

Board of Zoning Appeals Hearing Minutes
Application 26-038

Greenfield Township, Fairfield County, Ohio

Hearing called to order by Elizabeth McNeese on 7/13/2026 at 6:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Lee Winters: here, Dave Bichard: here, Elizabeth McNeese: here, Amy Brown: here, Danielle Keefer: here, Leann Racki: here

Elizabeth McNeese notes this is an official proceeding. Everyone here has signed in. We are recording it and the minutes will be published on the township website and the recording will be available by public records request.

Applicant: Sandy Young

Application number: 26-038

Tax Parcel #: 0410112110

Address: 4560 Wilson Road NW, Lancaster OH 43130

Current Zoning Classification: R1

Development standard: Greenfield Township Zoning Code June 10, 2026

310.06(A) Lot area:

For all parcels in the R-1, the lot area shall not be less than two (2.0) acres or such size as determined by the Fairfield County Health Department for the provision of on-site water and sanitary systems, whichever is larger.

Variance: Applicant is asking for a lot area of 1.507 acres MOL per divorce decree 24DR400, page 3 of 13,"...Defendant will transfer to the Plaintiff, via a general warranty deed, free and clear of any and all claims of him, an approximate 1.5 acre tract from this real estate, which is further described as the further east lot on the property..."

Zoning Inspector Jeff Williamsen is sworn in and asked to give background on the variance request. He notes that the way a lot split works in the county requires an application which is reviewed by all departments, and when it comes to the Zoning Inspector, he is asked to review and approve it. He cannot approve it because it does not meet the 2-acre minimum of the township. He thinks that what happened is that the 1.5 acres was minimum when the divorce proceedings began but the Zoning Board changed the minimum requirement to 2 acres before the divorce was finalized.

Elizabeth McNeese asked to clarify that the property meets all other requirements for the Zoning code if approved. Jeff confirms that the property is an exact replica of the property next to it and it meets all other requirements.

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Dave Bichard notes that they basically set it up to match the property next to it, and it was set up prior to the rules change.

Shannon Young is sworn in and gives the background of the request. He notes his former wife and he are co-owners of the parcel in question. He discussed the 2 lots noted in the drawings. One lot has already been sold and built upon. The owner is familiar with Mr. Young. The second lot was offered to another couple, but the sale was never completed because of personal issues with the couple. All of the background work was completed, but the sale could not be completed.

Elizabeth asks Mr. Young about the potential intent of the party interested in purchasing the lot, but he does not know.

Danielle Keefer asks for clarification between an area variance and use variance being requested for this lot. Mr. Young states he has not made the request for the variance, and Jeff Williamsen confirms it is a variance for area.

Elizabeth asks how big the lot in question is now. 1.507 is the current area of the lot.

No further questions for Mr. Young. He does note that he has been willing to sell the additional 0.5 acre to her to make the lot 2.0 acres, which would satisfy the current zoning codes. If that is not possible, he asks for the same variance be made to the other 1.5 acre lot to allow for equal property lines.

Jeff notes that the sticking point is the court order, which states 1.5 acres. Jeff notes that he is not an attorney or judge, but from those he has consulted with, there is no choice but to follow the order. Mr. Young asks why the split has not been done and Jeff notes that it cannot be done without variance due to the change in the zoning codes.

Amy Brown asks if either party has gone back to the attorneys or the courts to have the document modified given the change in the zoning codes. Mr. Young indicates that he has not.

Dave Bichard asks for clarification about the current ownership of the property. Mr. Young notes that currently, all the property is owned jointly by both Mr. and the former Mrs. Young. He has signed off on the house but is waiting for this approval for the property. Dave asks about the proposed sale of the additional 0.5 acre, and the current owners. Mr. Young notes that currently, both of their names are still on it. Dave proposes that he could do a survey, add her name on it and the additional money for the 0.5 acre. But it needs to have a new survey and all the other approvals for the addition of the 2.0 acre.

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Jeff notes there is a provision in the lot split program if it does not meet the code, a variance can be requested. It could be done with the 1.5 acres. If they want to work something out with an additional 0.5 acre, they could, but Jeff notes he would not take a chance without having something in writing. Dave notes before doing the variance, they could have worked that out, but Jeff reports he was told that would not happen. Those decisions needed to be made prior to the court order.

There is a question about the timing of the court order and the divorce decree. The divorce was finalized in March of 2026, but started in 2024, when the codes allowed 1.5 acre. Mr. Young notes he never intended to give up the 1.5 acres, and this is a concession he made.

Elizabeth asks about the 1.5 lot split agreement and Mr. Young notes the attorneys proposed this. He intended for his former wife to have the house, and he would keep the land. The house was always worth twice the value of the land until just recently with an increase in the value of the land. The land was given to him by his mother 6 months after her death. Dave confirms that the Board must consider just the 1.5 acre at this time, not the additional 0.5 acre.

Elizabeth clarifies the Board's objective is not to assess the court order, but we do need to ask questions about the intent and attempt to resolve the issue in other ways. To determine if they have exhausted all their other options. We are not judging the decree itself, and we have no say over that decree.

Amy Brown notes that the dates on the divorce decree display an error in dates. The first sentence states this came to a hearing on March 25, 2025. Should that be 2026? It looks like the answer was not even filed until December 2025. Mr. Young feels this seems like a typo. Sandy Young notes there is a correction on a later page.

Elizabeth notes that all of this was finalized in March 2026, but that particular rule change happened in March of 2025. She asks for a timeline on the proposed lot split as drawn on the map. They indicate this was drawn up in 2021, well before the divorce.

Elizabeth asks if they were aware of the change in the code, but Mr. Young states he was not until Sandy informed him after the decree.

Lee Winters asks if the one lot is already owned by someone. Mr. Young states yes, and they have built a house on it already. Lee notes that the only lot in question is the other, east lot.

No further questions for Mr. Young.

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Sandy Young is sworn in. She gives the background from her perspective. She notes she applied for the variance because she was unable to complete the transfer of the lot due to the change in the code. She notes in 2021 they were in the process of selling both lots, but the sale of this current lot fell through twice, once in 2021 and again in 2023. So, with the divorce, she was granted 1.5 acres out of a roughly 20-acre lot. When she found out that 2 acres is now the minimum, she applied for the variance. They cannot sign off on this until the lot is officially in her name only, which requires this variance approval.

Dave asks what would happen if the variance is not granted. She notes this would cause financial hardship since she could not do anything with the lot. He asks if it could be transferred or built upon and Jeff notes it could not be sold, transferred or built upon in the current state. So, Dave concludes that Sandy would lose the 1.5-acre lot and require additional attorney fees to change things. Mr. Young reports the owner of the other lot is interested in purchasing more land from him, but at this time the 1.5-acre lot is held up due to the need for a variance.

Amy Brown suggests to return to the attorneys. It sounds like the intent of the decree was that Mr. Young would transfer a lot to Mrs. Young that could be sold, but given this information regarding the code change, it cannot. So, if you could go back and re-negotiate this to the 2-acre minimum. We need to consider if all other options have been exhausted and this has not been attempted.

Mrs. Young states that Mr. Young is not willing to give an additional 0.5 acre. He was reluctant to give any land to her, as he felt the house was worth more than the land. She notes this is not true at this time.

Amy notes that they can look at the intent of the agreement, which was to include a lot that could be transferred and sold. Mr. Young indicates there was no intent to split the land in any way until that very last day in court.

No further questions, but Lee Winters suggests an executive session for further discussion. Amy Brown seconds the motion.

Mrs. Young asks that we consider the court order and allow her to move forward with the transfer of the lot.

Vote for the motion to go into executive session:

Lee Winters: yes, Dave Bichard: yes, Elizabeth McNeese: yes, Amy Brown: yes, Leann Racki: yes

Adjourn for deliberation at 6:23pm

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Board members return from executive session at 6:41 PM. Motion made to return and the vote:

Lee Winters: yes, Dave Bichard: yes, Elizabeth McNeese: yes, Amy Brown: yes, Leann Racki: yes

Elizabeth McNeese notes the Board members have additional questions. Danielle asks Jeff Williamsen to confirm the Health Department has approved the lot for onsite water and septic at 1.5 acres. Jeff notes there should be a septic report in the packet. The Board notes it is not in there, but Mrs. Young is able to produce a digital document for Board members to review, which confirms the lot soil was tested and has been approved for water and septic.

Elizabeth clarifies the Health Department did the survey in 2021 and the site has not been surveyed since the rule change. No additional surveys have been completed since 2021.

Amy Brown asks about the timeline for the divorce. November 2024 is when the initial divorce filing was made. Hearing was completed in March 2026, even though the document states March 2025. Then a couple weeks later, in April 2026, the judge issued a judgment decree of divorce, memorializing that hearing. She asks how long after that April 2026 date did she reach out to Jeff Williamsen about the need for a variance.

Mrs. Young states that as soon as the divorce was final, she began to work to get her name off the rest of the property and to transfer the 1.5-acre lot to her name with a quick claim deed. She looked online to be sure there were no changes, and when she discovered the change, she reached out to Jeff. Jeff found evidence of a first meeting with Sandy Young on May 12, 2026.

Amy asks if either party contacted the township prior to the finalized divorce hearing to check the codes for this property. Mrs. Young indicates they had not, but assumed it was still 1.5 acres. Amy asks how they came up with the 1.5-acre lot amount. Mrs. Young states the lot was surveyed in 2021 and at that time it met the minimum 1.5 acres, at the same time the other lot sold. She notes they did not even think about the possibility of the zoning codes changing.

Elizabeth asks if at any time after they found out the requirements had changed, they contacted their attorneys. Mrs. Young states she did inform her attorney that the requirements have changed. She notes he offered to meet with her again to discuss options, but she was trying to avoid further attorney fees, if possible, due to the high costs. Mrs. Young opted to talk to Jeff Williamsen instead to explore options. She felt it was a relatively small amount of land and a recent change, so she opted to seek a variance.

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Mr. Young notes he spoke with Sandy about the change in requirement after she contacted Jeff and he also emailed his attorney about the change, but is also trying to avoid further attorney fees.

Amy notes we cannot give them legal advice, but we are asking these to determine hardship if the variance were denied. She questioned Mrs. Young about the hardship and value of the property change if it were considered while they were negotiating throughout 2025. Mrs. Young indicates the intent was to exchange the lot rather than money to allow her to sell it. Mr. Young did not have any cash to give and the only thing they have of value was the land. She notes she has had a kitchen in disrepair for several years and she needs to have some money to complete the renovations. Amy asks for clarification that the kitchen discussed is in the house they lived in together, which has been given to her in the divorce. Mrs. Young confirms these are 2 separate properties discussed.

Amy asks if the variance option with the Board was the path of least resistance to resolve this issue. Mrs. Young indicates it was the easiest route since the lot had already been surveyed and was consistent with the other lot they sold a few years ago.

Amy notes the intent of the rules for the appeal process states that the applicants should have exhausted all other avenues before coming to the Board and asking for an exception to the rules as written. Mrs. Young notes that they tried to agree upon the split of the land and could not come to an agreement. They have not gone back to the attorneys to attempt to remedy this with the courts, other than letting them know the reason for the delay in completing the transfer of the property.

Amy asks Jeff about the variance again, being an area variance or a use variance since this essentially grants use of a property that does not currently meet the 2.0-acre requirement. Mrs. Young notes she intends to use the property to sell it. Jeff notes it would be an area variance since we are discussing the area of the lot size. Dave Richard reads the definition of an area variance which includes the size of the lot.

Danielle asks if there could be a use AND area variance at the same time, but Jeff notes it does not differentiate that at all in the application. Dave believes a use variance would be changing the use of the land such as residential vs business.

Leann Racki asks at this time, if the variance is approved, would the lot be able to be sold and built upon as it is, with the 1.5 acres instead of the 2 acres. Jeff notes that yes, it would allow this, and the next steps of approval would need to happen, but essentially, yes, it would be able to be sold and built upon.

Elizabeth asks if the variance is approved, making it a sellable property, would it remedy Mrs. Young's financial hardship? Mrs. Young notes it would be very helpful, as the lot is

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useless if she is not able to sell the lot. She would essentially just be giving Mr. Young back what she was given or holding it up and making it un-useable.

Elizabeth asks about the value of the property again. Mrs. Young has asked some realtors their professional opinion. Elizabeth asks if she were able to seek the modified divorce decree with the attorneys, would that also relieve her financial hardship. Mrs. Young states she is unsure, and it is dependent upon the amount of time and cost required to re-negotiate or modify the decree. Amy Brown asks if Mrs. Young has asked if it is possible he will not charge her for the modification of the divorce decree since the lot is not sell-able as was the intent of the decree. Mrs. Young states she has not.

Mr. Young notes that he is also experiencing financial hardship due to this property being tied up as well. The variance would also alleviate his hardship at this time as well.

Dave Bichard makes a motion to approve the lot split variance requested at 4560 Wilson Road from the 2-acre requirement to the 1.5 acres. Lee Winters seconds the motion.

Vote: Lee Winters: yes, Dave Bichard: yes, Elizabeth McNeese: no, Amy Brown: no, Leann Racki: yes

Elizabeth notes the motion carries and the variance is approved.

She notes the minutes will need to be approved and the variance will be good 30 days from now.

Leann Racki makes a motion to adjourn. Dave Bichard seconds the motion.

Vote: Lee Winters: yes, Dave Bichard: yes, Elizabeth McNeese: no, Amy Brown: no, Leann Racki: yes

Meeting is adjourned at 7:14 PM

Minutes Approved 7/28/26