

**MINUTES OF THE KINGSPORT BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS (BZA)**

**February 5, 2026 Regular Meeting**

Noon  
Montgomery-Watterson Boardroom, City Hall

Members Present:

Lora Barnett  
Bill Sumner  
Joe White  
Wes Combs  
Hoyt Denton

Members Absent:

Calvin Clifton  
Josh Taylor

Staff Present:

Lori Pyatte  
Ken Weems  
Jessica McMurray  
Jessica Harmon

Visitors:

Tim Martin	Randy Beckner
Nancy Randall	Keith Slaton
Clover Gardner	Ashley Slaton
Joe Randall	Freddy Marino
Allison Marino	Dan Preston
Justin Murphy	Christopher Brackett
Ellen Klug	Gerard Ricker

Chairman Bill Sumner called the meeting to order at 12:01pm.

Chairman Bill Sumner explained the meeting procedures.

Ms. Lori Pyatte conducted the swearing in ceremony for those wishing to speak during the regular meeting. All visitors were sworn in.

**Public Hearing:**

**Case: BZA26-0005– The owner of property located at 1370 Dewey Avenue, Control Map 061L, Group F, Parcel 013.00** requests a 20.17-foot deviation from rear yard to Sec 114-133(1) for the purpose of locating an existing garage in the side yard. The property is zoned R-1B, Residential District.

Mr. Kemp Brown presented the case to the Board, explaining that the property owners plan to construct an addition to the existing home. He noted that once the addition is completed, the existing detached garage—currently located in the rear yard—would be reclassified as being within the side yard and would no longer meet zoning requirements. The Board confirmed that there were no concerns with the proposed addition itself. Staff also verified that the addition complies fully with zoning regulations and that the request is solely to allow the existing garage to remain in compliance so that it does not have to be removed.

Chairman Sumner, seeing no one wishing to speak further on the item, closed the public hearing.

**Case: BZA26-0011– The owner of property located at 1476 Cooks Valley Road, Control Map 062, Parcel 003.00 and 003.50** requests a 10-foot front yard setback variance from Section 114-183(e)(1)c for Lots 18–24 on the western side of the proposed Cooks Valley Subdivision and Lots 11–24 on the eastern side of the proposed Cooks Valley Subdivision. The property is zoned R-1B, Residential District.

Mr. Randy Beckner, representing the property owner, presented the request to the Board. Mr. Beckner explained that the owner intends to develop a single-family residential subdivision; however, due to the site's topography, 21 lots would require a front yard setback variance. The request is to reduce the minimum front yard setback from 30 feet to 20 feet.

The Board inquired whether lot sizes would be changed, and Mr. Beckner confirmed they would remain the same and that all other aspects of the development comply with zoning requirements. He stated that without the variance, significant grading into the bank and the construction of a retaining wall would be necessary, which would be visible from Cooks Valley Road. Granting the variance, he noted, would reduce the extent of grading and the size of the retaining wall.

The Board confirmed that the variance area is located along the portion of the property that backs up to the ridge, which Mr. Beckner verified. The Board also inquired whether the subdivision extended that far into the property to accommodate the number of proposed homes, and Mr. Beckner confirmed that it did. The Board questioned whether reducing the number of lots could eliminate the need for the variances. The Board further clarified that the request involves adjusting the placement of homes on the lots by reducing the front setback from 30 feet to 20 feet, and noted that denying the request could limit the reasonable use of the property.

Mr. Beckner noted that the property owner has previously sought rezoning and is currently pursuing a request to rezone the property from R-1B to R-3, Low-Density Apartment District. He stated that if the variance is approved, the owner would likely withdraw the rezoning request.

Several residents of the Cooks Valley neighborhood spoke in opposition to the request. Concerns were raised that this was the third attempt to change the zoning or development approach to allow a higher housing density, with plans shifting from including green space to creating smaller lots, some of which would require setback variances. Residents expressed concerns about increased traffic from additional homes on surrounding two-lane roads, particularly with anticipated detours related to the Memorial Boulevard Project.

Residents also stated that reducing setbacks would result in homes being built closer together and could negatively affect nearby property values, especially given the proximity to a power substation. Additional concerns were shared about stormwater runoff since trees were cleared from the property, with fears that further development without green space would worsen drainage issues. Some residents suggested that denying the setback variance could allow for buffers such as trees or open space.

Other comments included concerns about the appearance and maintenance of the property, including a large accumulation of tires, which residents described as an eyesore and reflective of a lack of consideration for the surrounding community. Staff added that several emails had been received from residents and were included in the Board's packet.

Chairman Sumner, seeing no one wishing to speak further on the item, closed the public hearing.

**BUSINESS:**

Staff informed the Board that the March 2026 BZA meeting date falls on the same date of the TAPA Spring Conference. The Board agreed to reschedule the meeting to March 12, 2026.

Staff stated for record, the next application deadline is February 15, 2026 at noon, and meeting date Thursday, March 12, 2026 at noon.

The board reviewed the January 8, 2026 regular meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** made by Mr. Wes Combs, seconded by Mr. Joe White to approve the Kingsport Board of Zoning Appeals minutes for January 8, 2026.

**VOTE:** 5-0 to approve the minutes.

**Adjudication of Cases:**

**Case: BZA26-0005– The owner of property located at 1370 Dewey Avenue, Control Map 061L, Group F, Parcel 013.00** requests a 20.17-foot deviation from rear yard to Sec 114-133(1) for the purpose of locating an existing garage in the side yard. The property is zoned R-1B, Residential District.

The Board noted that the primary issue arises from the existing detached garage becoming noncompliant in the side yard once the proposed addition is constructed.

**MOTION:** Made by Mr. Wes Combs and seconded by Mr. Joe White to approve the request as presented.

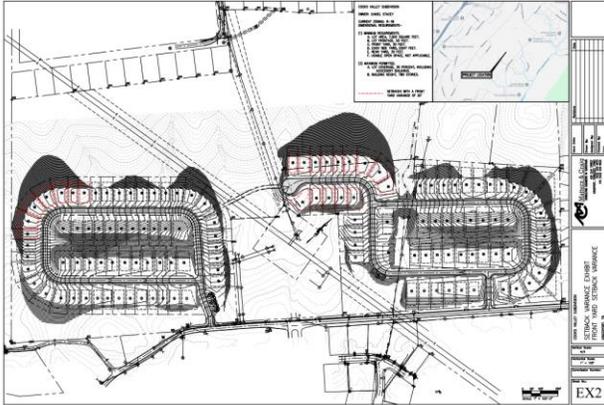
**VOTE:** 5-0 to approve the request.

**Case: BZA26-0011– The owner of property located at 1476 Cooks Valley Road, Control Map 062, Parcel 003.00 and 003.50** requests a 10-foot front yard setback variance from Section 114-183(e)(1)c for Lots 18–24 on the western side of the proposed Cooks Valley Subdivision and Lots 11–24 on the eastern side of the proposed Cooks Valley Subdivision. The property is zoned R-1B, Residential District.

The Board found that the primary hardship stems from the steep topography at the rear of the property and noted that denying the variances would limit the reasonable use of the land.

**MOTION:** Made by Mr. Hoyt Denton and seconded by Mr. Joe White to approve the request as presented per “EX2 – Setback Variance Exhibit Front Yard Setback Variance” and referenced below.

**VOTE:** 3-1 (chairman did not submit a vote) to approve the request.



**Public Comment:**

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jessica McMurray*

Jessica McMurray  
Development Coordinator