

**Maple Shade Township
Zoning Board of Adjustment
Minutes
October 8th, 2025
7:00 P.M.**

AGENDA

- I. Meeting called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman Gee
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Open Public Meeting Act: Public notice of this meeting, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, has been given by the Township Council in the following manner:
 - 1. Notifying the Township Clerk December 27th, 2024.
 - 2. Mailing Notice to the Courier Post, The Central Record & Burlington County Times on Dec 27th, 2024.
 - 3. Posting Notice on the Official Municipal Bulletin Board on December 27th, 2024.
 - 4. Board Agendas; Meeting Minutes; Zoning Information and Application Forms can be downloaded from the Township website: <https://www.mapleshade.com/planning-zoning>

IV. Roll Call:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. John Gee, Jr., Chairman | 6. William Zerega, Member |
| 2. Karen Radie, Member | 7. Laura Kozierachi, Member |
| 3. Lu Valentino, Member | 8. Dan McDonald, Alt #1 |
| 4. Miriam Bebitch, Member | 9. Beth Reeves, Alt #2 |
| 5. Joanne Mortimer, Member | 10. Mike Stevens, Alt #3 |
| | 11. Frank Lazar, Alt #4 |

John Gee	X	Laura Kozierachi	X
Karen Radie	X	Dan McDonald, Alt #1	X
Lu Valentino	X	Beth Reeves, Alt #2	Absent
Miriam Bebitch	X	Mike Stevens, Alt #3	X
Joanne Mortimer	X	Frank Lazar, Alt #4	Absent
William Zerega	X		

Also in Attendance:

Robert Kingsbury, Esq. – Zoning Board Solicitor
 Fred Turek, P.E. C.M.E., P.P. – Land Use Board Engineer
 Kyle Wagner – Director of Community Development

V. New Business:

- 1. **211 South Fellowship** Block 155, Lot 16; Marissa Rapposelli
 - Application #:** ZB-25-11
 - Zone:** R-2 (Residential District)
 - Existing Use:** Vacant Commercial Space – Former blade and metal sharpening
 - Proposed Use:** Vintage Boutique
 - Application:** Change of Use Variance

Applicant Testimony and Board Discussion

The applicant, Marissa Rapposelli, appeared before the Board seeking approval for a change of use variance to operate a curated vintage boutique within the existing commercial building at 211 South Fellowship Road. Ms. Rapposelli testified that the business would focus on vintage clothing ranging from the 1970s through the early 2000s, along with a small thrift-style room offering select items at

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discounted prices. She described the proposed operation as low-impact, generating minimal packaging waste, and noted that donations would be accepted only during regular business hours to prevent off-hour drop-offs.

Based on her prior business experience, the applicant anticipated approximately four customers per hour. The site provides nine on-site parking spaces, including two spaces located in front of the garage. The property also contains a two-bedroom apartment on the second floor with a separate private entrance.

With regard to business hours, Ms. Rapposelli stated that the schedule was still being finalized but requested approval for a maximum range of 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM on operating days to allow flexibility without the need for future variance modification. She noted the store would likely be closed on Mondays and could close earlier on certain weekdays.

The applicant testified that one light fixture currently exists on the property and that an additional downward-facing wall-mounted light would be installed to adequately illuminate the parking area and entrance without creating glare for neighboring properties. This lighting plan would be coordinated with the Township Engineer to ensure compliance.

Engineer's Report and Board Findings

Board Engineer Fred Turek reviewed his report, noting that the site is located within the R-2 Residential District, where retail uses are not permitted. A use variance is therefore required. However, Mr. Turek and the Board recognized that the property has maintained a longstanding commercial presence, historically operating as a corner store, Hunter Doors, and later as a blade sharpening business. The proposed boutique was deemed consistent with the established mixed-use character of the area and compatible with the Township's Master Plan objectives.

Regarding parking, the Engineer explained that zoning regulations require five spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail floor area, plus two spaces for the upstairs residential unit. With approximately 900 square feet of retail space and nine existing on-site spaces, the property meets and slightly exceeds the required number of parking spaces.

The Engineer advised that the site must comply with ADA accessibility standards under Ordinance §205-67C and federal regulations, including installation of one ADA-compliant parking stall with proper signage, pavement markings, a penalty plate, and a cross-slope not exceeding two percent. The applicant was directed to provide grading information to confirm compliance.

Concerning signage, the Board directed the applicant to coordinate with the Director of Community Development and Construction Department to ensure conformity with Township sign regulations. Any proposed sign exceeding the permitted dimensions would require additional relief.

The Board further discussed waste management and the requirement for refuse enclosures under the municipal code. Given the limited waste generation associated with the proposed business and the existing use of standard residential-style rollout bins—one for the apartment and one for the boutique—the Board found it appropriate to grant a waiver from the requirement to construct a formal trash

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enclosure. This waiver was conditioned upon adherence to Township collection procedures and prompt removal of any items left outside after hours.

In closing, the Board found that the proposed use would have no adverse impact on traffic, parking, or neighborhood character, and that the improvements—including ADA compliance, lighting upgrades, and signage coordination—would enhance the appearance and functionality of the site.

	Open to Public	Close to Public	Motion	Second	Ayes	Nays	Abstain
Ms. Bebitch					X		
Ms. Kozierachi					X		
Mr. Lazar, Alt #4							
Mr. McDonald, Alt #1					X		
Ms. Mortimer					X		
Ms. Reeves, Alt #3							
Mr. Stevens			X		X		
Ms. Valentino				X	X		
Mr. Zerega					X		
Ms. Radie					X		
Chairman Gee					X		

2. **2910 Route 73 North** Block 172, Lot 1, 1.01, 1.02 & 1.04; Deerfield Associates (Fox Meadow)
Application #: ZBA-23-22 (previously ZBA-23-06)
Zone: PD (Planned Development)
Existing Use: Fox Meadow Apartment Complex
Proposed Use: Fox Meadow Apartment Complex – replacement of existing solid waste & recycle containers
Application: Minor Site Plan Approval and Variance Relief for replacement of existing solid and recycling containers throughout the complex

Applicant Testimony and Board Discussion

Engineer Gregory Fusco, P.E., appeared on behalf of the applicant and presented Exhibit A-2, a full site plan illustrating the existing parking inventory and the proposed locations for 18 solid-waste and recycling enclosures throughout the Fox Meadow Apartment Complex. Mr. Fusco testified that he personally conducted a site inspection at 5:30 AM on a Saturday, during which he observed substantial parking availability across the development: 90 spaces vacant in the rear (Creek side), 127 spaces along the Route 73 frontage, 157 spaces on the Golf Farm side, and 90 spaces within the central section.

He explained that the complex contains approximately 1,498 dwelling units, which under current Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) would require 2,851 parking spaces. The site presently provides 2,382 spaces, which will be reduced by 37 with the installation of the new enclosures. Despite that reduction, Mr. Fusco emphasized that the project would not create a parking deficiency, as field counts confirmed “more than sufficient capacity.” Resident concerns, he noted, were typically a matter of convenience rather than shortage, with many desiring to park directly in front of their unit.

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Addressing landscaping, Mr. Fusco reported that management had already initiated a foundation-planting program prior to the hearing. The program included removal of aging shrubs, installation of new plant groupings along two sides of each building, and a commitment to ongoing maintenance.

When asked why rear areas were omitted, he explained that the backs of buildings contain underground utilities—gas, electric, sewer, and telecom—and present both security and maintenance challenges, making additional plantings impractical.

Regarding dumpster orientation, Board members questioned the “caddy-corner” arrangement shown on the plans. Mr. Fusco stated that the layout was derived from a truck-turning analysis (Exhibit A-4) based on 35- to 40-foot collection vehicles operating within 24-foot travel aisles. The angled placement permits safe pickup and return while protecting the enclosures. Each enclosure will feature a concrete pad and apron, earth-tone vinyl fencing on three sides with an open front, bollards for truck protection, and landscape buffers where feasible. The design, he added, was developed in consultation with county solid-waste and recycling haulers to ensure operational compatibility.

Engineer’s Report and Board Findings

Board Engineer Fred Turek, P.E. presented photographs and a memorandum dated October 6, 2025, summarizing his review of the proposal. Mr. Turek noted that historic aerials showed a marked decline in vegetation over several decades, leaving the 40-plus-acre property largely barren. The applicant proposed only 39 new trees (13 in Phase 1, 8 in Phase 2, and 18 in Phase 3). Mr. Turek recommended that a total of approximately 361 replacement trees—a mix of ornamental, shade, and evergreen species—be planted to restore canopy coverage and enhance neighborhood character.

Additional recommendations included expanding foundation plantings to three sides of each building (four for corner units); ensuring MUTCD-compliant signage and stop bars; obtaining Fire Official approval for constrained access points along Madison Drive (Phase 3); adding a note requiring coordination with the Township Engineer if grading issues arise; installing an evergreen buffer along Route 73 to screen the enclosures; and utilizing native, mixed species to prevent monoculture loss. Applicant’s counsel Thomas Coleman, Esq. acknowledged the recommendations but stated that the scope—particularly the 361-tree requirement—would be financially excessive. Chairman Gee emphasized that while economic hardship is not grounds for relief, the Board could support phased compliance to balance feasibility and sustainability. After discussion, Board Engineer Turek endorsed a phased approach, and Board Member Kozierachi proposed a five- to six-year schedule. Mr. Rivera, representing property management, agreed to a six-year planting plan totaling 200 trees (approximately 33 per year) coordinated with the Township Engineer.

Public Comment

During public comment, Mayor Heather Talarico of 553 Cutler Avenue inquired about the new dumpster locations (highlighted in pink on the plans) and tree counts. She voiced support for enhanced landscaping but regarded 361 trees as excessive, encouraging a balanced approach with ornamental and foundation plantings.

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No additional public comments were offered.

Following extensive discussion regarding the scope of the landscaping and tree replacement requirements, the Board continued to deliberate on a reasonable compromise between the applicant's proposal and the Engineer's recommendations.

Chairman Gee summarized that while the Engineer's memorandum called for approximately 361 new trees, the applicant had offered to plant 200 trees over a six-year period, or roughly 33 to 34 trees per year, as a phased approach. The Chairman noted that such a program would allow the landscaping to mature gradually and would mitigate the burden of large-scale replacement in the future, while also preventing a scenario where all plantings would age and require replacement simultaneously decades later.

Board members discussed the phasing concept and agreed that the long-term approach would promote sustainability, reduce financial strain on ownership, and result in more consistent ongoing maintenance. Several members commented that the phasing would help ensure continuous oversight and replenishment of any trees lost during growth periods.

During the deliberation, Ms. Radie inquired about the overall scale of the project, confirming that the property included approximately 1,490 units. She asked for clarification on the average rental rates, to which the applicant's representative, Mr. Rivera, responded that one-bedroom units rent for approximately \$1,500 per month, and two-bedroom units for about \$1,700 per month. Members noted the overall size and revenue of the complex and emphasized that the improvements should reflect a commitment to the community's livability and appearance.

Ms. Bebitch remarked that the project was not merely a "store with a dumpster behind it," but rather a large residential community where landscaping significantly impacts residents' quality of life. She recognized the applicant's recent investments in the community center and pool area but stressed that landscaping and tree replacement were integral to maintaining a welcoming environment for tenants.

Chairman Gee reiterated that economic hardship is not grounds for variance relief but acknowledged the applicant's willingness to compromise. The Board informally expressed support for a phased approach and suggested a five- to six-year implementation period to reach a total tree count in the range of 200–300 trees.

After additional discussion, Ms. Mortimer moved to require the applicant be subject to the Board Engineer's recommendations for tree planting and landscaping, including a six-year phased schedule to complete the installation of approximately 320 trees, inclusive of rear-yard plantings, as outlined in the Engineer's October 6, 2025 memorandum. Ms. Radie seconded the motion.

Before the Board could proceed with a roll-call vote, Attorney Thomas Coleman, on behalf of the applicant, formally withdrew the application without prejudice, stating that the proposed conditions exceeded the client's financial and logistical capacity. Chairman Gee accepted the withdrawal, and no further action was taken on the application.

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Ms. Bebitch							
Ms. Kozierachi							
Mr. Lazar, Alt #4							
Mr. McDonald, Alt #1							
Ms. Mortimer							
Ms. Reeves, Alt #3							
Mr. Stevens							
Ms. Valentino							
Mr. Zerega							
Ms. Radie							
Chairman Gee							

VI. Miscellaneous:

1. **Minutes:** September 10th, 2025

	Motion	Second	Ayes	Nays	Abstain
Ms. Bebitch			X		
Ms. Kozierachi			X		
Mr. Lazar, Alt #4					
Mr. McDonald, Alt #1			X		
Ms. Mortimer			X		
Ms. Reeves, Alt #3					
Mr. Stevens	X		X		
Ms. Valentino			X		
Mr. Zerega			X		
Ms. Radie			X		
Chairman Gee		X	X		

2. **Resolutions:**

Resolution No. ZBA-2025-07 – Resolution Granting Use Variance, Bulk Variance and Minor Site Plan Approval for Solar Panel Installation on Block 189, Lot 3, Tax Map of the Township of Maple Shade

Board Attorney Kingsbury presented Resolution 2025-ZB-10, memorializing the Board’s prior approval of the Solar Landscape LLC application for property located at 593 Route 38 in the BD Zone. The application sought a use variance to permit the installation of roof-mounted solar panels and an accessory ground-level equipment area on a 5.4-acre parcel.

The resolution recounted extensive testimony from Courtney Breeze, Project Manager for Solar Landscape, and Andrew Janu, P.P., the project planner, who testified to the public benefits of solar generation, the minimal visual impact of the proposed installation, and its alignment with state energy policy encouraging renewable energy development. The Board previously found that the application met

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the positive and negative criteria for a use variance and would not produce substantial detriment to the public good or the zoning plan.

Conditions of approval included implementation of a landscaping and screening plan to be reviewed and approved by the Board Engineer, and repair of fencing as necessary.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Resolution 2025-ZB-07 (Solar Landscape LLC) was adopted unanimously.

	Motion	Second	Ayes	Nays	Abstain
Ms. Bebitch		X	X		
Ms. Kozierachi			X		
Mr. Lazar, Alt #4					
Mr. McDonald, Alt #1					
Ms. Mortimer					
Ms. Reeves, Alt #3			X		
Mr. Stevens					
Ms. Valentino					
Mr. Zerega					
Ms. Radie	X		X		
Chairman Gee			X		

3. Discussion Items:

Mr. Wagner (Director of Community Development) reminded the Board that, since Fox Meadow’s application was withdrawn, the complex remains subject to Township Property Maintenance Ordinance §152, and violations will be issued for non-compliant dumpster enclosures.

VII. Adjourn: Next Meeting – November 12th, 2025

Chairman Gee made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Michael Stevens. All members present voted in favor by stating “aye.” There were no objections.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Danson, MPA, QPA, ICMA-CM
Board Secretary Pro Tem