

**CITY OF OAK PARK, MICHIGAN
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
APRIL 28, 2026
MEETING MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Huston in the City Council Chambers, 14000 Oak Park Blvd, Oak Park, MI 48237 and roll call was made.

PRESENT: Chairperson Huston
Vice Chair Brown
Commissioner Anderson
Commissioner Kleid
Commissioner Seligson
Commissioner Lebovic
Commissioner Steinberg

ABSENT: None

OTHERS
PRESENT: Economic Development & Planning Specialist, Salam Habhab
Deputy City Clerk/Director of Elections, Jo Lynn Williams-Elliott

3. APPROVAL OF ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MINUTES OF MARCH 24, 2026

MOTION BY Seligson SECONDED BY Kleid, to approve the meeting minutes of March 24 , 2026

Vote: Yes: All
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

4. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE: Received survey for Case #26-07

5. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Case #26-05, Jamie Craig, on behalf of Jonathan and Sarah Weinrach, 25951 Harding Sq.,
 - i. Article 2, Division 2: Section 214 of the Zoning Ordinance allows a maximum lot coverage of 35%. The applicant is requesting approval to allow a lot coverage of 36.8%.

Zack Ostroff – 1515 Midwood Dr. White Lake, MI - Project Architect, and Jamie Craig – 1502 W 13 Mile Rd, Royal Oak, MI - from Renaissance Restoration, both briefly provided an overview of the project changes and answered questions raised by the Board.

Applicant's Request

The applicant submitted a new variance request with a revised design. The updated plans eliminate the second kitchen to maintain a single-family dwelling and reduce the size of the addition, while still accommodating the needs of the applicant's parents. The proposed addition includes a common living area, two master bedrooms: one intended for a live-in caregiver, and a separate exterior entrance with an accessibility ramp. As a result, the proposal now meets the permitted uses in the R-1 District and the total side yard setback requirements, leaving lot coverage as the remaining variance request. Therefore, the applicant is requesting a variance to allow a lot coverage of 36.8%, where the Zoning Ordinance requires a maximum of 35%.

The application materials state the following:

- The proposed addition is to be an “in-law” suite for the owners. Both parents are in wheelchairs and will require a caregiver.
- The proposed addition is the minimum required to be able to use a wheelchair within the home.
- Since the last variance meeting, we have eliminated the need for two of the three variances. We made the addition smaller and brought the east wall in to eliminate the total side yard variance. We also reduced the lot coverage slightly and eliminated any kitchen from the plans.
- All adjacent properties have been shown the proposed design and are in full support. The proposed addition backs up to the backyards of several houses, which are heavily buffered by trees.
- The architecture of the proposed addition matches the existing house and is consistent with surrounding houses.

STAFF FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The property of 0.141 acres (6,142 sq. ft.) is improved by a two-story single-family residence (main dwelling) of 3,220 sq. ft. and an attached 433 sq. ft. garage structure.
2. The property is an irregularly shaped lot located at the southeast corner of a cul-de-sac, with a triangular configuration and sharp angles along the side yard property lines.
3. The property has approximately 25 ft of frontage along Harding sq. and a depth of approximately 108 ft.
4. The subject property was previously reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals under Case 26-01 at its January 17, 2026, meeting. At that time, the applicant requested approval of a use variance to allow a two-family dwelling in the R-1, One-Family Dwelling District, along with dimensional variances for total side yard setbacks and

- lot coverage related to the proposed addition.
5. The addition is intended to accommodate an in-law suite, as the owner's parents, both of whom use wheelchairs and require a caregiver, would reside in the dwelling.
 6. The Board denied the prior request, finding that the proposed addition, due to the inclusion of a second kitchen and related design features, constituted a two-family dwelling, a use not permitted in the R-1 District.
 7. The Board determined that the criteria for a use variance were not met, and the proposal would be inconsistent with the established single-family character of the neighborhood.
 8. Additionally, because the dimensional variances were directly associated with the size and layout of the proposed two-family configuration, the Board also denied the related setback and lot coverage variances.
 9. The applicant submitted a new variance request with revised plans.
 10. The updated plans eliminate the second kitchen to maintain a single-family dwelling and reduce the size of the addition, while still accommodating the needs of the applicant's parents.
 11. The proposed addition includes a common living area, two master bedrooms: one intended for a live-in caregiver, and a separate exterior entrance with an accessibility ramp.
 12. As a result, the proposal now meets the permitted uses in the R-1 District and the total side yard setback requirements, leaving lot coverage as the remaining variance request.
 13. The applicant is requesting a variance to allow a lot coverage of 36.8%.
 14. Section 411 requires a maximum lot coverage of 35%.
 15. The applicant indicated that the proposed addition is to be an "in-law" suite for the owners. Both parents are in wheelchairs and will require a caregiver.
 16. While the irregular shape of the property distinguishes the lot from standard interior parcels, they have not prevented the original development of a single-family dwelling, nor do they prevent reasonable expansion of the home in general.
 17. However, the need for the requested variance arises primarily from the combination of the property's configuration and the necessity to accommodate accessible living space for the applicant's parents, both of whom rely on wheelchairs.
 18. The requested lot coverage variance is the minimum necessary to accommodate the accessibility needs of the occupants, including circulation spaces, bedroom dimensions, and bathroom clearance.
 19. The Board has, at times, granted lot coverage variances in similar single-family cases where the requested relief was the minimum necessary and did not negatively impact neighborhood character.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information submitted by the applicant and the analysis presented in this report, it is the recommendation of the Economic Development and Planning staff to approve the use variance to allow an addition that does not meet the lot coverage requirements.

MOTION BY Steinberg SECONDED BY Seligson to approve the case #26-05:

Jamie Craig, on behalf of Jonathan and Sarah Weinrach, 25951 Harding Sq.,

- i. Article 2, Division 2: Section 214 of the Zoning Ordinance allows a maximum lot coverage of 35%. The applicant is requesting approval to allow a lot coverage of 36.8%.

Vote: Yes: Anderson, Lebovic, Seligson, Steinberg, Brown, Kleid, Huston
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

B. Ari Kosterlitz, on behalf of Congregation Dovid Ben Nuchim, 14830 Lincoln Ave.

- i. Article 5. Division 3. Section 544.g. requires the principal building to be located at least 50 feet from any residential district or use. The applicant is requesting approval for the building to be setback 47 feet from the north and 4 feet from the east.
- ii. Article 2. Division 2. Section 215.d. requires a total area of all impervious surfaces to not exceed 70% of the lot area. The applicant is requesting approval for 74.4% of impervious surfaces of the lot area.
- iii. Article 4. Division 1. Section 403. requires 30 spaces for the proposed cultural center (mikvah building). The applicant is requesting to allow 6 parking spaces on site.
- iv. Article 4. Division 5. Section 494 requires building-mounted light intensity within a site not to exceed one footcandle at any property line. The applicant is requesting approval for the wall-mounted light intensity to reach 3.7 footcandles at the east property line.

Mark Alfonsi - 100 E. Big Beaver Rd. Suite 915, Troy, MI- the project architect, provided an overview of the project and answered questions raised by the Board.

Applicant's Request

The applicant proposes to construct a new two-story cultural center. The cultural center will include a library and women's Mikvah on the first floor, men's mikvah on the basement floor, and a youth activity area, and an open office space on the second floor.

The subject property is located immediately west of, and directly abutting, the existing Congregation Dovid Ben Nuchim synagogue at 14800 Lincoln Avenue. The properties are under common ownership and will function as a unified campus.

As part of the application materials, the applicant submitted a Summary of Variance Justification that addresses the requested variances and demonstrates the special conditions and circumstances affecting the project.

STAFF FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The site of 0.25 acres (10,985 square feet) currently comprises a two-story, single-family residential structure. The lot has frontages on Lincoln Ave. and Stratford Pl. There is a driveway approach on Stratford Pl. that leads to an attached garage.
2. The applicant proposes demolishing the existing residential structure and constructing a new two-story cultural center (mikvah building).
3. The cultural center will include a library and women's mikvah on the first floor, men's mikvah on the basement floor, and a youth activity area and an open office space on the second floor.
4. The subject property is located immediately west of, and directly abutting, the existing Congregation Dovid Ben Nuchim synagogue at 14800 Lincoln Avenue. The properties are under common ownership and will function as a unified campus.
5. As part of the application materials, the applicant submitted a Summary of Variance Justification that addresses the requested variances and demonstrates the special conditions and circumstances affecting the project. The Variance Justification Summary is attached to this report for the Board's review and consideration.
6. The property is zoned R-1, One-family Dwelling District, and community centers/cultural centers/places of worship are permitted in the R-1 District by Conditional Land Use, subject to the regulations of Section 544.g of the Zoning Ordinance.
7. On March 9, 2026, the Planning Commission approved a Site Plan Review for the project. The Site Plan approval is contingent upon receiving variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to allow the construction of the cultural center (mikvah building) that does not meet the requirements for impervious surface percentage, north (rear) and east side setbacks, required off-street parking spaces, and building-mounted light intensity.
8. Per section 544.g.d, the principal building shall not be located closer than 50 feet from any abutting residential district or use. The proposed building is located 47 feet from the rear property line and 4 feet from the east side property line.
9. Per section 215.d, the total area of all impervious surfaces shall not exceed 70%. The site plan depicts 74.4%.
10. Per Section 403, 30 parking spaces are required for the proposed cultural center (mikvah building). The site plan depicts a rear parking lot with 6 spaces, with proposed vehicle access connecting to the existing Congregation Dovid Ben Nuchim synagogue parking lot.
11. The applicant indicated that a shared parking agreement with the synagogue is in place to meet the parking requirements.
12. On October 24, 2017, the Zoning Board of Appeals granted Congregation Dovid Ben Nuchim a variance for 49 off-street parking spaces from the 67 spaces required by the Zoning Ordinance.
13. It is important to note that the synagogue currently houses a 1,749-square-foot library. A smaller library of 1,060 square feet will be moved to the new building. This move will not increase occupancy, as library users are already included in the original calculations.
14. Additionally, the proposed relocation of the library from the synagogue building to the new building will not result in an expansion of sanctuary or worship space within the synagogue. The vacated library area will be used for customary congregation

- activities. As such, the overall parking demand for the synagogue site is expected to remain consistent with previously approved levels.
15. Per Section 494.b, building-mounted lighting shall not exceed one footcandle at any property line. The light plan indicates an intensity range from 0.1 to 3.7 footcandles along the east property line.
 16. The applicant is requesting approval for the principal building to be located 47 feet from the north and 4 feet from the east, with 74.4% of the lot area impervious surfaces, 6 on-site parking spaces, and 3.7% light intensity at the east side, as indicated above.
 17. While the lot is suitable for a single-family home, the proposed use is a cultural center (mikvah/library) that is intended to function as part of the adjoining synagogue campus.
 18. The applicant indicated that the mikvah must be located immediately next to the synagogue to ensure safe, convenient, and dignified access for congregants, particularly during evening hours and inclement weather.
 19. The Board had at times approved dimensional variances such as setbacks, impervious surfaces, and off-street parking for religious uses or educational institutions.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the application materials and the analysis in this report, the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will determine whether to grant the requested variances to allow construction of the proposed cultural center (mikvah building), which does not meet Zoning Ordinance requirements for impervious surface coverage, north (rear) and east side setbacks, off-street parking, and building-mounted lighting intensity.

Should the variances be granted, staff recommends that the approval be limited solely to the proposed cultural center (mikvah building) that is directly related to, and operated in connection with, the adjoining synagogue, as presented. The recommendation is also conditioned on parking being shared between the synagogue and the cultural center in a coordinated manner so that activities do not overlap during peak times and do not create additional parking impacts. Any changes to operations or the shared parking arrangement would require further review and approval.

MOTION BY Kleid SECONDED BY Seligson to approve Case #26-06, Ari Kosterlitz, on behalf of Congregation Dovid Ben Nuchim, 14830 Lincoln Ave.

- i. Article 5. Division 3. Section 544.g. requires the principal building to be located at least 50 feet from any residential district or use. The applicant is requesting approval for the building to be setback 47 feet from the north and 4 feet from the east.
- ii. Article 2. Division 2. Section 215.d. requires a total area of all impervious surfaces to not exceed 70% of the lot area. The applicant is requesting approval for 74.4% of impervious surfaces of the lot area.
- iii. Article 4. Division 1. Section 403. requires 30 spaces for the proposed cultural center (mikvah building). The applicant is requesting to allow 6 parking spaces on site.

- iv. Article 4. Division 5. Section 494 requires building-mounted light intensity within a site not to exceed one foot candle at any property line. The applicant is requesting approval for the wall-mounted light intensity to reach 3.7 foot candles at the east property line.

Vote: Yes: Anderson, Lebovic, Seligson, Steinberg, Huston, Brown, Kleid

No: None

MOTION CARRIED

C. Case #26-07, Barry and Martha Ginsburg, 14781 Talbot Ave.

- i. Article 2, Division 2: Section 214 of the Zoning Ordinance requires the rear yard setback to be a minimum of 30 feet. The applicant is requesting approval of a rear yard setback of 27 feet and 8 inches (a waiver of 2 feet and 4 inches).

Joe Novitsky – 3856 12 Mile Berkley, MI., the project architect, provided an overview of the project and answered questions raised by the Board.

Sanford Greenberg – 14810 Talbot spoke in support of the project

Applicant's Request

The applicants propose demolishing the existing detached garage and constructing an addition including an attached garage, a mud room, a study area, and a covered front porch. The existing residence contains one bedroom, a living room, a kitchen, and a full basement. The single-story layout provides accessible living accommodation, which was a primary factor in the applicant's decision to purchase the property, as they plan to age in place.

The applicants had previously submitted and received approval for a building permit.

The approved plans indicated compliance with all applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements. During construction, after the demolition of the existing detached garage and commencement of foundation work for the new attached garage, a building inspection determined that the proposed garage foundation was located approximately 28 feet from the rear property line rather than the required 30 feet. The discrepancy was identified as the result of an inaccurate rear-yard measurement reflected in the originally submitted plans.

Following the inspection, the applicants obtained a certified survey, which demonstrated that the actual rear yard depth of the property is 2 feet and 4 inches less than what had been previously submitted. As a result, the garage as constructed does not meet the minimum rear yard setback requirement.

The proposed attached garage measures approximately 20 feet wide and 23 feet deep. The attached garage area is approximately 477 square feet, which is smaller than the former detached garage that measured approximately 484 square feet. The applicants state that the attached garage is necessary to improve safety and accessibility, particularly as they plan to remain in the home long-term as they age. As part of the application materials, the applicant submitted a personal statement and a statement of non-objection from their neighbors on each side and in the rear of their property.

STAFF FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The property of 0.146 acres (6,419 sq. ft.) is improved by a one-story single-family residence (main dwelling) of 1,328 sq. ft. and a detached garage of 488 sq. Ft.
2. The property is an interior lot within an established residential neighborhood, and has a depth of approximately 118 ft. There is a drive lane that runs along the west property line to the detached garage.
3. The applicants propose demolishing the existing detached garage and constructing an addition including an attached garage, a mud room, a study area, and a covered front porch.
4. The existing residence contains one bedroom, a living room, a kitchen, and a full basement. The single-story layout provides accessible living accommodation, which was a primary factor in the applicant's decision to purchase the property, as they plan to age in place.
5. The applicants previously submitted and received approval for a building permit. The approved plans indicated compliance with all applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements.
6. During construction, after the demolition of the existing detached garage and commencement of foundation work for the new attached garage, a building inspection determined that the proposed garage foundation was located approximately 28 feet from the rear property line rather than the required 30 feet.
7. The discrepancy was identified as the result of an inaccurate rear-yard measurement reflected in the originally submitted plans.
8. Following the inspection, the applicants obtained a certified survey, which demonstrated that the actual rear yard depth of the property is 2 feet and 4 inches less than what had been previously submitted. As a result, the garage as constructed does not meet the minimum rear yard setback requirement.
9. The applicants are requesting approval for a rear yard setback variance to reduce the required 30 feet to 27 feet and 8 inches; a waiver of 2 feet and 4 inches.
10. As part of the application materials, the applicant submitted a personal statement and a statement of non-objection from their neighbors on each side and in the rear of their property. These documents are attached to this report for the Board's review and consideration.
11. The proposed attached garage measures approximately 20 feet wide and 23 feet deep. The attached garage area is approximately 477 square feet, which is smaller than the former detached garage that measured approximately 484 square feet.
12. The proposed attached garage replaces a previously existing legal nonconforming detached garage that was larger in area and located closer to the rear and side

- property lines. The new garage is smaller, improves accessibility and functionality, and represents an overall improvement to the property.
13. The Zoning Board of Appeals has previously approved similar rear yard setback variances, where it was demonstrated that the addition did not negatively impact neighborhood character.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information submitted by the applicant and the analysis presented in this report, it is the recommendation of the Economic Development and Planning staff to approve the variance to allow a building addition that does not meet rear-yard setback requirements.

MOTION BY Steinberg SECONDED BY Kleid to approve Case # 26-07, Barry and Martha Ginsburg, 14781 Talbot Ave.

- i. Article 2, Division 2: Section 214 of the Zoning Ordinance requires the rear yard setback to be a minimum of 30 feet. The applicant is requesting approval of a rear yard setback of 27 feet and 8 inches (a waiver of 2 feet and 4 inches).

Vote: Yes: Anderson, Lebovic, Seligson, Steinberg, Huston, Brown, Kleid
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

6. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

7. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Jo Lynn Williams-Elliott, Deputy City Clerk