearing is approximately fifteen minutes. He said anything over six appeals we can consider another meeting because six appeals would be approximately two hours. As long as we can properly notice our public and agendas for six or more items and they have more than one variance request we can schedule a second meeting.

**City of Willoughby  
Board of Zoning Appeals  
Minutes  
September 10, 2025**

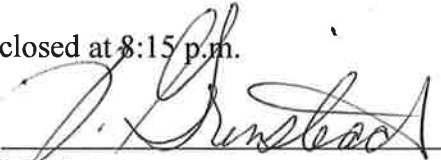
Mr. Maniche said the Planning Commission and City Council depend on what this board does to move things forward and how will this affect these items. He said Mrs. Grinstead mentioned this in an email as well. Chairman Palmer responded by saying that other cities such as Mentor etc. only have one BZA meeting per month.

ROLL CALL:        Yeas:    Mr. Yutzy; Mr. Maniche; Mr. Davis; J. Palmer, Chairman  
                      Nays:    None  
                      Absent: Mike Ross

**Motion Carried:    APPROVED**

There being no further business the regular meeting closed at 8:15 p.m.

  
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Joe Palmer, Chairman

  
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Vicki Grinstead, Secretary