

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
Thursday, May 14, 2026, 6:30 P.M.
600 W. Maple Street, Lansing MI**

Approved June 11, 2026

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Rice at 6:30 p.m.

Present: K. Berryman, M. Jackson, H. Lowry, M. Rice, S. Robertson

Absent: M. Alling, B. Fryling, C. Iannuzzi

Staff: A. Fedewa

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

II APPROVAL OF AGENDA – The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

IV. PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION

A. BZA-4101.26, 2214 Delta River Drive

Public Hearing – To receive public comment on requests for variances to:

Section 1250.04.01 (b)(1) *Single-family residential lots shall have no more than one (1) garage or detached carport.*

Section 1250.04.01 (b)(3) *A detached garage shall be no more than 840 square feet for a parcel size of 10,801 – 21,780 square feet.*

Section 1250.04.08 (b)(3) *An ADU shall be detached in the rear yard subject to the size limitation of this chapter or be part of an accessory building (such as a converted garage or carriage house), subject to the size limitations of Maximum Square Footage of Detached Accessory Garages in Table 1250.04.01.*

Section 1254.01.17 (b)(2) *Each residentially zoned or used parcel is permitted one driveway via one curb cut.*

Mr. Fedewa presented the application for an accessory dwelling unit above a detached garage, projecting eight feet into the front yard and having a ground floor area of 1,224 square feet. The subject property 2214 Delta River Dr. was recently combined with a vacant parcel, bringing the total lot size to 20,329 square feet.

The subject property already has an attached garage with a driveway and curb-cut.

The City of Lansing approved zoning changes legalizing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in 2025. Staff strived to craft rules that would not be overly burdensome or

limiting, but also to have rules in place so that ADUs would not become the dominant structure on a parcel or tower over adjacent neighbors.

Zoning rules permit ADUs to be part of a garage, either as a second story or as an addition, however no garage may be permitted to project into the front yard, closer to the street than the face of the primary residence. The allowable ground floor area of a garage ADU unit is dependent on the lot size and determined by Table 1250.04.01 Accessory Structure Size Maximums. For this parcel, 20,329 square feet in size, a detached garage would be limited to 840 square feet. Mr. Fedewa stated that the intent of this rule was so that any garage ADU would be limited to the same square footage of any other garage on a similarly sized parcel.

Mr. Fedewa stated that the neighborhood is characterized by moderately sized single-family homes with one detached or attached garage and one driveway. Therefore allowing a second driveway and second garage in a front yard would set a negative precedent in the neighborhood. Staff could not establish an unnecessary hardship based on a unique feature of the property. Mr. Fedewa stated that the vacant parcel that was recently combined with the primary parcel was of sufficient size and developable of a single-family residence. The applicant could build their proposed dwelling above a garage without any variances, subject to other setback and architectural standards.

Mr. Fedewa stated that because the former vacant parcel was developable, and because the subject site does not have any known unique features or practical difficulties, City staff recommends denial of each variance request.

Mr. Robertson asked for clarification about the front setback. Mr. Fedewa stated that as a principal structure, the residence should be 20 feet, or the average setback of the block. Given the angle of Delta River Drive, the proposed residence could be much closer than the house on 2214 Delta River Dr., but as an accessory dwelling unit, the garage may be in the side yard, but cannot project any closer to the street than the principal house. Mr. Fedewa clarified that a detached ADU must be in the rear yard, but a garage ADU may be in the side yard like a regular garage may be.

Mr. Robertson asked if a detached ADU in the rear yard must be accessible by a driveway. Mr. Fedewa stated that the property must provide an additional parking space for the ADU, but there is no requirement for a driveway or even a sidewalk to connect the rear yard ADU to the driveway or principal house.

Mr. Berryman asked if the combined parcel has become unusable since a garage or addition cannot project in front of the front building wall of the principal dwelling. Mr. Fedewa stated that the intent of the ordinance is so that garages, or vehicle storage, do not become the dominant architectural feature of the property. Lansing wants to maintain the established neighborhood feel of approximately 20 feet front setbacks and front porches. Garages in front yards or pejoratively termed "snout-houses" can destroy the inviting feel of a neighborhood and reserves all usable front yard space for the storage of motor vehicles. Mr. Fedewa stated that a building addition could project closer to the street, or even a garage oriented to the side (with doors facing east), as long as that front building wall had fenestration and appeared as part of a normal house.

George Berry, applicant stated that his son's family will occupy the existing house while

he and his wife planned to live in the proposed ADU. Mr. Berry stated that they plan to remove the garage door on the existing garage and enclose the space for an office or den. Therefore, they are not requesting a second garage. The proposed garage will have three bays to accommodate both families' vehicles and workshop space. Mr. Berry stated that they have used a cottage that is approximately 1,224 square feet and they believe that is a comfortable amount of space for their family. Mr. Berry stated that the 840 square feet allowed as a garage unit, or the 1000 square feet allowed as a detached ADU would not be large enough for their family or when they care for their grandchildren.

Mr. Berry stated that there is a 10-foot utility easement bordering the property which limits the placement of the proposed garage ADU completely in the side or rear yard. They would select siding materials to match the existing house to limit the aesthetic impact of the large building.

Mr. Jackson asked the applicant to clarify his statement and the packet drawings showing that the existing garage would be fully removed from use and that a variance for a second garage is not being requested. Mr. Berry confirmed they are not asking for a second garage. The existing driveway would be removed and reconfigured. Mr. Berry would like the proposed driveway for maneuverability and that they could save existing trees to help screen the garage ADU.

Mr. Jackson and Mr. Lowry stated that the rear setback of an accessory structure greater than 1000 square feet is six feet rather than 30 feet of the primary structure and asked if the proposed garage could be moved back eight feet to remove that variance request. Mr. Berry stated that because the property line is angled there is not quite enough room to not infringe on the utility easement. Mr. Berry stated that the process to vacate the 10 foot utility easement can be time-consuming and complicated with the utility companies, the City and the State.

Mr. Lowry asked if the square footage is measured as ground floor area or total floor area. Mr. Fedewa stated that the size limits are based on ground floor area. The size limits of garages and accessory structures based on lot size is based on precedent – the numbers were in the preceding zoning ordinance, however the zoning ordinance does not detail the intent or rationale for the square footage limitations.

Mr. Rice stated that he would not support a second garage or second driveway based on the established development pattern of the neighborhood.

Mr. Robertson asked if the applicant needs to request a variance for a garage ADU in a side yard. Mr. Fedewa stated that that a garage ADU may be in the side yard, but a variance to project into the front yard is still required. Mr. Fedewa explained that the intent of the zoning requirement is so that garages do not become the dominant feature of the parcel. According to the drawings the proposed garage will not be directly in front of the existing house and does not look like it will be the majority of the front building frontage.

Mr. Jackson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lowry to approve variances to Section 1250.04.01 (b)(3) and Section 1250.04.08 (b)(3) to permit a garage and an accessory dwelling unit with a ground floor area of 1,224 square feet, and to project eight feet into the front yard, based on the following findings of fact:

-
1. That the zoning ordinance does not explain the intent or reasoning of the rules determining sizes of garages.
 2. That the size limitations of Table 1250.04.01 may be too restrictive for garages with an accessory dwelling unit.
 3. A ten feet utility easement surrounding a portion of the subject parcel and the angled configuration of the subject property lines produce a limiting factor on the siting of the proposed garage ADU.

On a roll call vote the motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Mr. Lowry made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jackson, to approve a variance to Section 1250.04.01 (b)(1) to permit a second garage on a property and a variance to Section 1254.01.17 (b)(2) to permit a second driveway and curb cut on the subject property.

On a roll call vote the motion failed 1-4. Mr. Lowry, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Robertson, and Mr. Rice cast the dissenting votes.

V. **OLD BUSINESS** – None

VI. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Excused Absences

Mr. Lowry made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jackson, to grant excused absences for Ms. Alling, Mr. Fryling, and Mr. Iannuzzi. On a voice vote, the motion carried 5-0.

VII. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Regular Meeting, February 12, 2026

Mr. Lowry proposed a correction to the draft minutes to reflect that the motion to approve BZA-4100.26 failed unanimously. Mr. Jackson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rice to approve the February 12, 2026, meeting minutes, as corrected. On a voice vote, the motion carried 5-0.

VIII. **PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

IX. **ADJOURNMENT AT 7:35 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Andy Fedewa, Principal Planner