

City of Eaton Rapids

Zoning Board of Appeals

Meeting Minutes, June 11, 2025

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Hetzer called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. **Roll Call:**

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
Chair Hetzer	X		Member Lehto	X	
Vice Chair Miller	X		Alternate Freer		X Ex
Secretary Baker	X		Alternate Kopak		X Ex
Member Williams	X				

Also present were Building Official Hummel and Financial Specialist Leigh Tyler.

3. **Approval of the Agenda:**

Secretary Baker moved to approve the agenda and Member Lehto seconded. Motion carried to approve the agenda as presented.

4. **Approval of the May 14, 2025 Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting minutes:**

Member Lehto moved to approve the May 14, 2025 Minutes and Vice Chair Miller seconded. Motion carried to approve the minutes as presented.

5. **Public Comments:**

Public comments were opened at 7:02 pm. Pam Colestock (203 Cherry Street, Eaton Rapids, MI), an employee of the Eaton Rapids Medical Center, came to the podium. She stated that she was there to answer any questions pertaining to an item that is on the agenda (Sign variance for the ERMC).

6. **Public Hearing**

Eaton Rapids Medical Center (1500 South Main Street, Eaton Rapids, MI 48827) is requesting a main identification sign variance, Article XXII, Sections 22.25 B. Building Inspector Hummel came to the podium and stated that there has been discussion on the size and location of the sign. The property was approved to be rezoned by the Eaton Rapids City Council from being zoned Residential to being zoned for General Business. A variance of 76" would still be needed because the sign is close to the grade. Since the ERMC is now zoned for General Business, they would be allowed a ground sign / pole sign of 75 square feet and a height of 20 feet with a minimum clearance of 8 feet. Even then, a variance for the ground clearance would be required as the bottom of the proposed sign is 20 inches above the ground. Vice Chairperson Miller states that since the Eaton Rapids Medical Center is also used as a major heating and cooling center for the city, that the variance should be approved with the following criteria:

Chairperson Miller moved that the Zoning Board of Appeals approve the amended requested variance for the sign with a condition that the rezoning of the property be complete prior to construction of the sign; finding the hospital is also used as a cooling/warming center for the city, the LED portion of the sign may at times be considered an essential public service sign as defined in section 22.30 of the Zoning Ordinance; find that the height of the LED portion of the sign would need to be visible to passing traffic to protect public safety; and finding that the requested variance meets the requirements of Zoning Ordinance Section 25.55. A.-H (See Below)

A. A practical difficulty and/or unnecessary hardship exists according to the standards of this Article - YES.

B. The proposed variation involves exceptional circumstances not found in other areas of the same zoning district - YES

C. The proposed variation will be in harmony with the general purposes and intent of this Ordinance - YES.

D. The proposed variation will not in any respect impair the public health, safety, comfort, or welfare of the inhabitants of the city - YES.

E. The proposed use will be of such location, size, and character that it will be in harmony with the appropriate and orderly development of the surrounding neighborhood - YES

F. The proposed use will be of a nature that will make vehicular and pedestrian traffic no more hazardous than is normal for the distance involved, taking into consideration vehicular turning movements in relation to routes of traffic flow, proximity and relationship to intersections, adequacy of sight distances, location and access of off-street parking and provisions for pedestrian traffic, with particular attention to minimizing child-vehicle contact - YES

G. The location, size, intensity, site layout and periods of operation of such proposed use will be designed to eliminate any possible nuisances emanating therefrom, which nuisance might be noxious to the occupants of any other nearby permitted uses, whether by reason of dust, noise, fumes, vibration, smoke, or lights - YES

H. The location and height of buildings or structures and the location, nature, and height of walls and fences will be such that the proposed use will not interfere with or discourage the appropriate development and use of adjacent land and buildings or unreasonably affect their value – YES

Chairperson Hetzer seconded the Motion and a Roll Call vote was taken: Hetzer (Aye), Miller (Aye), Baker (Aye), Williams (Aye), Lehto (Aye). The Motion passes with all Aye votes.

## 7. **Old Business – None**

## 8. **Reports:**

**Building Official** - Building Official Hummel stated that Taco Bell is working on the conditions that were set forth in our last meeting. He is also working with a developer to build more homes in the Inverness subdivision and 400 Dexter is looking into grants to help build the 29- unit apartment complex.

**Planning Commission:** Secretary Baker reports that during the last Planning Commission meeting there was extensive discussion regarding the Taco Bell being built where the old Stockbridge Bank is located. The Commission attempted to table the Site Review from Taco Bell but the motion failed. The Commission ended up with conditions in which to approve the Site Review (See Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from June 2, 2025).

Member Williams moved that we adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Vice Chairperson Miller. All members voted aye and the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm

Minutes Recorded by:

Leigh Tyler

Financial Specialist

City of Eaton Rapids