

LODI TOWNSHIP BOARD OF APPEALS

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 14, 2026 at 7 pm

Lodi Township Hall
3755 Pleasant Lake Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

1. Call to order - Pledge of Allegiance

The regular meeting of July 14, 2026 opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 pm.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chronis, Dever, Schaible, Strader, VanKoevering

Absent: None

Others Present: Recording Secretary Michelle Joppeck,
Applicants Lynn and Monte Bishop,
Jeff Brown and Randy Raiford from Dexter Builders

3. Approve 4/21/2026 Minutes

Dever moved to approve the minutes from the 4/21/2026 meeting as presented. Second by Schaible. A voice vote was taken. Aye=4, Nay=none, abstain=Strader. Motion carried.

4. Revision / Approval of Agenda

Schaible moved to approve the agenda as presented. Second by Dever. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

5. Public Hearing request from Lynn & Monte Bishop, 7830 Grass Road, Saline, MI 48176. Lodi Township Parcel ID # M-13-32-400-010 to appeal Ordinance #30-101 yard/setback standard-minimum street side to request an 11'-8" variance from the minimum required front yard setback of 100' in the AG District to construct an 8' wide by 9' deep covered porch addition and steps.

Schaible moved to open the public hearing at 7:03 pm. Second by VanKoevering. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

Randy Raiford from Dexter Builders explained the request and reasoning behind the request.

Chronis asked for clarification on if they are asking for the variance for the plan showing the front door facing the road or the front door on the side. Raiford said they are wanting to put the front door towards the road in order for more of the porch to be usable instead of mostly being a walkway to the door. The front door towards the road also matches the historical look of the house.

Chronis asked if leveling will be done to make the grading less steep. Raiford said that will be done and a sidewalk will be installed which will minimize the change in grade as well.

VanKoevering asked for confirmation that the number of steps needed has been calculated to account for the grading so that they will not need a future request for a variance for more steps. Rainford confirmed that there will be a step down from the front door onto the landing and a set of steps which will take care of the grading. No further steps will be needed. If necessary, they will raise the grade to make the submitted plan work.

Dever had a question about the variance amount because he calculated a smaller amount. Raiford was able to explain how they came to their calculation.

Dever asked what other entrances are already existing. The applicant stated that there are three other entrances already existing and described their locations. Dever asked if the new proposed entrance would be primarily aesthetic or functional. The applicant stated that it was to reestablish the porch and it is also the fastest way to get out of the house for safety.

Strader and VanKoevering noted that they like the look of the addition, the aesthetic aspects, that it looks more balanced with the door facing the road, and appreciate the applicant's thoroughness with the application.

Dever stated that many of the nearby houses are nonconforming in that they do not have a 100-foot setback so having the requested variance is perfectly consistent with other older houses in the neighborhood.

Chronis moved to close the public hearing at 7:19 pm. Second by Strader. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

The applicant provided answers to the Findings of Facts as required by Zoning Ordinance 54.08.B Variances, Standards of Review which will be appended to the minutes. Discussion was held regarding those answers. Dever did not agree with the first sentence of number 4 Preservation of property rights. He was ok with changing it from:

"The right to improve your property should be shared by all. The owners should be allowed to improve their property in such a way that improves the use of existing spaces while creating a more historically and architecturally correct design."

To "The owners should be allowed to improve their property in such a way that improves the use of existing spaces while creating a more historically and architecturally correct design so long as other Zoning Ordinances and variance requirements are satisfied."

Strader moved to approve the requested variance by Lynn and Monte Bishop for the property at 7830 Grass Rd, Saline, MI 48176 (Lodi Township Parcel ID # M-13-32-400-010) for Section 30.101 to reduce the front yard setback from 100 feet to 88 feet for a new front porch and steps per the drawings received 6/17/2026 based on the Findings of Fact from Zoning Ordinance 54.08.B provided by the applicant with the change of 4. Preservation of Property Rights to: "The owners should be allowed to improve their property in such a way that improves the use of existing spaces while creating a more historically and architecturally correct design so long as other Zoning Ordinances and variance requirements are satisfied." Second by Dever. A roll call vote was taken. Schaible=aye, Dever=aye, Chronis=aye, Strader=aye, VanKoevering=aye. Motion carried.

Raiford asked about the return of their escrow payment. Raiford also let the Board know that with recent variances in other local Townships, scam letters have been received that look official stating that money is needed to receive the variance.

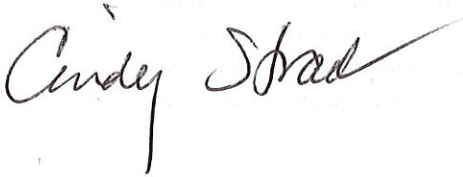
6. Public comment

Public comment started at 7:28 pm. Public comment was heard from 1 member of the public. Public comment ended at 7:29 pm.

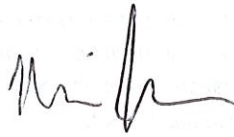
7. Adjournment

Schaible moved to adjourn at 7:30 pm. Second by VanKoevering. A voice vote was taken. Aye=all, Nay=none. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Cindy Strader,
Secretary



Michelle Joppeck,
Recording Secretary

1. Practical difficulties. Strict compliance with the specified dimensional standard(s) will deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other property owners in the same zoning district, create an unnecessary burden on the applicant, or unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose.

Without the requested variance from the front yard setback, the applicants cannot construct a covered entry facing Grass Road. The proposed entry is necessary to restore a historically appropriate façade consistent with farmhouse architecture common in the area. Denial would impose an unnecessary burden by preventing a reasonable and customary improvement and limiting the ability to use the property in a manner similar to others in the same zoning district.

2. Substantial justice. The variance will give substantial relief and justice to the applicant, consistent with justice to other property owners in the same district.

Granting the variance would provide substantial justice to the applicants while remaining consistent with the rights of neighboring property owners. Covered entries are common features in both historic and modern homes, offering functional weather protection as well as enhanced architectural character and curb appeal. The improvement aligns with typical residential expectations in the district.

3. Unique circumstances. The need for the variance is due to unique circumstances peculiar to the land or structures involved, that are not applicable to other land or structures in the same district.

The style of the house and methods of construction appear to indicate that the enclosed porch was once open. It was common practice over time, for families to enclose the porch to create more living space. Doing so, stripped the home of its original architectural details and character.

4. Preservation of property rights. The variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right possessed by other property owners in the same zoning district.

The right to improve your property should be shared by all. The owners should be allowed to improve their property in such a way that improves the use of existing spaces while creating a more historically and architecturally correct design.

5. Public safety and welfare. The requested variance can be granted in such fashion that the spirit of this Ordinance will be observed and public safety and welfare secured. In addition:

a. The granting of a variance will not increase the hazard of fire or otherwise endanger public safety.

The proposed variance will not increase fire risk or compromise public safety. All construction will comply with applicable local, state, and federal building codes and regulations.

b. The granting of a variance will not unreasonably diminish or impair the value of surrounding properties.

The variance is expected to maintain or enhance surrounding property values by improving the subject property's appearance and architectural integrity.

c. The granting of a variance will not alter the essential character of the area or surrounding properties.

The project will preserve and reinforce the established character of the area by reflecting the design and architectural features of similarly aged farmhouses.

d. The granting of a variance will not impair the adequate supply of light and air to any adjacent property.

The subject property is located approximately 320' from the nearest dwelling and will not affect any adjacent property.

6. Not self-created. The problem and resulting need for the variance has not been self-created by the applicant or the applicant's predecessors.

The need for the variance is not self-created. The home was constructed around 1900, prior to the adoption of zoning regulations. Subsequent zoning requirements, including setback standards, rendered the structure nonconforming, creating the current need for relief.

7. More than mere inconvenience. The alleged hardship and practical difficulties that will result from a failure to grant the variance include substantially more than mere inconvenience or an inability to attain a higher financial return.

The hardship extends beyond mere inconvenience. A centered covered entry would align directly with the existing door, creating a more functional and safe egress route. An alternative side entry would significantly impair the usability of the porch by converting a portion of it into a corridor, reducing functional space.

8. Minimum necessary action. The reasons set forth in the application justify the granting of the variance, and the variance is the minimum necessary relief to allow reasonable use of the land, building, or structure. The granting of a lesser variance will not give substantial relief and justice to the applicant, consistent with justice to other property owners in the same district.

The requested variance represents the minimum relief necessary to allow reasonable use of the property. A lesser variance would not achieve the intended functional or architectural outcomes. The design has been carefully developed to integrate seamlessly with the existing structure, using appropriate proportions, materials, and detailing consistent with early 20th-century construction, ensuring the improvement appears original and not excessive.