



CITY OF IONIA
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
6:00 PM, Monday, June 29, 2026
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. CALL TO ORDER

Assistant City Manager Jonathan Bowman called the meeting of the Ionia Zoning Board of Appeals to order at 6:00 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call revealed a Quorum with Board Members Logan Bailey, Mike Kirgis, and Amanda Ondersma present. Board Member Troy Waterman was absent.

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

(III.1.) Chairperson

Board Member Bailey made a motion, seconded by Board Member Ondersma, to nominate and elect Mike Kirgis as Chairperson.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

(III.2.) Vice-Chairperson

Board Member Ondersma made a motion, seconded by Board Member Kirgis, to nominate and elect Logan Bailey as Vice-Chairperson.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

(III.3.) Secretary

Board Member Bailey made a motion, seconded by Board Member Kirgis, to nominate and elect Amanda Ondersma as Secretary.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Kirgis introduced the agenda and asked if there were any requested changes. Board Member Bailey made a motion, seconded by Board Member Ondersma, to approve the agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(V.1.) January 6, 2025 – Regular Meeting

Minutes from the regular meeting of January 6, 2025, were reviewed. Board Member Bailey made a

motion, seconded by Board Member Ondersma, to approve the January 6, 2025, meeting minutes as presented.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING

(VI.1.) Public Hearing to receive comments on the requests from Mark Purkey LLC (Even More Purks) located at 703 W. Lincoln Avenue for sign variances from Section 1284.14 of the City's Zoning Code.

(VI.1.a.) A variance of 4.06 feet from the height restrictions for monument signs found in Section 1284.14 to allow two connecting signs making a "V-shape" to be 10.06 feet tall.

(VI.1.b.) A variance of 3.80 square feet from the size display area restrictions for monument signs found in Section 1284.14 to allow two connecting signs making a "V-shape" to each have a 53.80 square feet display area.

Assistant City Manager Bowman explained the two variance requests for a monument sign at 703 W. Lincoln Avenue. Chairperson Kirgis requested the applicant to review the details of the variances.

As a representative of the property owner, Marty DuBois (Postema Signs) presented the requested variances to the Board and described how the standards were met for each variance. DuBois emphasized the unique configuration of the intersection and the property's location on a corner lot. He noted that the property is impacted by the right-of-way of M-21 and M-66 and cited unique topography challenges. DuBois mentioned that the new signage would replace an existing sign that is nonconforming, due to encroachment into the right-of-way. He also explained the illumination of the sign, expressing that there would be minimal impact on adjacent properties.

Bowman reviewed the six standards for non-use variances related to exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions and the required practical difficulty standard. He provided background information on other past sign variances granted by the Board, and the precedence that the Board had set.

Board Members asked a few questions about the requests.

Chairperson Kirgis opened the floor at 6:25 PM to receive comments on the requested 4.06 feet height variance and 3.80 square feet display area variance for monument signs found in Section 1284.14 of the Zoning Code.

Assistant City Manager Bowman read a statement submitted by Liz Blankenship (728 W. Lincoln Avenue) noting concerns that the proposed sign height and illumination would adversely affect adjacent properties. Ms. Blankenship argued that increased visibility alone is not a reason to supersede the City's ordinances unless there is a compelling hardship.

Chairperson Kirgis closed the public hearing at 6:27 PM.

Board Members discussed the variance standards and unique circumstances affecting the property. The past precedence for sign variances was also discussed. Board Members noted that the sign would remove a nonconforming sign within the right-of-way and improve the safety of the intersection.

Board Member Bailey made a motion, seconded by Board Member Ondersma, to approve both requested variances, as listed below, for a monument sign at 703 W. Lincoln Avenue. The decision was reached by establishing reasonable evidence of practical difficulty, acknowledging compliance with the six non-use (dimensional) variance standards found in Section 1244.05 (b)(3)A, and determining that the proposed variations would not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, or unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets, or increase danger of fire or endanger public safety, unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding area, or in any other respect impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals or welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Ionia

1. A variance of 4.06 ft. from the height restrictions for monument signs found in Section 1284.14 to allow two connecting signs making a "V-shape" to be 10.06 ft. tall. Section 1284.14 permits a monument sign to be a maximum of 6 feet tall.
2. A variance of 3.80 sq. ft. from the size display area restrictions for monument signs found in Section 1284.14 to allow two connecting signs making a "V-shape" to each have 53.80 sq. ft. of display area. Section 1284.14 permits a monument sign to have a maximum area of 50 sq. ft.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Logan Bailey, Mike Kirgis, Amanda Ondersma

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

MOTION CARRIED

(VI.2.) Public Hearing to receive comments on the requests from Mr. Mann located at 710 Chapman Street for fence variances from Section 1286.06 of the City's Zoning Code.

(VI.2.a.) A variance of 30 in. (2.5 ft.) from the height restrictions for front yard fences found in Section 1286.06 to allow for a 6 ft. tall fence. Section 1286.06 (b)(2) permits fencing in the front yard of a residential district to be a maximum of 42 in. between 48 in. posts.

(VI.2.b.) A variance of 50% opacity from the front yard fence restrictions found in Section 1286.06 to allow 100% opacity meaning light cannot be seen through. Section 1286.06 permits front yard fencing to not exceed 50% opacity.

Assistant City Manager Bowman explained the two variance requests for a front yard fence at 710 Chapman Street. Chairperson Kirgis requested the applicant to review the details of the variances.

Jesse Mann and Hanah Klinger (710 Chapman Street) presented the requested variances to the Board and described how the standards were met for each variance. Mann emphasized the

property's topography. Klinger mentioned safety concerns for her children, due to the steep incline. The similar placement of other neighboring fences was also indicated.

Bowman reviewed the six standards for non-use variances related to exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions and the required practical difficulty standard.

Board Members asked a few questions about the requests.

Chairperson Kirgis opened the floor at 6:44 PM to receive comments on the requested 30 in. (2.5 ft.) height variance and 50% opacity variance for a front yard fence found in Section 1286.06 of the Zoning Code. Chairperson Kirgis closed the public hearing at 6:45 PM.

Board Members discussed the variance standards and unique circumstances affecting the property. Chairperson Kirgis noted the unique lot configuration and topography. Board Member Bailey noted that the variances would not have a negative impact on the general standards.

Board Member Bailey made a motion, seconded by Board Member Ondersma, to approve the requested variances, as listed below, for a front yard fence at 710 Chapman Street. The decision was reached by establishing reasonable evidence of practical difficulty, acknowledging compliance with the six non-use (dimensional) variance standards found in Section 1244.05 (b)(3)A, and determining that the proposed variations would not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, or unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets, or increase danger of fire or endanger public safety, unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding area, or in any other respect impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals or welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Ionia.

1. A variance of 30 in. (2.5 ft.) from the height restrictions for front yard fences found in Section 1286.06 to allow for a 6 ft. tall fence. Section 1286.06 (b)(2) permits fencing in the front yard of a residential district to be a maximum of 42 in. between 48 in. posts.
2. A variance of 50% opacity from the front yard fence restrictions found in Section 1286.06 to allow 100% opacity, meaning light cannot be seen through. Section 1286.06 permits front yard fencing to not exceed 50% opacity.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Logan Bailey, Mike Kirgis, Amanda Ondersma

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

MOTION CARRIED

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

None.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

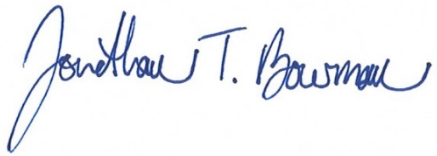
XI. ADJOURNMENT

Board Member Kirgis made a motion, seconded by Board Member Bailey, to adjourn.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jonathan T. Bowman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.

Jonathan T. Bowman, Recording Secretary
for Amanda Ondersma, Secretary