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ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Regular Meeting

April 28, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Russ Boersma at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Russ Boersma, Members Jack Vander Meulen, Elliott Church, Ross DeVries and Robert De Vries. Also present were Community Development Director Corey Broersma, Assistant Planner/Zoning Administrator Kate White and Recording Secretary Laurie Kissau.

Absent: None

There were no public comments.

** It was moved by Ross De Vries and supported by Boersma to approve the minutes of March 24, 2026, as presented. Motion carried with a roll call vote of 3 Yes - 2 Abstain.

Chairman Boersma explained the Public Hearing process to the audience.

Hearing declared open to consider a petition to Extend a Nonconforming Use submitted by D-Sign LLC on behalf of Doug Bazuin of Community Action House for 650 Riley Street, known specifically as Parcel Number 70-16-18-101-043. Petitioner is requesting permission to add an electronic changeable message (ECM) sign to a nonconforming pylon sign. The subject property is zoned C-1 Neighborhood Commercial and R-1 Low Density Residential.

Present for this request was Doug Bazuin of Community Action House. Also present was James Smeed, Director of Resale for Community Action House.

Mr. Bazuin explained to the Board that they have modernized the building at 650 Riley Street. They would like to update the face of the existing pylon sign with an electronic message board. The existing sign is structurally sound. There would be no improvements made to the existing pylon sign. Nothing is rusty on the sign. They submitted two examples of where they would like to put the Electronic Changeable Message (ECM) sign. One shows it near the top of the sign and one near the bottom. The existing sign is illuminated, however, only half of it is working currently. The lighting would be the same with LED lights and new ballast to make the entire sign work. The size of the sign would not change.

Chairman Boersma mentioned the Staff Report and the suspected illegal sign panel that was added. Director Broersma noted there was a variance approved for the sign in 1986. However, it appears that there were panels added to the bottom of the sign after the approval was granted. They are permitted 75.5 square feet of signage in this area of the sign; it measures 99 square feet based on Staff calculations. Mr. Broersma also noted the overgrown shrubs, and the added panels block the clear vision area making it a safety issue.

The applicant responded that they would get rid of the shrubs. Mr. Broersma stated that the shrubs are part of the front yard landscaping and they cannot get rid of them. They do, however, need to be trimmed down.

Mr. VanderMeulen asked how many tenants are in the building now? Mr. Bazuin stated there are four tenants in the building. Mr. Church asked about the use of the ECM. Mr. Bazuin noted Community Action House would be the only one using the message board. They would use it to advertise sales and to welcome volunteers. They would not need the message to change messages any more than once per minute.

Chairman Boersma opened the floor for public comment. Present in the audience to speak to this request was Dave Willmore of 920 Shadybrook Dr. His concerns were with brightness of the sign at night. The flashing when the sign message changes. He would like the sign to be dimmed way down at night. There have been additional lights put on the back of this property. Now with more lighting out front, it bounces off the side of the buildings and into Mr. Willmore's residence.

The Board asked the applicant about the added lighting in the back yard. Mr. Bazuin responded that they put in lamp posts near the enclosed garbage area.

Mr. Willmore replied that the applicant's property is 10 to 15 feet higher than him and that the backyard lighting is not super bright. It is the flashing and brightness of the proposed sign that he has concerns with.

The Board questioned Community Development Director Broersma about the brightness of the proposed sign. Mr. Broersma referred them to Section 13.9 of the Sign Illumination Ordinance particularly 4a and 4b which refers to the brightness of ECM signs and how it is to be measured.

** It was moved by Robert De Vries and supported by Ross De Vries to close the hearing. Motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

The Board went over the standards to review when considering a petition for the extension of a nonconforming use.

1. Whether the extension, enlargement, alteration, remodeling or modernization will substantially extend the probable duration of the nonconforming structure, building or use.

The Board found that the modernization of the sign will not substantially extend the probable duration of the nonconforming sign as it is in good shape. Nothing structural needs to be repaired on the existing sign.

2. Whether the extension, enlargement, alteration, remodeling or modernization of the nonconforming structure, building or use will interfere with the use of adjoining lands or other properties in the surrounding neighborhood for the uses for which they have been zoned pursuant to the provisions of this ordinance.

The Board found that it may interfere with surrounding properties if the applicant does not set the lighting to be in line with what is allowed as far as dimming time and how many times the message can change. The Board commented that attention has been drawn to this possibility, so it will be less likely to be violated.

The Board had further discussion about a ground sign being less intrusive with its lighting because of the height restriction. It was noted that with a new ground sign the applicant could have 40 square feet of ECM and they are asking for 19.84 square feet, well below what's allowed.

3. The effect of the nonconforming structure, building or use and such extension, enlargement, alteration, remodeling or modernization thereof on adjoining lands in the surrounding neighborhood

The Board found that the addition of the ECM to a nonconforming pylon sign may be more visually obtrusive to adjoining lands in the surrounding neighborhood.

The Board further discussed the residential zoning of the properties around the Community Action House property. The Board asked Staff if they could restrict the hours the sign is in use. Staff replied that asking them to turn the sign off at night should be reviewed against any possible restriction on speech.

Chairman Boersma responded that the Ordinance does address illumination at night. The Board commented that the illuminated sign has been there a long time. There was further discussion among the Board members about the illumination of the sign, other ECM signs that have been approved by the Board. Also, what stipulations could be put in the motion.

** It was moved by Vander Meulen and supported by Robert De Vries to approve the request with the following stipulations:

- The tenant section of the sign is reduced to 75.5 square feet by removing the bottom portion of the sign which there is no record of having been approved.
- The ECM changes no more than once every 60 seconds.
- They must secure all permits as needed and call for a final inspection of the sign and illumination.
- The ECM shall be on the bottom-most portion of the sign.

Motion carried with a roll call vote of 4 Yes and 1 No.

Hearing declared open to consider a petition for Nonuse Variance submitted by Lloyd Stegenga for 167 Burke Avenue, known specifically as Parcel Number 70-16-20-126-059. Petitioner is requesting a variance of 384 square feet from the maximum 480 square feet permitted for a detached accessory building, resulting in second detached accessory building at 864 square feet in area. The subject property is R-2 Moderate Density Residential.

Present for this request was Lloyd Stegenga.

Mr. Stegenga explained to the Board that with the addition of the warehousing behind his property, wildlife has been pushed onto his property. There has been damage to his lawn, vehicles and outbuildings. The gopher chewed through the flooring of his shed. Wildlife chewed through the harnesses on his vehicles.

Mr. Stegenga noted he has approximately one acre of property. He would like to build an accessory building of 864 square feet for his car and boat. He would be tearing down the existing shed and patio pavilion. He wants to protect his personal property. The proposed accessory building would be half about the length of the lot from the road; no one would see it. It would have a 15' side yard setback. It would be aesthetically appealing and match the existing house. The back of the lot is still wooded, and he would want it to blend with the woods. He has kept the back of the property wooded for the wildlife.

The Board discussed what Mr. Stegenga would be allowed if the garage were attached to the house instead of unattached. He would be allowed 1,050 square feet of attached garage and would still be allowed by ordinance to have a detached accessory building of 480 square feet.

The Board asked Mr. Stegenga if he had considered that option. He responded that he had and that it would be more expensive. Also, because of the layout of the house, he feels it does not make sense. The garage would be on top of the deck.

He further explained he is asking for 24' x 36' for the storage of the items that are in the small shed he proposes to tear down such as a lawn mower as well as his car and boat.

There was further discussion by the Board of other ways for Mr. Stegenga to get more storage on his property. He could add on to the existing detached garage, which is now 704 square feet. He could have 832 square feet and build the 480 square foot accessory building allowed by ordinance. He could attach the garage to the house in which case he could have 1,050 square feet of garage and the 480 square feet of detached accessory building allowed by ordinance.

Mr. Stegenga commented that with the cost of lumber, that would be more costly to extend the detached accessory building. He would like his wife's car to go in the existing detached accessory building, and he put the boat and motorcycles in the proposed accessory building.

Chairman Boersma opened the floor for public comment. There was no one in the audience to speak to this request.

** It was moved by Boersma and supported by Robert De Vries to close the hearing. Motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

The Board went over the standards to review when considering the nonuse variance request.

- 1. That compliance with the Zoning Ordinance would result in practical difficulties due to exceptional, extraordinary, or unique characteristics or conditions of the land or lot of record, including but not limited to:**
 - a. Exceptional narrowness of the width or depth of a lot of record, or irregular shape.**
 - b. Exceptional natural or topographic features located on the lot of record, such as steep slopes, water, existing significant trees, or other unique or extreme physical conditions of the land.**

- c. Extraordinary location of an existing building or structure that allows no other practical or feasible location for expansion because of exceptional land features.*
- d. Other exceptional or extraordinary dimensional conditions or characteristics of land or lot of record.*

The Board found that there are no unique characteristics of the lot that would impact the applicant's ability to build a secondary detached accessory building at 480 square feet in size, compliant with the Zoning Ordinance. The need for detached accessory building, larger than allowed by ordinance, for protection of his personal property comes from the desire of the applicant, not from the characteristics of the property itself.

- 2. That the unusual circumstances do not apply to most other lots of record in the same manner to the same extent to other lots of record in the same zoning district.*

The Board found that there are no unusual circumstances to this lot. There is nothing unique about it and his neighbors have the same circumstances.

- 3. That the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right. The possibility of increased financial return shall not of itself be deemed sufficient to warrant a variance.*

The Board found the granting of this variance is not necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right. The ordinance permits about the same square footage for a detached garage and an accessory building as is allowed with an attached garage. He could add on to the existing detached garage and put up a 480-square-foot accessory building.

- 4. That the granting of the variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent and nearby land uses and properties.*

The Board found that granting this variance would not be of substantial detriment to adjacent land uses and properties, however, granting this variance would set a precedent.

- 5. That the applicant shall not have created the problem for which the variance is being sought.*

The Board found that the applicant has other options for his storage needs.

- 6. That the granting of the variance will not be contrary to the public interest and that the spirit of this ordinance shall be observed, public safety secured, and substantial justice done for both the applicant and other property owners in the district.*

The Board found that granting this variance would be contrary to the spirit of this ordinance given the review of the standards. It would be setting a precedence.

** It was moved by Robert De Vries and supported by Boersma to deny the request for a variance of 384 square feet from the maximum 480 square feet permitted for a detached accessory building, resulting in second detached accessory building at 864 square feet in area at 167 Burke Avenue

as it does not meet all of the standards for granting a variance. Motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote.

**** It was moved by Church and supported by Ross De Vries to remove from the table both of the Chick-Fil-A variance requests tabled at the February 24, 2026 ZBA Meeting. Motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.**

Consideration of a petition for Nonuse Variance submitted by Chick-Fil-A, Inc. for property located at 2332 North Park Drive, known specifically as Parcel Number 70-16-21-100-046. Petitioner is requesting a variance from the Type D Buffer requirements in Section 11.7 of the Township Zoning Ordinance for 151.86 feet of the northern property line resulting in a 0 foot buffer with no canopy or evergreen trees. The variance is being requested for an expansion of Chick-Fil-A's current drive-thru operation. The subject property is zoned C-2 Community Commercial.

Present for this request was David Caldon of Varnum LLP, Council for Chick-Fil-A. Also present was Jason Toole, Project Engineer of CPH, 1031 W 23rd Street, Panama City, FL 32405; Shaun Page, Owner/Operator of Chick-Fil-A, 2332 North Park Drive, Holland, MI 49424; Mike Lewis, Robert Murphy, and Micah Dowdy, all representatives of Chick-Fil-A. Also present was Mandi Brower, Chief Operating Officer of Quality Car Wash.

Mr. Caldon explained to the Board that Chick-Fil-A is seeking a variance from the 10' landscape buffer for a portion of the landscaping. They would then be able to add a lane to the drive-thru. It would reduce traffic and traffic stacking on North Park Drive and provide better service to the residents of the Township. It is a relatively minor variance but would have a large positive impact to the benefit of property owners, their customers and the businesses in North Park Plaza. There is very little detriment associated with this request, only benefit.

Mr. Caldon gave some history of the request. They first appeared before the Planning Commission for a PUD. There was support for the drive-thru, however, no one was there to represent Quality Car Wash and the Planning Commission determined that seeking a variance would be a better choice. With a PUD, both businesses would have to come back before the Planning Commission with every little change they would want to make to their properties.

Mr. Caldon further noted that no one has shown up to any of these meetings or submitted any opposing comments or anything in writing in opposition to the request. He proceeded to go over the standards, stating that it would not be a detriment to surrounding properties, it would be a benefit to them. Also, not a detriment to public safety. He further commented that there are exceptional, extraordinary or unique characteristics or conditions associated with these lots. They are narrow for their intended use. They are bound by a limited access highway to the east. They are encumbered by difficult topography in as much as there is a 50' drainage ditch on the easterly side of the properties that reduces the usable land area. North Park Drive is an undersized service drive with Sam's Club, Sam's gas station and Walmart and all the other businesses in the Plaza. It is the traffic that has created the situation not the applicants. These conditions do not apply to most other property owners and lots in the district. Certainly not in the same manner as they apply to these applicants. The traffic stacking and circulation problems associated with these issues interfere with their ability to use these parcels in the same way that other parcel owners in the district have the ability to use their properties

Mr. Caldon noted they have two property owners working together, hopefully with the Board's permission and at their owners' own expense, to try to address these traffic issues for the benefit of the residents of the Township that are customers of their property and for the other owners and customers of North Park Plaza.

Jason Toole, Project Engineer, informed the Board about the change made to the type of plants to be in the landscape buffer. The original plan noted reed grass. The Board asked that there be something planted that would be a buffer year-round not just in the summer months. They replaced the grass with Winter Creeper and Green Juniper and added a Dogwood tree up at the corner.

Chairman Boersma asked if there has been a study done showing how many times cars from Chick-Fil-A stack on North Park Drive. The reason for this request is to keep cars off North Park Drive so there are no traffic incidents.

Mr. Toole responded that no traffic study has been done as far as counting how many times the cars stack up. It is just something that has been observed that is happening.

Mr. Page answered the Board's question as to when it has been observed. He stated it is on Fridays, Saturdays and when school gets out early on half days. He further stated that Chick-Fil-A has been open for 8 years. Their vision is to be Holland's most caring company. Quality Car Wash does incredible things in the community as well. The dual lanes will allow Chick-Fil-A to live that vision out even more. They do park vehicles behind the building and that requires more steps for employees. In the winter, this creates the possibility of slips and falls. By allowing Chick-Fil-A to have two lanes, there will be less steps for employees.

He further stated that for their vision, he believes one thing they can do is give their guests their time back and they do that by being fast and efficient. The second lane will allow them to do that. The cars won't be stacked. There will be a constant flow, and they will be able to get the cars through quicker.

Mandi Brower, Chief Operating Officer of Quality Car Wash, was present to speak to this request. She was in support of the variance. Ms. Brower noted how their business runs will not change. She has seen the congested traffic. It can happen 4-5 times a week, specifically at lunchtime. This will help eliminate that.

Chairman Boersma asked Staff if the replacement plantings for the Reed Grass were a good buffer. Staff responded that those elements do qualify as landscape buffer material as opposed to Oriental Grass.

There was further discussion among the Board members about the landscaping. It will now be present year-round. Not just in the summer as the Reed Grass would have been. This is a more permanent all-season buffer rather than basically a green season buffer. All the shrubs will be on Quality Car Wash's parcel. There will be a 0-foot buffer on Chick-Fil-A.

There was further discussion from Mr. Church about who was responsible for maintaining the buffer and what is to keep them from removing it. The buffer is in Chick-Fil-A's easement on Quality Car Wash's property.

Ms. Brower stated that Quality wants the buffer. They do not want traffic crossing over into the oncoming traffic to sneak out of Chick-Fil-A's line. It will be maintained.

Community Development Director Corey Broersma further stated that they both take good care of their properties. They hold themselves to high standards. Code enforcement will be watching it too.

Chairman Boersma opened the floor for public comment. There was no one present in audience to speak to this request.

** It was moved by Robert De Vries and supported by Ross De Vries to close the hearing. Motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

The Board went over the standards to review when considering the nonuse variance request.

1. ***That compliance with the Zoning Ordinance would result in practical difficulties due to exceptional, extraordinary, or unique characteristics or conditions of the land or lot of record, including but not limited to:***
 - a. ***Exceptional narrowness of the width or depth of a lot of record, or irregular shape.***
 - b. ***Exceptional natural or topographic features located on the lot of record, such as steep slopes, water, existing significant trees, or other unique or extreme physical conditions of the land.***
 - c. ***Extraordinary location of an existing building or structure that allows no other practical or feasible location for expansion because of exceptional land features.***
 - d. ***Other exceptional or extraordinary dimensional conditions or characteristics of land or lot of record.***

The Board found that the proximity of the parcels to US-31 and the drainage ditch to the east as well as frontage on North Park Drive are practical difficulties for this parcel. Having two large frontages is unique to this property.

2. ***That the unusual circumstances do not apply to most other lots of record in the same manner to the same extent to other lots of record in the same zoning district.***

The Board found that the unusual circumstances do not apply to most other lots of record in the same manner to the same extent to other lots of record in the same zoning district. The Board felt that the same arguments under standard 1 apply here (i.e., proximity to US-31, the drainage ditch and the North Park Drive frontage).

3. ***That variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right. The possibility of increased financial return shall not of itself be deemed sufficient to warrant a variance.***

The Board found that the variance is necessary for the safety issues. One being employees walking out to cars in the parking lot to deliver orders. The other being vehicles stacked in North Park Drive creating traffic issues.

4. ***That the granting of the variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent and nearby land uses and properties.***

The Board found that granting of the variance is not anticipated to be of substantial detriment to adjacent and nearby land uses/properties. The northern property owner of 2353 North Park Drive is also seeking relief from the buffer requirements of the Ordinance, and they would be the property most impacted by the drive-through expansion and elimination of the buffer. There will still be a very dense buffer there on the Quality Car Wash property. They were not worried about it setting a precedent given the amount of landscaping the applicant is proposing.

5. *That the applicant shall not have created the problem for which the variance is being sought.*

The Board found that this variance request is for the safety of staff and the adjacent businesses. They are a victim of their success.

6. *That the granting of the variance will not be contrary to the public interest and that the spirit of this ordinance shall be observed, public safety secured, and substantial justice done for both the applicant and other property owners in the district.*

The Board found that the applicant still has a lot of green on the property, which lives up to the spirit of the Ordinance. It would be better for all of the adjacent property owners if the traffic is not backed up on North Park Drive. That is a safety hazard.

Mr. Church commented that this is fairly unique. Often when someone in a commercial zone comes in, they want a variance for more storage, or they want to put cars right up to the property fence. This is NOT for parking. It is definitely for traffic. There are lanes of cars moving in the direction of service. It is at the back of the property, and it will not be visible from North Park Drive. This is identical to the usage being made on the neighboring parcel right next to it. It's just lanes of traffic moving toward a service. When one has that sort of rare compatibility where they are just trying to route traffic to service and it is not competing with some other use, it is agreeable to both property owners. These are all reasons why this is different from other ones which mainly seem to relate to storage that the Board has received in the past. So, Mr. Church sees it as being compatible, not contrary to the public interest. Most important, it is a safety thing. Mr. Church noted the Board knows that North Park Drive is busy. The safety concerns are compelling. The buffer itself is going to be denser than the preexisting buffer.

** It was moved by Church and supported by Robert De Vries to grant the request as presented. Motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

** **Next was the consideration** of a petition for Nonuse Variance submitted by Chick-Fil-A on behalf of Essenburg Car Wash of North Park, LLC for property located at 2352 North Park Drive, known specifically as Parcel Number 70-16-21-100-045. Petitioner is requesting a variance from the Type D Buffer requirements in Section 11.7 of the Township Zoning Ordinance for 151.86 feet of the southern property line resulting in a 4.54-foot buffer with no canopy or evergreen trees. The variance is being requested in conjunction with the variance request for the Chick-Fil-A site. The subject property is zoned C-2 Community Commercial. Tabled from the February 24, 2026, ZBA Meeting.

Present for this request was David Caldon of Varnum LLP, Council for Chick-Fil-A. Also present was Jason Toole, Project Engineer of CPH, 1031 W 23rd Street, Panama City, FL 32405, and Shaun Page Owner, Operator of Chick-Fil-A, 2332 North Park Drive, Holland, MI 49424. Mike Lewis, Robert Murphy, and Micah Dowdy, all representatives of Chick-Fil-A. Also present was Mandi Brower, Chief Operating Officer of Quality Car Wash

Mr. Caldon stated there was no additional presentation for this request.

Chairman Boersma opened the floor for public comment. There was no one present in audience to speak to this request.

** It was moved by Robert De Vries and supported by Church to close the hearing. Motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

The Board went over the standards to review when considering the nonuse variance request.

1. ***That compliance with the Zoning Ordinance would result in practical difficulties due to exceptional, extraordinary, or unique characteristics or conditions of the land or lot of record, including but not limited to:***
 - a. *Exceptional narrowness of the width or depth of a lot of record, or irregular shape.*
 - b. *Exceptional natural or topographic features located on the lot of record, such as steep slopes, water, existing significant trees, or other unique or extreme physical conditions of the land.*
 - c. *Extraordinary location of an existing building or structure that allows no other practical or feasible location for expansion because of exceptional land features.*
 - d. *Other exceptional or extraordinary dimensional conditions or characteristics of land or lot of record.*

The Board found that the proximity of the parcels to US-31 and the drainage ditch to the east as well as frontage on North Park Drive are practical difficulties for this parcel. Chick-Fil-A needs a second lane for drive-thru.

2. ***That the unusual circumstances do not apply to most other lots of record in the same manner to the same extent to other lots of record in the same zoning district.***

The Board found the unusual circumstance is that Chick-Fil-A is next to the car wash and they need a second lane for the safety of businesses on the North Park Drive. The two property owners have worked together to solve the problem. This is a drive-thru alongside a drive-thru.

3. ***That the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right. The possibility of increased financial return shall not of itself be deemed sufficient to warrant a variance.***

The Board found that the variance is for the safety of the customers and for the flow of the traffic on the properties. The quality of service. It is not for financial gain.

- 4. That the granting of the variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent and nearby land uses and properties.***

The Board found that granting the variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent and nearby land uses and properties. It will be an improvement for adjacent businesses on North Park Drive.

- 5. That the applicant shall not have created the problem for which the variance is being sought.***

The Board found the problem for which the variance is being sought is created by the southern property owner. If there were less customers, they would not have made this request.

- 6. That the granting of the variance will not be contrary to the public interest and that the spirit of this ordinance shall be observed, public safety secured, and substantial justice done for both the applicant and other property owners in the district.***

The Board found that it is in the public interest to grant this request.

** It was moved by Robert De Vries and supported by Ross De Vries to grant this request as presented. Motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Broersma informed the Board that the Planning Commission is reviewing the Zoning Board of Appeals request to revisit the permitted size of a detached accessory building on property three acres in size and larger. They are looking at how many properties that would include within Holland Charter Township.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Kissau
Recording Secretary