
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING – *Approved July 10, 2025*
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
Thursday, April 10, 2025, 6:30 P.M.
600 W. Maple Street, Lansing MI

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Alling at 6:30 p.m.

Present: M. Alling, K. Berryman, B. Fryling, C. Iannuzzi, H. Lowry, M. Jackson, M. Rice & E. Jefferson

Absent: None

Staff: S. Stachowiak

A quorum of at least five members was present, allowing voting action to be taken at the meeting.

II APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Mr. Iannuzzi, seconded by Mr. Lowry to approve the agenda as printed. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (8-0).

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Alex Slovinski, 6103 Scotmar Drive, spoke in opposition to the variance requests for the proposed sports complex on E. Miller Road, expressing concerns about noise and traffic.

Stacy Lynch, 6101 Scotmar Drive, spoke in opposition to the variances. She stated that the building will be out of character for the area and will diminish the view from her home which is located directly across the street.

Erin Fleck, 1753 Maisonette Drive expressed concerns about the location, given the already high volumes of traffic in the area and the limited traffic control systems,

Brian Fisher, 6245 Timberland Drive, spoke in favor of the request. He said that most of the noise will be confined to the dome and the traffic will not be as high as what is anticipated as most of the time there are only 2-4 teams playing at one time and there is a lot of ridesharing.

Alexandra Fisher, 6245 Timberland Drive, spoke in favor of the request. She said that an indoor sports complex allows sports to continue in the winter and the additional traffic that would be generated could result in changes to the traffic control system in the area to resolve some of the concerns that have been expressed by the area residents.

Christina Fisher, 6245 Timberland Drive spoke in support of the variances. She said that she is a soccer mom and a high school teacher. She also said that most of the traffic will occur in the evenings and on weekends and will not draw as much traffic as it might seem.

David Ames, applicant's representative, stated that he is an owner, operator and building of sports dome and they are insulated to buffer the noise. He said that the noise from meter/generator could only be heard when standing right next to it and it is located on the back of the building.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION

A. BZA-4095.25, 1801 E. Miller Road and adjoining vacant parcel, Variances to the building height limitation, allowable building materials and mechanical equipment in the front yard.

Ms. Stachowiak announced that the public hearing was held at the March 13, 2025, meeting at which Stacy Lynch of 6101 Scotmar Drive spoke in opposition to the request expressing concerns about the traffic that would be generated by the proposed sports complex and about the appearance of the dome.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that this is a request for variances to permit a 67-foot, 2 inch high, domed indoor soccer building, that would be constructed of vinyl coated polyester and an entry building that would be constructed of metal panels at 1801 E. Miller Road and the adjoining vacant property. She further stated that the staff recommendation is to deny the request as the proposed building may have a negative impact on future development in the area and on property values, particularly with regard to the residential uses to the south. She said that, as evidenced by the renderings included in the packet, the proposed dome is massive and will dramatically change the character/appearance of the area, in direct conflict with the goals of the Master Plan and with the intent and purpose of the Zoning Ordinance. Ms. Stachowiak said that granting the requested variances under these circumstances would set a negative precedent for future variance requests where approval thereof would be contrary to the guiding and regulatory documents related thereto.

Mr. Fryling asked about the dome that collapsed in East Lansing.

Mark Bigelbach, applicant's representative, stated that it had to have been an error on the part of the operator.

The Board members discussed the inability to construct an indoor sports complex in compliance with the City's architectural standards and softening the view of the dome by planting dense rows of trees and shrubs in front of the building and in front of the parking lot

Mr. Berryman asked about the hours of operation and whether the amount of parking will be adequate to accommodate the demand.

Mr. Bigelbach stated that the hours are typically from 5-10 during the week and during the daytime on weekends.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the number of parking spaces meets the code requirement

for the projected occupancy load. She also said that there is a zoning ordinance amendment pending before the City Council that would increase the allowable height for structures in the industrial zoning district to 60 feet which would reduce the variance to 7 feet, 2 inches as opposed to 22 feet, inches. She said that there has been no objection to the amendment, and she anticipates that it will be approved within 30-45 days. Ms. Stachowiak also stated that if the site had greater depth so that the building would be located at least 200 feet from the front property line, it would not have to comply with the architectural requirements.

Mr. Rice stated that he will not be voting in favor of the variances as the building is contrary to the intent of the ordinance which is to regulate building design and materials so that buildings improve the appearance of the streetscape and fit in with the area in which they are located. He said that he doesn't have concerns about traffic and noise but is concerned about preserving the intent of the ordinance.

Mr. Lowry pointed out that there is already a domed structure in the area. He also pointed out that the variance to the height limitation would be minimal under the proposed ordinance amendment and thus, denial of the variances would create an unnecessary hardship on the applicant.

Mr. Iannuzzi spoke in support of the request stating that the height variance would be minimal and is necessary because of the unique circumstance of it being a domed structure.

Mr. Fryling stated that he could support the variances as long as a substantial amount of shrubs and trees will be planted to soften the view of the building and only if the amendment allowing for an increased building height is approved by the City Council, thus reducing the variance to 7 feet, 2 inches.

Mr. Iannuzzi made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lowry to approve BZA 4095.25 for variances to Sections 1245.04.02(A) and 1246.04.03(c) of the Zoning Ordinance to permit a 67-foot, 2-inch high, domed, indoor soccer building constructed of vinyl coated polyester and an entry building constructed of metal panels on the property at 1801 E. Miller Road and the adjoining vacant parcel, based upon the findings described in the staff report regarding compliance with variance evaluation criteria listed in Sections 1274.06 (c) & (e) of the Ordinance.

Mr. Fryling made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jackson to amend the motion to add a condition of approval that the applicant install a dense row of evergreen trees and shrubs in the area south of the building and parking lot and that the variance to the height restriction is limited to 7 feet, 2 inches which requires approval of the ordinance amendment increasing the allow building height to 60 feet. Mr. Iannuzzi and Mr. Lowry accepted the amendments.

On a roll call vote, the motion, as amended, carried 7-1. Mr. Rice cast the dissenting vote.

V. **OLD BUSINESS** – None

VI. **NEW BUSINESS** – None

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting March 13, 2025

Mr. Jackson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Iannuzzi to approve the regular meeting minutes for March 13, 2025, as presented. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (8-0)

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

IX. ADJOURNMENT AT 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Stachowiak, Zoning Administrator