

Minutes  
City of Syracuse  
Board of Zoning Appeals  
Thursday, September 4th, 2025  
1:00 p.m.  
Common Council Chamber

I. Meeting called to order at 1:01 PM

Member Present

Mr. Michael Cheslik	Yes
Ms. Honora Spillane	Yes
Ms. Karen Gillette	Yes
Mr. Otis Jennings	Yes
Mr. Liam Kirst	Yes
Mr. Vincent Ryan	Yes
Ms. Katelyn Wright	Yes

Staff Present

Mr. Jake Dishaw	Yes
Ms. Meira Hertzberg	Yes
Mr. Cristian Toellner	Yes
Mr. Zhitong Wu	Yes
Mr. Nate Pan	Yes
Ms. Amber Dillon	Yes
Mr. Noah Garcia	No

I. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve July 24th, 2025 meeting minutes was made by Mr. Jennings, and seconded by Mr. Kirst. The motion carried unanimously.

II. Public Hearings

A. New Business

1) V-25-01

**Area Variance to encroach on the minimum 4-foot side setback requirement for the primary structure.**

**520 Cortland Ave.**

**John Thomas, Gladys Thomas (Owner)**

**R2 Zone District**

John Thomas, the applicant of the area variance application, presented the application. They are asking to seek relief from ReZone Article 2, Section 2.3B, to waive the side setback requirements for the porch they are building. The Area Variance application is requesting that the 4-foot setback requirement for structures in the R2 Zone District be waived. The porch makes it easier for him and his wife to navigate their way to the basement, and they would have to remove the entire porch if this variance was not granted. They did not realize they were building less than 4 feet away from the property line.

Zoning Administrator Jake Dishaw asked about the design of porch and how to navigate it. The applicant replied the porch will be used to get into their kitchen easier from outside.

Mr. Cheslik asked if this addition is a porch or new room in the house. The applicant replied it's just a porch.

Mr. Ryan asked who decided the width of the porch. The applicant replied that there was a deck there before and they used the width from that.

Ms. Spillane opened public comment. 2 people spoke in favor. Phil Prane spoke in favor of the application. He commented that the porch would not have any adverse effects on the neighborhood. Mr. Walter Dixie also spoke in favor of the application, speaking highly of the applicant.

None spoke in opposition.

Ms. Spillane closed public comment.

Mr. Jennings moved to approve Area Variance V-25-06 with conditions Mr. Dishaw and staff recommended. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion with a comment that he does not meet the self-created hardship criteria. Mr. Jennings stated the applicant's proposal is not substantial and will not negatively or adversely impact the neighborhood. The motion to approve Area Variance V-25-06 was passed unanimously.

**2) V-25-07**

**Area Variance to exceed the 180-foot maximum building length for the newly built multi-unit dwelling building.**

**680-682 South Ave.**

**Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation (Owner)**

**Keplinger Freeman Associates (Representative/Applicant)**

**MX-2 Zone District**

Mr. Ryan and Ms. Wright both recused themselves from this application.

The applicants from Keplinger Freeman Associates and other involved parties, Christian Freeman, Walter Dixie, Kenan Bigby, Dawson Homes, introduced the application. They are seeking approval for an Area Variance application to seek relief from ReZone, Article 4, Section 4.6, by requesting that their building length be 241.89 feet. Mr. Bigby outlined the reason for the development and how it will improve corridor connectivity while providing additional mixed-income housing options. Mr. Freeman explained the significance of this property being in the flood plain and the design of the structure.

Mr. Jennings asked if the building was to meet the zoning requirements, would they still meet the challenges of building in a flood plain. The applicant replied there is not a way to design the building that would not fall into the flood plain area.

Mr. Dixie commented that this building is an important step forward for the neighborhood.

Ms. Spillane opened public comment.

None spoke in favor or against.

Ms. Spillane closed public comment.

Mr. Kirst moved to approve Area Variance V-25-07 with conditions Mr. Dishaw and staff recommended on page 31 of the staff report. Ms. Gillette seconded the motion. Mr. Kirst stated the applicant's proposal meets all five of the area variance criteria. The motion to approve Area Variance V-25-07 was passed with 5 in favor and 2 abstentions.

**III. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn brought by Ms. Spillane, motion passes unanimously

Meeting Adjourned at 1:29 PM