



Village of South Russell

5205 Chillicothe Road
South Russell, Ohio 44022
440-338-6700

Board Of Zoning Appeals Meeting

Minutes

January 21, 2026 – 7:00 pm

Members Present: Andy Hitchcock, Chairman; John Buda; Cindy Matejcik; Martin O'Toole; Mike Mulloy

Other Officials: Mayor Bill Koons, Dave Hocesvar, Building Official; Jared Flynn, Solicitor; Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary

Visitors: Christine Partain, 83 Maple Hill Drive; James Snell of 110 Silver Springs Trail

Call to Order

Mr. Hitchcock called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Griswold conducted roll call. All members were present and a quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Hitchcock asked whether the Board had reviewed the minutes of the November 6, 2025 meeting and whether there were any questions, comments, or requested changes. Hearing none, Mr. Hitchcock made a motion to approve the November 6, 2025 minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Cindy Matejcik and approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Swearing In

The Solicitor administered the oath to all people who would be providing testimony during the meeting. It was noted that John Buda's term on the Board of Zoning Appeals had expired. Mr. Buda was formally sworn in for a new term as a member of the Board of Zoning Appeals for the Village of South Russell, Geauga County, Ohio, and executed the oath of office prior to participating in deliberations or voting.

Agenda Item: BZA Case #26-01

William and Christine Partain, owners and applicants for the property located at **83 Maple Hill Drive**, are seeking the following variances: 1) A side yard area variance of 10' and 8' for a new accessory structure. The site plan shows the northeast corner of the accessory structure to be 10' from the side lot line, and the northwest corner of the accessory structure to be 12' from the side lot line. Per Section 4.02 of the South Russell Zoning Code, accessory structures must be a minimum of 20' from all lot lines; and 2) Applicants show accessory structure to be 960 square feet with an attached canopy of 260 square feet, for a total of 1,220 square feet on a one-acre parcel. Per Section 4.01(b)(1), the maximum square footage for an accessory structure is 500 square feet per acre, requiring an area variance of 720 square feet.

Mr. Hitchcock opened the public hearing for BZA Case #26-01. The application requests an area variance and a side yard variance to permit the replacement of an existing accessory structure located at 83 Maple Hill Drive.

Applicant Testimony

Ms. Partain stated that the existing accessory building is old and in poor condition and that they are proposing to demolish it and construct a new accessory structure in approximately the same location. She said that the proposed structure would have a slightly smaller footprint than the existing building and would be used solely for residential storage purposes, including storage of boats, lawn and snow equipment, exercise equipment, and seasonal household items.

Ms. Partain confirmed that there is no homeowner's association governing the Maple Hill Drive properties.

Existing and Proposed Square Footage

Board discussion clarified that the existing accessory structure, including additions, measures approximately 1,100 to 1,200 square feet based on field measurements. The proposed structure would consist of a 960-square-foot accessory building and a 260-square-foot covered canopy, resulting in a total covered area comparable to the existing conditions.

Ms. Partain said that the structure existed at the time they purchased the property approximately 20 years ago and that it had previously been used by prior owners in connection with a sprinkler business. Board members discussed that the structure appears to be a long-standing nonconforming structure that likely predates current zoning enforcement.

Design, Height, and Location

Ms. Partain said that the proposed accessory structure would have a maximum height of 15 feet, which complies with the zoning code and does not require a height variance. The covered canopy would function as an open-air covered walkway and patio area supported by posts. Exterior finishes would generally match the residence, including white siding, with roof colors coordinated with the house; the canopy roof would be metal.

Board Questions and Discussion

Board members asked questions regarding the necessity of the proposed size, whether the structure could be reduced further, and the visual impact of the structure due to its size and location being closer to the residence and street than typical accessory buildings.

Several Board members stated that, if proposed as a new accessory structure without an existing nonconforming building, the size and placement would be inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood and would likely be difficult to approve. Other members noted that the proposal replaces an existing large structure and would not materially increase the overall impact while improving aesthetics.

Public Comment

James Snell, property owner of 110 Silver Springs Trail, said they do not object to the replacement of the structure itself, but he expressed concern regarding stormwater runoff. Mr. Snell described existing drainage issues caused by the downward slope from Maple Hill Drive toward Silver Springs Trail and requested that stormwater impacts from additional hard surfaces be carefully addressed to avoid increased runoff onto neighboring properties.

Stormwater Mitigation

Ms. Partain said that the property currently has an underground French drain system and that proposed gutters and downspouts would be connected to underground drainage. Board members discussed that the plans show gutters but do not detail downspouts or stormwater routing and agreed that review by the Village Engineer was necessary to ensure adequate stormwater mitigation.

Board Deliberation

The Board discussed the nonconforming nature of the existing structure, neighborhood character, and the applicant's intent to replace an aging structure with a more visually acceptable building. Board members agreed that stormwater mitigation must be addressed as a condition of approval and that review and approval by the Village Engineer would provide appropriate oversight.

Motions

Motion 1 – Side Yard Variance

Mr. Hitchcock made a motion to approve a side yard variance of ten (10) feet to permit an accessory structure to be located no closer than ten (10) feet to the property line at 83 Maple Hill Drive, subject to the following conditions:

1. Review and approval by the Village Engineer of a site plan addressing stormwater management and mitigation; and
2. Approval by the Architectural Board of Review (ABR).

The motion was seconded by Cindy Matejcik. On roll call vote, all members voted in favor. The motion passed.

Motion 2 – Area Variance

Mr. Hitchcock made a motion to approve an area variance of seven hundred twenty (720) square feet to permit construction of a nine hundred sixty (960) square foot accessory structure with an additional two hundred sixty (260) square foot canopy at 83 Maple Hill Drive, subject to the following conditions:

1. Review and approval by the Village Engineer of a site plan addressing stormwater management and mitigation; and
2. Approval by the Architectural Board of Review (ABR).


Mr. Mulloy seconded. On roll call vote, all members voted in favor. The motion passed.

Mr. Hitchcock wished the applicant luck with their project. Ms. Partain thanked the Board.

Old Business: None

New Business: None


There being no further business, Mr. Hitchcock adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.



Andy Hitchcock, Chairman



Date



Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary



Date