

ROME CITY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

**Regular Meeting
September 23, 2025**

The Rome City Board of Zoning Appeals held their regular meeting on Thursday, September 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Rome City Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chair Kelly Morris.

Members Present:

Barb Tatman	Kelly Morris
Leigh A. Pranger-Secretary	Tom Clifton
Gerrit Geurs	

Members Absent:

Christine Coe

Rollcall determined a quorum was present.

Member Geurs made a motion to waive the reading of the minutes and approve them as presented. Second by Member Clifton. All in favor-aye. Motion Carried. The minutes were posted on the bulletin board for everyone to read.

Interested Parties in attendance: Town Attorney Dustin Glick, Frank and Cris Kopecky, Austin Buescher, Jodie Swaney, and Denise Blad.

NEW BUSINESS

Variance #2025-21

Denise Blad, 770 Lakeside Drive, Rome City, IN 46784 is requesting a variance from the Rome City Unified Development Code, Lake Residential District, Article 2.12 Maximum primary structure height of thirty-five feet up to thirty-seven feet and four inches. For the construction of cupola on the roof.

Chair Morris called for Ms. Blad to present her petition to the board. Ms. Blad presented the board with a plot plan, blueprints of the house and findings on the proposed variance. She stated she would like to build a new house with cupola on the roof. She noted the height of the roof is 33'3" the addition of the cupola put the top at 37'4". She is requesting a variance from the maximum height of 35' up to 37'4" in the amount of 2'4". She stated she owns the garage behind the house and addition of the cupola will not obstruct anyone's view. Presidnet Morris stated the house has been torn down and you have a blank slate so you can meet the code. Ms. Blad stated she would have to change the structure of the house as it has cathedral ceilings, she is not sure how that would look. Presidnet Morris stated you have not given the board reason to vary from the code. State law lays out the reasons the board can grant a variance, and your presentation does not give board any reasons to variance. Member Tatman asked what the cupola would be used for? Ms. Blad, she added the cupola because she thought the house looked plain from the road. Chair Morris asked about reducing the roof rafters to adjust the height down

2'4". Ms. Blad stated no, due to the cathedral ceiling. Presidnet Morris stated the board can not grant a variance on the basis you want the variance there has to be a reason, such as there is a hill, the lot lines are angled, the existing house does not meet the setbacks. Ms. Blad asked to call her building Lynn Delagrange. The board agreed. Mr. Delagrange stated ordinances ensure the best products, in a way that the variance does not affect others negatively. Ms. Blad is only asking for a three-foot variance out of the rest of the roof which does comply. Chair Morris stated the house has been demolition and you now have a blank lot; you should be able to meet the code. Because the cupola is aesthetically pleasing, it is not a reason for the board to grant the variance. Pranger asked if there is a way for the roof height to be reduced by 2' 4"?

Mr. Delagrange stated they would have to flatten the whole structure down, when the variance is only three feet of the roof line. He noted the roof could be lowered but it would not be aesthetically pleasing. Member Geurs stated that we have already established the structure we are working with, and it doesn't seem the petitioner wants to change the structure to meet the code. He recommended the board vote.

Chair Morris called for interested parties on Variance #2025-21. Secretary Pranger informed the board the adjoining owners were notified and none returned with no comments. No one was present in the audience on Variance #2025-21. There being no further discussion Chair Morris called for a motion. Member Tatman made a motion to deny variance #2025-21 as the variance is not necessary the petition has a blank lot and could meet the code. Second by Member Morris. All in favor-aye. Motion Carried. Variance #2025-21 Denied.

Variance #2025-25

Frank and Cris Kopecky, 620 Lakeside Drive, Rome City, IN 46784 are requesting a variance from the Rome City Unified Development Code, Lake Residential District, Article 2.12 minimum street yard setback of twenty-five feet down to nineteen feet. For the construction of porch onto the existing home. Chair Morris called for the petitioner to present their petition to the board. Austin Buescher, contractor for Kopecky's, addressed the board with the plot plan. The plan showed the addition to the house, which does not need a variance, and the porch. Mr. Buescher stated they will be adding to the existing porch, and it will remain open. Mrs. Kopecky informed the board she likes to decorate her house on the outside and would like to add to the porch to put out seasonal items and add some furniture. Mr. Buescher stated the existing porch meets the setback of 25' but the addition to the porch will be 21' at the closest point to the road. This is due to the angle of the lot line on the roadside of the property as it narrows as it runs to the south. He noted the additions will not impair anyone's view. Mr. Buescher passed out photos of the existing house with the porch. He also distributed a survey showing how the lot line runs at an angle. There being no further questions Chair Morris called for interested parties. Secretary Pranger informed the board that two out of the three neighbors returned the notice, with VanOsdale stating their approval of the construction. There were no interested parties in attendance. Presidnet Morris called for a motion. Member Geurs made a motion to approve Variance #2025-25 as presented per the findings of fact. Second, by Member Clifton. All in favor-aye.

Tabled-Appeal #2025-12-waiting on court date

Appeal by Larry Weisenberger, 1115 Pleasant Point, Rome City from Zoning Administrator's

402 Kelly Street

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Rome City, IN 46784

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decision to enforce the Fence standards, 5.23 FW-04 Residential Fence Standards B. Location 2. Side Yard or rear yard in the Rome City Unified Development Ordinance.

OLD BUSINESS-Tabled from January meeting-update from Attorney Glick

Variance #2025-02

Bret and Jodie Swaney, 6714 Laysan Teal Cove, Fort Wayne, IN 46845, owners of 1498 North Shore Drive, Rome City, IN 46784 are requesting variances from the Rome City Unified Development Code, Lake Residential District, Article 5.66 SB-02 Setback Exceptions Standards A. Exceptions 6. Chimneys. This will allow the chimney two feet into the side yard setback on the east side of the house.

Attorney Glick informed the board Swaney's Attorney requested the appeal of the Zoning Administrator's interpretation be tabled. The parties are in negotiations. Member Tatman made a motion to approve the table request. Second by Member Clifton. All in favor-aye. Motion Carried.

Attorney Glick informed the board that he and Pranger met with Swaney's attorney and Neederman's Attorney to discuss a settlement. The proposal is for Mr. Swaney to remove the garage bathroom and all evidence of the upstairs plumbing; the air conditioning units be moved to the west side of the house and fines will be paid to the Town of Rome City and Mr. Nedderman. The cantilevered chimney is to remain as it is elevated ten feet above the ground. The BZA board seemed to be amenable to the settlement offer. Secretary Pranger asked that they add to the deed no other restrooms or expansion of restrooms in the garage and no future variances can be requested on the east side of the property.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Nothing for the agenda

There being no further business, Member Tatman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 p.m. Second by Member Geurs. All in favor-aye. Motion Carried.



Kelly Morris, Chair BZA

Attest: 

Leigh A. Pranger, Secretary