

Russell Township Board of Appeals Meeting Minutes

Russell Township Community Room

Date: January 5, 2026

Present: Mr. Steve Gokorsch, Chairman

Mr. Dushan Bouchek, Vice-Chairman

Ms. Adrienne Knauer

Mr. Mark McGrievy

Ms. Nicole Mulloy

Frank Kolk, Zoning Inspector

Bonnie Guyer, Zoning Secretary in attendance

Also In Attendance:

Larry Fulton 7550 Thistle Lane

Harshna Patel 14869 Trappers Trail

Gary Utterback 14859 Trappers Trail

I. Call to Order

Chairman Gokorsch opened the meeting at 7:00pm

Public Meeting notices were published on December 18 and December 25, 2025, in the Geauga Maple Leaf and Chagrin Valley Times.

Letters to neighboring residents sent on December 16, 2025.

II. 2026 Organization

Organizational roles to be determined at the February 9th meeting.

III. Variance Application #574, submitted by Applicants Larry and Arlishea Fulton, owners of property at 7550 Thistle Lane, parcel number 26-213887. The Applicants are seeking a reduction of the required 100 ft. rear yard setback to 93.7 feet for construction of a detached garage, per Section 5.2(B).

Chairman Gokorsch described the role and responsibilities of the Board of Zoning Appeals. Chairman Gokorsch noted this is an area variance. As such the Board must consider the practical difficulty due to the unique physical characteristics of the property.

Mr. Bouchek moved to open the public hearing for Variance Application #574. Ms. Mulloy seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Chairman Gokorsch swore in the attendees:

Larry Fulton 7550 Thistle Lane

Harshna Patel 14869 Trappers Trail

Gary Utterback 14859 Trappers Trail

Mr. Fulton described the proposed location as the best place for the storage unit. Per Mr. Fulton, the proposed location addresses safety concerns, maintains integrity of the property and the unit will have the same look as the house. That is, design and color are similar if not identical to the house.

Frank Kolk, zoning inspector, noted the garage location with rear setback is preferable to other locations which would also require a variance.

Mr. McGrievy inquired about the wooded area between the neighbor and rear of Mr. Fulton's property. It was confirmed the area is wooded and will remain so.

Ms. Mulloy asked if the structure could be smaller thus eliminating the need for a variance. Mr. Fulton indicated two cars would be stored and a smaller structure would not allow for two cars. The second floor of the garage will also be used for storage.

Chairman Gokorsch emphasized the structure will not be utilized as a residence. Mr. Fulton reiterated this will not be utilized as a residence.

The issue of lighting was addressed by Chairman Gokorsch and as confirmed by Mr. Fulton only downlighting will be utilized and there will be no lights on the rear of the building.

Mr. Utterback asked what the variance would be if the proposed structure is moved to a different location. Discussion among the board members, zoning inspector, and Mr. Fulton, the agreement was the planned location is the best option.

Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Picture of the proposed garage noting the overhang will not be included.

Mr. McGrievy moved to accept Exhibit A. Ms. Knauer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

There was no additional discussion or public comment.

Mr. Bouchek moved to close the public hearing. Ms. Mulloy seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Bouchek moved to approve the Variance Application #574 for the reduction of the 100 ft rear yard setback to 93.7 feet for construction of a detached garage, with conditions. Ms. Mulloy moved to second, and upon roll call the vote was Mr. Bouchek-yes; Ms. Knauer-yes; Mr. McGrievy-yes; Ms. Mulloy-yes; Mr. Gokorsch-yes. The motion was approved.

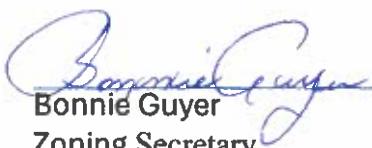
IV. December 1, 2025, Minutes and Findings of Fact

Mr. Bouchek moved to accept December 1, 2025, minutes as amended and Findings of Fact. Ms. Knauer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

V. Adjourn

Mr. Bouchek moved to close the meeting at 7:55. Ms. Knauer seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

 2-9-26
Steve Gokorsch *Duahnn Bouchek* Date
Vice-Chairman

 2-9-2026
Bonnie Guyer Date
Zoning Secretary

