

**CITY OF OAK PARK, MICHIGAN
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
JANUARY 27, 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: Commissioner Anderson (7:11)
Commissioner Kleid
Commissioner Seligson
Chairperson Huston
Commissioner Lebovic (7:01)
Vice Chairperson Brown
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 DECEMBER 16, 2025

MOTION BY Seligson SECONDED BY Kleid, to approve the meeting minutes of December 16, 2025

Vote: Yes: All
No: None

MOTION CARRIED

4. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Case #26-01: Jamie Craig, on behalf of Jonathan Weinrach, 25951 Harding Square.

- i. Article 2, Division 2: Section 211 of the Zoning Ordinance permits detached one-family dwellings in the R-1, One-Family Dwelling District. The applicant is requesting to allow a two-family dwelling in the R-1 District.
- ii. Article 2, Division 2: Section 214 of the Zoning Ordinance requires the total side yard setback to be a minimum of 14 feet. The applicant is requesting to allow a total side yard setback of 13 feet.
- iii. Article 2, Division 2: Section 214 of the Zoning Ordinance allows a maximum lot coverage of 35%. The applicant is requesting to allow a lot coverage of 37.6%.

Public Hearing was opened at 7:03 pm

Zach Ostroff, the project architect, presented to the board and explained that the requests are intended to provide accessible living accommodations for the owner's parents. The owner wishes to have his parents live with him. Both parents use wheelchairs and will require a caregiver.

Jamie Craig, the project contractor and applicant, spoke in support of the project, joined by Jonathan Weinrach, the homeowner; Arthur Weinrach, the owner's father; and Sarah Weinrach, the homeowner's wife.

Public Hearing was closed at 7:21 pm

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 limited frontage of approximately 25 ft on Harding Sq. and a depth of approximately 108 ft.
3. The property is located in the R-1, One-Family District, and is currently developed with a single-family dwelling, which is a permitted use.
4. The applicant proposes to construct an addition to the existing dwelling. The proposed addition includes living and dining areas, two master bedrooms: one intended for a live-in caregiver, a kitchenette, a separate exterior entrance with an accessibility ramp, and interior access between the existing dwelling and the proposed addition.
5. The proposed addition is to be an "in-law" suite for the owners. The owner would like his parents to live with him. Both parents are in wheelchairs and will require a caregiver.
6. Pursuant to Michigan Housing Law (MCL 125.402), a dwelling designed to provide cooking and kitchen accommodation for two families meets the definition of a two-family dwelling.
7. The applicant indicated that the proposed design includes a kitchenette intended solely for warming food, not a full kitchen.
8. The plans submitted do not provide detailed information about appliances and fixtures within the proposed kitchenette. However, the kitchenette area measures approximately 12 ft by 8.5 ft, which is substantial size and typically capable of accommodating independent cooking facilities.
9. Based on the inclusion of a second kitchen and the overall layout of the proposed addition, staff finds that the proposal meets the definition of a two-family dwelling.
10. Two-family dwellings are not permitted in the R-1 zoning district.
11. The applicant is requesting approval of a use variance to allow an attached two-family dwelling within the R-1 District.
12. Additionally, the proposed addition does not meet the total side yard setback and lot coverage requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.
13. Section 411 requires a minimum of 14 feet for total side yard setback and a maximum lot coverage of 35%.
14. The applicant is requesting approval of dimensional variances to allow a total side yard setback of 13 feet and lot coverage of 37.6%.
15. The property is already developed with a single-family residence, which is a permitted use within the R-1 District. The existing home may be reasonably used and expanded in

a manner that maintains compliance with single-family residential standards, without introducing a second dwelling unit or separate kitchen facilities. While the applicant's design reflects a specific preference, alternative configuration could provide living space and accessibility features without creating a second dwelling unit or necessitating a use variance.

16. The dimensional variances are driven by the size and configuration of the proposed addition.
17. The requested dimensional variances are not the minimum necessary to accommodate the applicant's stated objective of providing living space for elderly parents and a caregiver.
18. The size and layout of the proposed addition exceed what is reasonably required for this purpose. A smaller or reconfigured design could still provide adequate and functional living space while reducing or eliminating the need for the requested setback and lot coverage variances. Such approach would better align with the intent of the ordinance and provide reasonable relief for the applicant.
19. The irregular shape of the property distinguishes the parcel from standard interior lots. These conditions did not prevent the original development of a single-family dwelling on the site and do not preclude reasonable expansion of the existing home.
20. Similar irregular lots exist on other properties within the cul-de-sac. The site conditions are not so unique as to necessitate the requested variances.
21. While the Zoning Board of Appeals has previously approved lot coverage and yard setback variances for single-family properties when it was demonstrated that the minimum necessary to accommodate an addition, the size and layout of the proposed addition exceed what is reasonably necessary to meet the applicant's stated objectives.
22. Granting the use variance to allow a residential use that is not permitted in the R-1 District would introduce a two-family dwelling into an area planned and zoned exclusively for single-family homes. This change would alter the established single family character of the area and could set a precedent for similar requests on nearby properties.
23. Granting the dimensional variances as proposed would undermine the standards and the overall intent of the Zoning Ordinance.

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 deny the use variance to allow a two-family dwelling in a One-Family Dwelling (R-1) District, and the dimensional variances to allow construction of an addition that does not meet the lot coverage and total side yard setback requirements.

MOTION BY Steinberg SECONDED BY Kleid to approve the case #26-01: Jamie Craig, on behalf of Jonathan Weinrach, 25951 Harding Square.

- i. Article 2, Division 2: Section 211 of the Zoning Ordinance permits detached one-family dwellings in the R-1, One-Family Dwelling District. The applicant is requesting to allow a two-family dwelling in the R-1 District.

Vote: Yes: None

No: Anderson, Lebovic, Seligson, Steinberg, Huston, Brown, Kleid

MOTION DENIED

MOTION BY Steinberg SECONDED BY Kleid to approve the case #26-01: Jamie Craig, on behalf of Jonathan Weinrach, 25951 Harding Square.

- ii. Article 2, Division 2: Section 214 of the Zoning Ordinance requires the total side yard setback to be a minimum of 14 feet. The applicant is requesting to allow a total side yard setback of 13 feet.
- iii. Article 2, Division 2: Section 214 of the Zoning Ordinance allows a maximum lot coverage of 35%. The applicant is requesting to allow a lot coverage of 37.6%.

Vote: Yes: Steinberg, Lebovic, Kleid
No: Seligson, Anderson, Huston, Brown

MOTION DENIED

B. Election of officers: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary.

MOTION BY Seligson SECONDED BY Lebovic, to reappoint the current officers: James Huston as Chairperson, Sharrista Brown as Vice Chairperson, and Aaron Kleid as Secretary.

Vote: Yes: Seligson, Kleid, Huston, Steinberg
No: Brown, Anderson

MOTION CARRIED

5. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Jo Lynn Williams-Elliott, Deputy City Clerk