

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GEORGETOWN CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS HELD July 27, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Kendall Grable.

Members Present: Tom Healy, Trevor Petroelje, Kendall Grable, Michael Bosch  
Members Absent: Brock Nanninga, Tim Smit, alternate  
Others Present: Victor Vuong, Secretary and Zoning Administrator

**#220727-01 – Approval of the Minutes of the May 25, 2022 Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting**

The minutes of the regular meeting held on May 25, 2022 were presented.

Moved by Tom Healy, seconded by Michael Bosch, to approve the minutes as presented.

Yeas: Tom Healy, Trevor Petroelje, Kendall Grable, Michael Bosch

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**#220727-02 – Public Hearing – (VAR2203) Jenison Christian School, 7726 Graceland Dr.,** is requesting to have an additional on-site sign, a variance of one (1) from the maximum of one (1) on-site sign per Sec. 25.6(A)(4), and for the additional on-site sign to be 77.83 sf, a variance of 45.83 sf from the maximum of 32 sf per Sec. 25.6(A)(4), in a Low Density Residential (LDR) district on a parcel of land described as P.P. # 70-14-15-100-001, located at 7726 Graceland Dr., Georgetown Township, Ottawa County, Michigan.

The Zoning Administrator presented the [staff report](#) and stated that Joe Oosterheert, Principal of Jenison Christian School, recently emailed him requesting to combine P.P. # 70-14-15-100-001 (7726 Graceland Dr.) and P.P. # 70-14-15-176-008 (7700 Greenfield Ave.) in order to eliminate the non-conforming situation of the building being located on the common property line.

Dan Postmus of Postema Sign, 7475 Division Ave S, Grand Rapids, MI 49548, accompanied by the applicant Joe Oosterheert, presented the request ([application](#), [proposed wall sign](#)) with the following comments:

- He understands the sign doesn't meet the ordinance, but it doesn't seem like a stretch. The ordinance doesn't allow them to express themselves as they'd like. Public schools have free range to do what they want. Being zoned LDR puts them at a disadvantage. The sign at the entrance is miniscule compared to businesses and public schools.

Tom Healy asked why do they want a second sign?

Joe Oosterheert said curb appeal is a big thing. Their school is tucked away behind the church and is about 200 yards from Baldwin St. There's a small sign at the main office. They are building the roof up in this area and the sign will let people know Jenison Christian School is back there.

Tom Healy asked why does it have to be so much larger?

Joe Oosterheert said it's in the vestibule and sits three feet into the wall. It's a large wall and the size they are requesting will make it look appropriate for the wall and be visible from the street.

The remaining Zoning Board of Appeals members did not have any questions or comments for the applicant.

The Chairperson opened the public hearing.

Lloyd Tinholt, 7650 Graceland Dr., said he'll probably see the sign more than anybody because it's in his backyard. It won't block anybody's view, it's an attractive sign, and it won't advertise anything offensive. He is all for it.

The Chairperson closed the public hearing.

Tom Healy said he understands private schools are at a disadvantage compared to public schools, but there's a substantive difference. Private schools aren't compelled to accept everyone who lives in the district and private schools are private property. The State dictates the curriculum for public schools while private schools have a say in their own curriculum. That difference exists between private and public schools. The Planning Commission and Township Board have been trying to narrow the gap by doing things like reducing the minimum site size requirement for private schools. Although this is a unique circumstance, we just have to keep in mind private schools and public schools are not apples to apples even though they are close.

Kendall Grable said he agrees there are differences between private and public schools, but this is a unique case. They have access on two separate streets. Similarly, the Zoning Board of Appeals approved a variance for Meijer to have a larger wall sign because a smaller sign wouldn't meet the size of their wall. The size of the school, size of the lot, and frontage on two streets makes this situation unique.

Tom Healy said it's important to remember that the sign is required to go where it was requested on the application. Standard 7 is satisfied in both reviews because the purpose of the sign is to create better visibility from the primary road which is Baldwin St., and the school didn't create the unique and unusual location.

Trevor Petroelje and Michael Bosch said they agree with everything that have been said.

**Moved by Trevor Petroelje, seconded by Michael Bosch, to adopt the staff report as finding of fact and move to approve the variance for (VAR2203) Jenison Christian School, 7726 Graceland Dr., to have an additional on-site sign, a variance of one (1) from the maximum of one (1) on-site sign per Sec. 25.6(A)(4), in a Low Density Residential (LDR) district on a parcel of land described as P.P. # 70-14-15-100-001, located at 7726 Graceland Dr., Georgetown Township, Ottawa County, Michigan; based on the finding that the request meets the seven standards of the ordinance and the reasons were explained in the staff report and discussed during the meeting; and with the following condition:**

- 1. A sign permit and electrical permit shall be obtained prior to any sign construction.**

Yeas: Tom Healy, Trevor Petroelje, Kendall Grable, Michael Bosch

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

All members of the Zoning Board of Appeals agreed that all standards have been met for the sign to have the additional square footage as requested.

**Moved by Michael Bosch, seconded by Tom Healy, to adopt the staff report as finding of fact and move to approve the variance for (VAR2203) Jenison Christian School, 7726 Graceland Dr., for the additional on-site sign to be 77.83 sf, a variance of 45.83 sf from the maximum of 32 sf per Sec. 25.6(A)(4), in a Low Density Residential (LDR) district on a parcel of land described as P.P. # 70-14-16-100-001, located at 7726 Graceland Dr., Georgetown Township, Ottawa County, Michigan; based on the finding that the request meets the seven standards of the ordinance and the reasons were explained in the staff report and discussed during the meeting; and with the following condition:**

- 1. A sign permit and electrical permit shall be obtained prior to any sign construction.**

Yeas: Tom Healy, Trevor Petroelje, Kendall Grable, Michael Bosch

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**#220727-03 – Public Comments**

No one from the public made public comments at this time.

**#220727-04 – Other Business**

There was no other business at this time.

**#220727-05 – Adjournment**

Moved by Tom Healy, seconded by Trevor Petroelje, to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Yeas: Tom Healy, Trevor Petroelje, Kendall Grable, Michael Bosch

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.