

**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS**  
**PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals was held on  
Monday, January 12, at 7:00 p.m.  
at 4850 Mark Center Drive, Room 1305, City Hall, Alexandria, Virginia

The proceedings of the meeting were recorded; records of each case are on the web at [www.alexandriava.gov/dockets](http://www.alexandriava.gov/dockets) and on file in the Department of Planning and Zoning.

Members Present: Paul Liu, Chair  
Coleman Burke  
Tim Foley  
Andrew Justus

Members Absent: Dawn Bauman, Vice Chair  
Kimberlee Eveland, Secretary  
Raj Patel

Staff Present: Mary Christesen, Department of Planning & Zoning  
Luke Cowan, Department of Planning & Zoning  
William Cook, Department of Planning and Zoning  
Marlo Ford, Department of Planning & Zoning  
Kendra Jacobs, Department of Planning & Zoning  
Nancy Williams, Department of Planning & Zoning

**CALL TO ORDER**

- 1. Chair Liu called the January 12, 2026, Board of Zoning Appeals to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Luke Cowan, Senior Planning Technician, was introduced to the Board.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND ITEMS PREVIOUSLY DEFERRED**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- 2. BZA #2025-00011  
2807 Ridge Road Drive  
Public hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Exception to construct a rear addition in the required side yard; zoned: R-8/Residential Applicant: John DiCalogero represented by Kim Robbert, architect.

**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ACTION, JANUARY 12, 2026:** On a motion by Foley, seconded by Mr. Burke, the Board of Zoning Appeals voted to approve the special exception as requested. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Reason:

The Board agreed with the staff analysis that the request met the standards for a special exception.

Speakers:

John DiCalogero, the property owner, stated that the request was to allow for additional living space in the existing one-level house.

Discussion:

Mr. Burke asked what existing room the additional would connect to, and Mr. DiCalogero directed him to a plan in the staff report showing the extension of an existing hallway from the kitchen.

There was no further discussion.

- 3. BZA #2025-00012  
408 East Monroe Avenue  
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Variance to construct accessory structure forward of front building wall of the principal dwelling; zoned R-B/Residential Townhouse Applicant: Jared and Olivia Griffin, property owners.

**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ACTION, JANUARY 12, 2026:** On a motion by Mr. Foley to approve the requested variance with the conditions that: (1) all the fences on the subject property will be brought into compliance; (2) shrubbery is put in that will create a hedge that will be between 4.00 and 6.00 feet at maturity and evergreen; and (3) that the shed that is to be removed that any future shed is put behind the accessory dwelling unit. The motion did not receive a second and failed.

On a motion by Mr. Foley, to approve the requested variance with the conditions that 1) All fences located on the subject property must be brought into compliance and 2) the applicant should work with City staff to obtain recommendations for proposed plantings, seconded by Mr. Burke, the Board of Zoning Appeals voted to approve the requested variance. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Reason:

The Board agreed with the staff analysis that the request met the standards for a variance.

Speakers:

Olivia Griffin, the property owner, made the presentation.

Brian Glassman, the project architect, answered questions from the Board.

Discussion:

Mr. Foley inquired of staff if the Board can make the approval contingent that shrubbery be planted as identified in plans.

Mr. Foley asked when the applicants purchased the property because of the criteria about purchasing the property in good faith and understanding the regulations. Staff indicated according to real estate assessment records the property was purchased within the last year and explained history of site. Mr. Foley indicated that the “reasonableness” is that a purchaser would do their due diligence to understand the requirements.

Staff explained that all accessory structures must be located behind the front building wall of the principal dwelling. This requirement is listed in the limitations for accessory structures section of the zoning ordinance and not specifically in the section that regulates ADUs, so the applicants may not have been aware. Further, there is an existing noncomplying shed located forward of the principal dwelling’s front building wall. The owners may not have been aware that this structure did not meet the requirement either.

Mr. Justus inquired about the existing dwelling being “substantial re-built” in 1997. Staff explained that the Department of Code Administration maintains permit records and does not keep plans after 3 years. There are references to the dwelling being reconstructed in 1997 in City records, but no plans were located. Based on historical maps, it is assumed that the existing dwelling is likely a replacement or substantial repair in approximately the same location on the lot as the original dwelling.

Chairman Lui asked staff to explain the condition of the front existing fence. Staff explained that the ordinance does not allow 6.00 foot privacy fences in a required front yard. Because the applicants are seeking a variance for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), staff is recommending a condition that the fence be brought into compliance with the current regulations and reduced not to exceed 4.00 feet in height and remain 50% open in the required front yard.

Mr. Burke asked about the trees on the property and how the ADU would impact them. Staff advised that the owners are proposing to maintain the trees on the lot.

Olivia Griffin, the property owner, expressed that the purpose of the proposed ADU is to

allow her retired parents to live there and assist in caring for their young child.

Mr. Foley asked the property owner what specific shrubbery was proposed to be planted. Ms. Griffin responded that she would defer the question to their builder and architect. Mr. Glassman responded the specific plantings had not yet been determined.

Ms. Justus wanted clarification regarding fences other than the portion along the front property line. The property owner and staff explained that the other fences shown on the survey are located on the adjacent properties.

Mr. Foley indicated his intention to vote to approve the variance with conditions that the fence is brought into compliance and that shrubbery is planted to help mitigate the visual impact of the parking area forward of the ADU.

Mr. Burke inquired into the drainage and flood risk for the area currently and what it will look like in the future. Architect indicated that they did a grading study and that the property is relatively flat and will not have a grade change.

Ms. Griffin responded that there is currently a drainage system on the property near the porch and they have not experienced any flooding or drainage issues since purchasing the property.

Mr. Foley expressed a desire to condition the approval that any future sheds be located behind the ADU. staff explained that any future shed could not be located forward of the principal dwelling's front wall even if it is behind the ADU. They could have a small shed, up to 100 square feet located behind the principal dwelling's front building wall that would not have side or rear setback requirements. Additionally, half the width of the rear alley can be applied towards the rear yard setback.

Staff advised the Board that the Department of Planning and Zoning has a Landscape Architect on staff and suggested the Board could condition the variance that the applicant will work with staff on the proposed plantings for screening purposes.

Chairman Lui questioned staff regarding the condition requiring shrubbery that it is not a requirement as part of the zoning ordinance and is not mitigating the ADU itself which is the subject of the requested variance. Staff advised that the proposal for shrubbery is the applicant's proposed solution to address the concern raised about the visual impact of the parking area in front of the ADU.

Chairman Lui indicated that it was his opinion that if is not required as part of the zoning ordinance, it makes no sense to impose a condition on the applicant but rather leave the landscaping and the planting as an option if the applicants want to pursue it.

Mr. Burke believed that the landscaping is important because the property is very built and currently has a lot of gravel and not a lot of greenery. While he did not get into the specific type of plantings and/or shrubbery, he indicated it would be good not only for the community but also for the homeowners as it would give them separation from what is a heavy traffic and pedestrian area. Not only would the landscaping act as visual barrier but could also mitigate sound from the street to homeowners.

Mr. Justus indicated that he could go either way on the landscaping. This is a voluntary measure to address aa concern raised by the Del Ray Civic Association.

#### **MINUTES**

4. Consideration of the Minutes from the November 10, 2025, Board of Zoning Appeals Public Hearing.

**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ACTION, JANUARY 12, 2026:** On a motion by Mr. Foley, seconded by Justus, the Board of Zoning Appeals voted to approve the minutes. The motion was approved on a vote of 4 to 0.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

5. Board Elections

**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ACTION, JANUARY 12, 2026:** On a motion by Mr. Burke, seconded by Mr. Foley, the Board of Zoning Appeals voted to defer the elections to the next hearing. The motion was approved on a vote of 4 to 0.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

6. The Board of Zoning Appeals meeting was adjourned at 7:52 pm.