

Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes – July 11, 2025

The Muscatine County Board of Adjustment met in the Board of Supervisors Office on Friday, July 11, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Emily Geertz (Vice Chair), Tom Harper, Carol Schlueter, and Michael Smock

Absent: Janelle Spies (Chair)

Staff Present: Eric Furnas and Morgan Othmer

Others present for this meeting included: Tommy DeClue, Joseph Woodhouse, Angela Woodhouse, Mike Stych, and Troy Holliday

- **Approval of the June 6, 2025 meeting minutes.**
 - A motion was made by Tom Harper to approve the June 6, 2025 meeting minutes and was seconded by Carol Schlueter.
 - Aye's: Emily Geertz, Tom Harper, Carol Schlueter, and Michael Smock
 - Opposed: None
 - Motion approved.

- **Case #25-07-01**
 - Tommy DeClue explained the request to place a second building, similar to the existing building, approximately 34' from the front property line. The building would not contain any water or sewer and would not be staffed. There would be minimal traffic – only for routine maintenance.
 - Emily asked if the property had been annexed into the City of West Liberty. Eric explained that the property was part of an annexation request, but the request had been denied by the state because the properties included in the request were not contiguous.
 - Carol asked how far back the existing building sits. Tommy answered that it's around 55' back from the front lot line.
 - Carol then asked if the new building could be placed on the east side of the existing building. Tommy responded that they have plans to place generators in the space to the east and the buildings are designed to be placed next to each other in a specific configuration so that they can connect cables between the buildings.
 - Eric provided the staff opinion on the case. He noted that he was not able to determine the unnecessary hardship and that there are no unique property limitations.
 - Micheal asked Tommy if it would be possible to make the structure any smaller and Tommy said that they would not be able to due to the way the buildings are designed. He explained that it is more economical to place the buildings adjacent to each other.
 - Tom commented that it's difficult to find the unnecessary hardship.
 - Michael also noted that the unnecessary hardship was not clear.

- A motion was made by Carol Schlueter to grant a Variance to allow a prefab shelter for fiber optics and related equipment to be built approximately 34' from the front lot line and was seconded by Tom Harper.
 - Aye's: Emily Geertz and Tom Harper
 - Opposed: Carol Schlueter and Michael Smock
 - Motion denied. Unable to determine that an unnecessary hardship exists.

- **Case #25-07-02**
 - Angela Woodhouse explained that their request is to place a single-car garage in front of the house. Angela said that the proposed location is ideal due to the number of mature trees on the property and existing landscaping. The exterior will be designed to blend in with the house.
 - Eric explained that there is some challenging topography on the parcel with sloping and the septic system located in the back yard. The proposed location would provide screening from neighboring properties due to existing vegetation. The structure would be located 28' back from the road – a subdivision road, so it would not cause any visibility issues.
 - A motion was made by Tom Harper to grant a Variance to allow an accessory structure to be built in the front yard space approximately 28' from the front lot line and was seconded by Carol Schlueter.
 - Aye's: Emily Geertz, Tom Harper, Carol Schlueter, and Michael Smock
 - Opposed: None
 - Motion approved.
 - The Board determined that an unnecessary hardship exists due to the topography of the lot and the location of the septic system.

- **Case #25-07-03**
 - Troy Holliday introduced his request. He said that the accessory structure would be used for storage and will not have any plumbing. Troy also asked about rotating the building by 90°.
 - Eric explained that rotating the building would increase the distance for the request and may not allow for the structure to meet the setback distance from the rear lot line.
 - Next, Eric provided the staff opinion on the case. He explained that he was not able to determine the unnecessary hardship. There is space in the side yard to accommodate an accessory structure, but it would not be able to accommodate one at the size requested. He had no concerns about the structure negatively impacting visibility or changing the character of the lot as there is an existing garage in front of the house.

- Emily asked if the structure was moved back towards the rear lot line, if that would work. Eric explained that a variance would still be required for the rear lot line setback, but that may place the structure in the side yard space, not in the front.
 - Emily also inquired about the possibility of reducing the size of the structure and Troy responded that he would consider making the building smaller if the variance is not approved.
 - Eric then pointed out that the septic system is also located in the back yard and that may void the option of moving the structure back. He then informed the Board that they could choose to table the request to allow for time to complete a site visit and for the request to be adjusted.
 - A motion was made by Tom Harper to table the request and add it onto the agenda for the August 2025 Public Hearing and was seconded by Carol Schlueter.
 - Aye's: Emily Geertz, Tom Harper, Carol Schlueter, and Michael Smock
 - Opposed: None
 - Motion approved.
- The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

MUSCATINE COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
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