



**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA  
TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025  
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
161 E. GRAND RIVER AVE., WILLIAMSTON, MI  
Phone (517) 655-2774  
6:00 pm**

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Audience Participation- Maximum 5 minutes per presentation. Subject matter on non-agenda & agenda items
5. Approval of Agenda
6. Zoning Board of Appeals Regular Minutes of March 11, 2025
7. Public Hearing- Zoning Variance for Parcel ID 33-18-07-02-126-008, 3448 Corwin Road
  - a. Open Public Hearing – 6:01 p.m.
  - b. Chair states purpose of hearing and rules of procedure as deemed necessary
  - c. Presentation by staff summarizing the item
  - d. Questions from Board to staff
  - e. Presentation by Applicant
  - f. Questions from Board to Applicant
  - g. Testimony from public
    - i. Presentation of written comments
    - ii. Presentation of oral comments (-Supporters of Request, -Opponents of Request)
  - h. Concluding comments from staff
  - i. Concluding comments from applicant
  - j. Concluding questions or comments from Board
  - k. Close public hearing
8. Action Items
  - a. Zoning Variance for Parcel ID 33-18-07-02-126-008, 3448 Corwin Road
  - b.
  - c.
9. Discussion Items
  - a.
10. Information Only
  - a.
11. Audience Participation
12. Member Comments
13. Adjournment

**Individuals with disabilities requiring special assistance that are planning to attend a Zoning Board of Appeals meeting should contact the City Clerk by writing or calling at least 2 days in advance of the meeting that will be attended.**

**THE NEXT REGULAR ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025 AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS.**

**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
MARCH 11, 2025  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**1. Call To Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers by Chairman Robert DeGarmo and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. Roll Call:**

Chairman Robert DeGarmo, Vice Chair Derik Feldpausch, Board Members Scott VanAllsburg, and Steve Panganis. Absent: None.

Also Present: City Deputy Clerk Barbara Burke, City Attorney Timothy Perrone, McKenna representative Liz Hart, applicant Jaremy Jess with Storage Near Me LLC, and Raelynn Iaquinto and Cheryl Heuer with Creek Club Apartments.

**4. Audience Participation:**

Chairman DeGarmo called for public comments at this time and there were none.

**5. Approval of Agenda:**

Motion by **Panganis**, second by **Feldpausch**, to approve the agenda as presented.  
**Motion passed by voice vote.**

**6. Zoning Board of Appeals Regular Minutes of February 11, 2025:**

Motion by **Feldpausch**, second by **Panganis**, to approve the February 11, 2025 minutes as presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

**7. Public Hearing- Dimensional Variance for Parcel ID 33-18-07-02-126-008, 3448 Corwin Road:**

**7a. Open Public Hearing:**

Chairman DeGarmo opened the public hearing at 7:02 p.m.

**7b. Chair States the Purpose of the Hearing and Rules of Procedure:**

Chairman DeGarmo explained the purpose of the public hearing and rules of procedure.

**7c. Presentation by Staff Summarizing the Item:**

McKenna Planner Hart went over the written report from McKenna stating the applicant is requesting a variance for a 20-foot reduction to the rear yard setback from ordinance standards for parcel ID 33-18-07-02-126-008, 3448 Corwin Road. This variance was previously approved by the ZBA in September of 2023, but the variance expired after one year due to the lack of a building permit being obtained.

**7d. Questions from Board to Staff:**

Board member VanAllsburg asked about traffic flow.



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**7e. Presentation by Applicant:**

Mr. Jesse said the previous building burned in 2021 and he purchased the property from the former owner. He has done phase 1-2 of the environmental studies. This facility will be state of the art, gated, lighted, top of the line technology, etc.

**7f. Questions from Board to Applicant:**

Chairman DeGarmo spoke about the 20-foot reduction.

Board member Panganis asked about access points and if there was an office on-site. Applicant Jesse said there is no office on-site, it is all done online. He described the access/entrances and the building.

**7g. Testimony from Public:**

1. **Presentation of Written Comments:**

A letter was received from Subhash Gupta, M.D., Ph.D., owner of Creek Club Apartments, about their concerns.

2. **Presentation of Oral Comments:**

Raelynn Iaquinto (manager) and Cheryl Heuer (property manager) with Creek Club Apartments both spoke on Creek Club's concerns, including privacy for their residents, aesthetics, lighting, crime, safety, etc.

**7h. Concluding Comments from Staff:**

Attorney Perrone provided three resolutions for consideration of the variance. As this variance was previously approved by the ZBA in September of 2023, if the Board comes to a different decision than the September 2023 decision, the Board will have to describe reasons as to why.

**7i. Concluding Questions or Comments from Applicant:**

Applicant Jesse feels this would be a great fit in the community, this would be a good use of this space, it is low impact, and non-intrusive.

**7j. Concluding Questions or Comments from Board:**

Chairman DeGarmo asked the applicant for an estimate as to how many cars per day would visit the facility. Applicant Jesse said approximately 5-6 per day.

Chairman DeGarmo asked about hours traffic may visit the facility, especially from 9pm-6am. Applicant Jesse said generally there is zero traffic during night hours; most traffic is during the hours of 7a-7p.

Board member VanAllsburg asked Creek Club if they had any regulations on visitor hours.

Chairman DeGarmo asked about fencing. Applicant Jesse said he wants to be a good neighbor.

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**7k. Close Public Hearing:**

Chairman DeGarmo closed the public hearing at 7:37 p.m.

**8. Action Items**

**8a. Dimensional Variance for 3448 Corwin Road, Parcel ID 33-18-07-02-126-008**

Motion by **Feldpausch**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to adopt resolution Option 2, Granting Variance with Conditions:

**RESOLUTION OPTION 2 – GRANTING VARIANCE WITH CONDITIONS**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Williamston Board of Zoning Appeals hereby finds, with respect to the request for the variance requested by Storage Near Me, LLC, Applicant, of 1057 Frost Rd., Williamston, Michigan, from the rear yard setback requirements under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamston, Article 2, Section 2.311, for a 20 foot variance in the 50 foot rear yard setback in the I-2 Industrial District to allow for the construction of a 12,000 sq. ft. storage facility (mini-warehouse) on the property located at 3448 Corwin Rd., Williamston, Michigan, Tax ID No. 33-18-07-02-126-008, as follows:

1. That the rear yard setback variance is necessary because compliance with the strict letter of the rear yard setback requirements will unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose, or will render conformity with the standards unnecessarily burdensome. The 0.8 acre property was previously split from a larger parcel, and does not meet the current minimum 2-acre lot size, which would have accommodated the proposed 12,000 sq. ft. building without a setback variance. A smaller building for the intended use that met setback requirements would not be economically feasible.
2. That the rear yard setback variance is necessary because a grant of the variance will do substantial justice to the applicant as well as to other property owners in the zoning district, and a lesser variance will not give substantial relief to the applicant as well as be more consistent with justice to other property owners in the district. The variance will allow the economical development of the vacant property, create jobs, and revitalize the industrial district. A lesser variance is not possible due to the non-conforming lot size and the need for a building large enough to be financially feasible.
3. That the plight of the applicant is due to the unique circumstances of the property. The property is unique in that it was split from a larger parcel and does not conform to the minimum lot size. A financially feasible structure cannot be constructed elsewhere on the property.
4. That the problem to be addressed by the rear yard setback variance is not self-created. The lot was split from a larger parcel before the applicant acquired it.



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Without the variance, a financially feasible structure could not be built on the property.

5. That the rear yard setback variance will allow the spirit of the Zoning Ordinance to be observed, public safety and welfare secured, and substantial justice done. A grant of the rear yard setback variance would permit economically reasonable development of the property, which is adjacent to other industrial property, consistent with the City's Master Plan, and is harmonious with similar setbacks in the I-2 district and surrounding properties. Public safety will not be impaired.
6. That the variance will not impair adequate supply of light and air to adjacent properties, unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets, increase the danger of fire or endanger public health, or unreasonably diminish established property values within the surrounding area. Approval of the variance will not negatively impact other properties, property values, or the public health. The actual development of the property will require Planning Commission approval of a site plan.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that based in the aforementioned findings, the Applicant's variance is hereby granted to permit the development of the property by allowing a 20 foot variance in the 50 foot rear yard setback requirement, resulting in a 30 foot setback on the rear (east) line of the property, to allow the construction of a 12,000 sq. ft. storage facility (mini-warehouse), consistent with an approved site plan.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the variance granted to Applicant, shall be subject to strict compliance with the following condition:

1. The variance must be used within one (1) year from this date.

Yes: VanAllsburg, DeGarmo, Feldpausch, Panganis. No: None. **Motion passed.**

**8b. Election of Chair and Vice Chair:**

Motion by **Feldpausch**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to elect DeGarmo as Chair. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

Motion by **Panganis**, second by **VanAllsburg**, to elect Feldpausch as Vice Chair. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

**11. Audience Participation:**

Chairman DeGarmo called for public comments at this time and there were none.

**12. Member Comments:**

Board member Panganis thanked McKenna Planner Liz Hart for a great presentation.

**13. Adjournment:**

Chairman DeGarmo adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

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**Meeting Adjourned at 7:45 p.m.**

**\*THE PRECEDING MINUTES ARE A SYNOPSIS OF A ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING AND DO NOT REPRESENT A VERBATIM RECORD.**

**Respectfully Submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Barbara J. Burke, Deputy Clerk**

**Date Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT





# City of Williamston

Planning & Community Development Department

161 E. Grand River Avenue

Williamston, MI 48895

[commdev@williamston-mi.us](mailto:commdev@williamston-mi.us)

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## ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION

### PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION

Property Owner Name: Storage Near Me, LLC

Property Owner Address: 1057 Frost Rd City, State, Zip: Williamston, MI 48895

Telephone: 517-881-6347 E-Mail Address: storeit@michiganstorage.us

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

*If the applicant is NOT the property owner, please complete the following:*

Applicant Name: Jaremy Jesse

Applicant Address: 1057 Frost Rd City, State, Zip: Williamston, MI 48895

Telephone: 517-881-6347 E-Mail Address: storeit@michiganstorage.us

Applicant is: (Check box) ☒ Business Owner ☐ Architect/Engineer Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Current Property Use is: (check box) ☐ Residential ☒ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Vacant

Property Address: 3448 Corwin Rd Property Zoning District: I-2

Parcel ID Number (PIN): 33-18-07-02-126-008

Property Dimensions: Width: 113.31'-135.28' Length: 266.50'-269.93' Area: 0.76 ac

### REQUEST FOR ZBA ACTION

*Per Section 74-9.402 of the Williamston Zoning Ordinance, the ZBA has the power and duty to hear and decide appeals, interpret the zoning ordinance text and map, and grant dimensional variances. Please select the section for the type of action you are requesting and provide all relevant information in full.*

### APPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Action Requesting Appeal From: *(Describe the order, requirement, decision or determination made by the City Administration which you are requesting to be reversed or modified.)*

I-2 requires a minimum lot size of 2.0 acres, there are also 30' building side yard and 50' building front and rear setback requirements. The existing lot is 0.76 acres and the proposed building has a 20.5' (NE Corner) and 17.4' (SE Corner) encroachment requiring the rear setback be changed to 29' from the required 50' and a 3.0' (SW Corner) encroachment requiring the side yard setback be changed to 27' from the required 30'. We are also requesting a variance due to the size of the lot of the I-2 Landscaping Buffer as described by 74-7.305 to 6' from the required 25' along with the proposed landscape plantings as depicted on the attached drawing.

Grounds for Appeal: *(Present any and all information which in your opinion justifies the reversal or modification of the decision of the City Administration. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)*

The property was allowed to be previously split making it a non-conforming I-2 property prior to the purchase by Storage Near Me. The split has made the property incompatible with all uses of I-2 due to the size, setbacks and landscape buffer requirements. The proposed use of mini storage is a good fit for the surrounding area and use of this non-conforming property.

### INTERPRETATION OF ZONING ORDINANCE PROVISIONS/DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

Zoning Ordinance Section Requesting an Interpretation of: 74-3.102 & 74-7.305

Address/Location Requesting Interpretation of District Boundary: Building Setback and Area, Landscape buffer along North and East property line that abuts a C-3 district

Reason for Interpretation Request: *(State why you are requesting the above interpretation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)*

As the non-conforming property is a trapezoid shape, fitting a rectangular building within the building setbacks and adding in the required I-2 landscape buffers creates an unreasonable hardship for the use of the property.

### DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE

Zoning Ordinance Dimensional Requirement: Min. Req. Lot size is 87,120 s.f. (2.0 acres), existing lot 0.76 acres

Proposed Dimension: Existing lot (266.50' & 269.93') by (135.28' & 113.31') Requested Variance: Setback and acreage

Per Section 74-9.406(b) of the Zoning Ordinance a dimensional variance shall not be granted unless the ZBA finds that there is a practical difficulty in carrying out the specific standards of the Zoning Ordinance.

The applicant must provide evidence and/or state the reason why:

- A. Compliance with the existing regulations unreasonably prevents the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose or that such compliance is unnecessarily burdensome.

As the lot is Non-conforming and use of the property requires ZBA approval, the proposed use of a Mini-Storage is not only needed, but is a less intensive I-2 use of the property that will be harmonious with the surrounding area. Without the above requested variances the property will have a significant reduction in usability and not financially viable.



- B. Granting of the variance will do substantial justice to the applicant as well as to other property owners in the district and be more consistent with the justice provided to other property owners in the zoning district and that a lesser variance would not give sufficient relief to the applicant.

The property is situated as such that the approval of these variances will not only provide relief for the Applicant but have little to no impact on the surrounding properties as the previously split C-3 parcels provide additional buffers to this proposed property. Without the variances being approved the property will continue to be undeveloped and under utilized by the community.

- C. That there are circumstances or characteristics unique to the property that requires the need for a variance.

The size and shape of the existing lot is the primary issue for its development.

- D. That the circumstances requiring the granting of a variance are not self-created by the applicant.

The Applicant has done nothing to create the above requested area variance, the setback and landscape variance is necessary due to the non-conforming status of the property that was previously approved prior to the Applicants purchase. The size and shape of the existing lot is the primary issue for its development.

- E. That granting a variance will insure the spirit of the ordinance will be observed, public safety and welfare protected and substantial justice is provided.

The previous structure on the property was demolished after suffering a fire, the recommended environmental redevelopment of the property was to minimize previous area to mitigate any future issues. The proposed use does this while providing a needed service for the area.

#### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL ZBA DETERMINATIONS**

Per Section 74-9.403(B) of the Zoning Ordinance before granting any decision the ZBA must determine that any action meets the following criteria.

The applicant must provide evidence and/or state the reason why granting a decision in their favor:

- A. Will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property.

The proposed use is a less intensive use for the property of any other I-2 allowable uses and does not create any noxious gasses and all proposed lighting meets the zoning requirements

- B. Will not unreasonably increase congestion in public streets.

The proposed use is a less intensive use for the property of any other I-2 allowable uses and trip generation estimates of less than 5 cars a day for this size of a facility is typical.

- C. Will not increase the danger of fire or endanger the public safety.  
The proposed use is a less intensive use for the property of any other I-2 allowable uses and does present an unreasonable danger of fire or public safety.
- D. Will not unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding area.  
The proposed use is a less intensive use for the property of any other I-2 allowable uses and provides a much needed amenity to multi-family areas with limited on-site storage.
- E. Will not impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals or welfare of the inhabitants of the City.  
The proposed mini-storage will serve the community during many transitional phases of life from temporary relocations, short and long term storage of household items, retirement, business opening and closing, etc.

#### **ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

**1) Proof of Ownership:** *Provide proof of ownership such as property tax receipt or copy of deed.*

**2) Plot Plan for Dimensional Variance:** *For any request for a dimensional variance a drawing **MUST** be attached showing the property lot lines and dimensions, existing building locations, all proposed buildings, any site improvements/changes and specifically show with labels the required zoning ordinance dimension and the proposed dimension.*

#### **SIGNATURES**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (property owner), hereby give permission for Williamston City officials, staff, and consultants to go on the property for which the above referenced Zoning Board of appeals application is proposed for purposes of verifying information provided on the submitted application.

Property Owner Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

City Use Only: Fee Paid \$ _____  Date Complete Application Received: _____
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**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON, MICHIGAN  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
FOR REQUESTED ZONING VARIANCES**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE the City of Williamston Zoning Board of Appeals will conduct a Public Hearing at 6:01 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at the City of Williamston Council Chambers, 161 E. Grand River Avenue, Williamston, MI 48895.

Application has been made by Storage Near Me LLC for Zoning Variances for property located at 3448 Corwin Road, Williamston, MI 48895 (an existing building Parcel ID 33-18-07-02-126-008) Property Zoning District: I-2, Industrial.

Applicant has requested Zoning Variances from the City of Williamston Zoning Ordinance as follows:

1. Section 74-2.311 Dimension Regulations for the I-2 District to reduce the rear setback from 50 feet to 29 feet.
2. Section 74-3.102 Dimension Regulations for the I-2 District to reduce the southwest side yard setback from 30 feet to 27.
3. Section 74-7.305 Landscaping Buffer for the I-2 District to reduce the rear landscaping buffer from 25 feet to 6 feet.

Notice is hereby given as required by the City of Williamston's Zoning Ordinance and the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended. All related documentation may be reviewed, and written comments will be accepted, at the City of Williamston City Hall, 161 E. Grand River Avenue, Williamston, MI 48895, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. during all scheduled days of operation. Questions can be directed to John Hanifan, City Manager, at 517-655-2774, ext. 110, or [manager@williamston-mi.us](mailto:manager@williamston-mi.us).

Any party having an interest in the matter may attend the Public Hearing and make their comments known to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Individuals with disabilities needing special accommodations to fully participate in the meeting may contact the City Clerk to request the necessary assistance. This request must be made at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting.

Holly Thompson, City Clerk  
CITY OF WILLIAMSTON



May 8, 2025

Mr. John Hanifan, City Manager  
City of Williamston  
161 E. Grand River Avenue  
Williamston, MI 48895

**Subject: 3448 Corwin Road – Variance Review #2**

Dear Mr. Hanifan and the Williamston Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA),

The applicant is seeking a dimensional variance to reduce the required rear and side yard setbacks to construct an 11,100 square foot mini-warehouse, operating as Storage Near me, LLC. The subject site is located at 3448 Corwin Road (Parcel ID: 33-18-07-02-126-008) is 0.76 acres and is zoned I-2, Industrial District (see aerial below for an approximate location, Ingham County Parcel Viewer).



The applicant previously received ZBA approval in September 2023 for a 20-foot reduction to the rear yard setback. The variance expired after one year due to the lack of a building permit. The applicant returned to the ZBA in March 2025 for approval for the same 20-foot rear yard reduction and was granted approval. However, upon further site plan review, it was determined that an additional foot of relief is necessary for the rear yard to accommodate the proposed building. As a result, the applicant is now requesting a 21-foot reduction to the rear yard setback, bringing the required 50-foot setback down to 29 feet.

In addition, the applicant is requesting a 3-foot reduction to the total side yard requirement, specifically for the Southeast corner of the proposed building. Lastly, a reduction to the required landscape buffer in the rear yard is requested, from the required 25 feet in width to 6 feet. No landscaping is proposed within that buffer area.



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The requested variance is associated with the applicant's proposal to develop the site for a mini-warehouse facility.

The applicant received preliminary site plan approval from the Planning Commission on April 1, 2025. Final site plan approval will be required next. **The outcome of this variance request will inform the final design and review process, and the Planning Commission will be notified of the Board of Appeals decision.**

### BACKGROUND

The site is legally nonconforming due to its lot size and width, which fall below the current I-2 District requirements. The ordinance requires a minimum lot size of 2 acres and minimum lot width of 150 feet. While Section 74-2.423 of the zoning ordinance provides an exception for mini-warehouse uses, permitting them on lots as small as 1 acre with 100 feet of width, the subject property still falls short of these reduced thresholds.

With this double nonconformity, strict compliance with standard setbacks and buffer requirements would severely limit the buildable area of the site. To develop a functional mini-warehouse facility, the applicant is seeking relief from both the rear and side yard setback requirements, as well as the required landscape buffer in the rear yard. Specifically, the applicant is requesting to reduce the 25-foot-wide rear buffer to 6 feet and to eliminate the landscaping required within that area.

Although Section 74-2.423(d) of the ordinance allows the Planning Commission to modify landscaping requirements, that flexibility does not apply to required landscaped buffers. As a result, a variance is required for the proposed reduction to the rear buffer width and the elimination of landscaping.

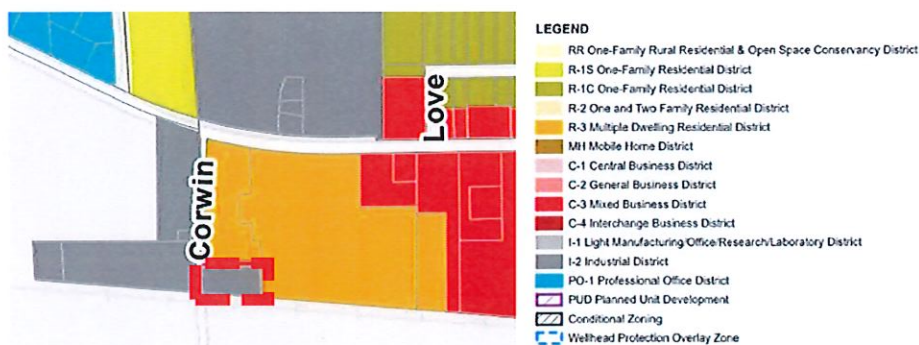
The proposed building layout has been designed to maximize site efficiency while accommodating the applicant's operational needs. However, the irregular lot shape and limited size continue to impact full compliance with zoning standards, prompting this request for dimensional relief.

### ZONING AND USE

The subject property is located in the I-2 Industrial zoning district where the proposed use, a mini-warehouse facility, is permitted by right. Positioned at the city's southern boundary, the site directly abuts a railroad corridor along its southern property line. The area is characterized by a mix of residential and industrial uses, with existing development on all sides.

The surrounding zoning and land uses are as follows:

- **North and East:** Zoned R-3 (Multiple Dwelling Residential District), with existing multi-dwelling buildings.
- **West:** Zoned I-2, with existing industrial buildings.
- **South:** Outside of city boundary/Rail Tracks



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## DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The project received preliminary site plan approval from the Planning Commission on April 1, 2025. Identified in the table below are the non-compliant dimensions, which are part of this variance request.

### I-2 District Dimensional Requirements and Proposed Site Conditions:

Zoning Ordinance Requirement Type	Mini Warehouse	I-2 District	Proposed Site Conditions	Compliance Status
Minimum Lot Area	43,560 sq. ft. (1 acre)	87,120 sq. ft. (2 acres)	34,848 sq. ft. (0.8 acres)	Nonconforming
Minimum Lot Width	100 feet	150 feet	113 feet	Nonconforming
Maximum Lot Coverage	Not provided	50%	~31%	Compliant
Minimum Front Yard Setback		50 feet	50 feet	Compliant
Minimum Side Yard Setback (one)		30 feet	30 feet	Compliant (North Side)
Minimum Side Yard Setback (total of two)		60 feet	<u>57 feet</u>	<u>Not Compliant, reduction of 3 feet on the Southeast corner of the building.</u>
Minimum Rear Yard Setback		50 feet	<u>29 feet</u>	<u>Not Compliant, reduction of 21 feet (20 foot variance previously granted).</u>

### I-2 District Buffers. Required buffer standards for property lines abutting nonindustrial zoning districts:

Regulation Type	I-2 District	Proposed	Compliance with Ordinance?
<b>Minimum Buffer Width</b> (Sec. 74-7.305.A)	25 ft.*	<u>Rear: 6 ft. at its smallest</u>	<u>Requesting variance.</u>
<b>Buffer Species Mix</b> (Sec. 74-7.305.B)	2 deciduous shade trees, 3 evergreen trees, 1 ornamental tree, and 15 shrubs per 50 feet of buffer length.	<u>None proposed</u>	<u>No, there are 6 existing evergreen trees on the abutting property.</u>  <u>Required: 6 evergreen trees, 2 ornamental trees, and 30 shrubs.</u>
<b>Grass or Ground Cover</b> (Sec. 74-7.305.C)	Grass or ground cover required for all unpaved areas, except mulch around individual trees or shrubs.	<u>Undetermined</u>	<u>Landscaping plan must clearly indicate the location and extent unpaved areas and proposed grass or ground cover.</u>

\*The ordinance does allow for a masonry wall 6 feet in height to be integrated into the buffer at the discretion of the site owner. If the wall is used, the buffer may be reduced to 12 feet in width and only the deciduous tree planting are required. The applicant is not proposing a masonry wall, they are proposing a chain linked fence which is required for mini-warehouses per the zoning ordinance.



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## VARIANCE REVIEW

Section 74-9.406A of the Zoning Ordinance grants the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) the authority to grant dimensional variance requests: *The ZBA may grant a dimensional (nonuse) variance to provide relief from a specific standard in this Ordinance relating to an area, a dimension or a construction requirement or limitation, upon the concurring vote of a majority of the members of the ZBA.*

The applicant seeks the following variances from Section 74-2.311 and Section 74-7.305 of the Zoning Ordinance:

- A reduction to the minimum rear yard setback from 50 feet to 29 feet, resulting in a 21-foot variance request.
- A reduction to the total side yard requirement of 60 feet to 57 feet, a reduction of 3 feet.
- A reduction to the required landscape buffer from 25 feet in width to 6 feet, along with a variance to eliminate the required landscaping within that buffer area.

## CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL

Section 74-9.406B stipulates that a finding of "practical difficulty" by the ZBA must be made for a dimensional variance to be granted. For a finding of practical difficulty to be made, the following criteria must be met:

**Criteria 1: Compliance with the strict letter of the restrictions governing area, setback, frontage, height, bulk, lot coverage, density or other dimensional or construction standards will unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose or will render conformity with such restrictions unnecessarily burdensome.**

The subject property was split from a larger parcel before the current zoning standards were adopted, resulting in a lot that is both smaller and narrower than required. These physical constraints significantly limit the buildable area and create practical difficulty in complying with required rear and side yard setbacks as well as the 25-foot-wide landscaped buffer along the rear yard.

Strict adherence to these dimensional requirements would make it difficult to construct a functional and economically viable mini-warehouse, even though the use itself is permitted in the I-2 District. The proposed building layout has been designed to minimize the number of variances needed and to fit the site as efficiently as possible while maintaining compatibility with surrounding development.

The applicant is also requesting a reduction in the rear landscaped buffer width from 25 feet to 6 feet with no landscaping. This request stems directly from the site's spatial limitations, not design choice. To help mitigate the lack of landscaping and preserve the spirit of the ordinance, a condition requiring a 6-foot masonry or decorative opaque wall has been proposed. This wall would provide visual screening for the adjacent R-3 residential development and offer a reasonable alternative under the circumstances.

Given the lot's pre-existing nonconformities and irregular configuration, the requested relief appears to be the minimum necessary to allow practical and reasonable use of the site without undermining the intent of the zoning ordinance.

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**Criteria 2: A grant of the variance will do substantial justice to the applicant as well as to other property owners in the district, and a lesser variance will not give substantial relief to the applicant as well as be more consistent with justice to other property owners in the zoning district.**

Granting the requested variances would support substantial justice by allowing the applicant to develop the site for a permitted industrial use while recognizing the unique constraints of the parcel and maintaining reasonable consideration for nearby property owners. The property is legally nonconforming in both size and width, and its irregular shape makes compliance with standard setbacks and buffer requirements extremely difficult without severely limiting the buildable area.

The applicant is requesting two setback reductions: a 21-foot reduction to the rear yard setback and a 3-foot reduction to the side yard requirement. These are necessary to accommodate a functional mini-warehouse layout that meets operational needs for storage capacity, circulation, and access. A lesser variance—such as shrinking the building footprint—would likely render the project economically infeasible or limit its functionality.

In addition, the applicant is requesting a variance to reduce the required 25-foot-wide rear yard landscape buffer (adjacent to an R-3 multi-family residential property) to 6 feet, with no landscaping. This reduction provides critical relief by creating enough room to construct the building, which would not be possible with a full-width buffer. While the mini-warehouse use is relatively low-intensity and the rear elevation includes no loading areas, the elimination of the landscaped buffer removes an important visual and physical separation that is typically required to protect residential neighbors.

To help mitigate this impact, a condition may be considered requiring the applicant to install a 6-foot masonry or decorative opaque wall along the rear property line in place of landscaping. While it does not replicate the full buffer, this wall would provide a durable and effective visual screen for the adjacent R-3 residential property and help preserve the intent of the ordinance. This condition would promote fairness to surrounding property owners while allowing the applicant reasonable use of the site under constrained conditions.

Based on these factors, the requested variances, with the recommended screening condition, appear to represent a fair and context-sensitive adjustment that balances relief to the applicant with compatibility with the surrounding area.

**Criteria 3: The plight of the applicant is due to the unique circumstances of the property.**

The requested variances stem from the site's unique physical characteristics, including its reduced size, nonconforming width, and irregular shape. These conditions were established prior to the applicant's ownership and are not self-created. Due to these constraints, meeting current rear and side yard setback requirements—as well as the required 25-foot-wide landscape buffer along the rear—would significantly limit the developable area and prevent reasonable use of the site for a permitted mini-warehouse.

The need for the buffer variance is directly tied to these same constraints. While the applicant proposes a 6-foot buffer with no landscaping, this reduced width is a result of the limited space available after accounting for building placement and circulation needs. To help mitigate the lack of plantings and maintain some separation from the adjacent R-3 residential development, a condition



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may be considered requiring the installation of a 6-foot masonry or opaque wall along the rear property line.

These unique physical conditions justify the need for relief and distinguish the property from others in the district, supporting approval of the variances with appropriate mitigation.

**Criteria 4: The problem is not self-created.**

The need for the requested variances is not the result of a self-created hardship. The property's lot size and width deficiencies were established when the parcel was split prior to the adoption of current zoning standards, well before the applicant acquired the site. These conditions are beyond the applicant's control and constitute a preexisting hardship rather than a situation created by the current owner.

Due to the lot's reduced size and irregular shape, strictly following the rear and side setback requirements (and providing the full 25-foot rear landscaped buffer) would significantly limit the buildable area and make the site difficult to develop for a permitted use. While a smaller building might technically fit, it could compromise the functionality, circulation, or economic viability of a mini-warehouse facility.

The request for reduced buffering is directly tied to the same physical constraints, not to site planning choices made by the applicant. Given these factors, the hardship appears to arise from the historic configuration of the lot, rather than any actions taken by the current owner.

**Criteria 5: The spirit of this ordinance will be observed, public safety and welfare secured, and substantial justice done.**

Granting the requested variances appears to uphold the spirit and intent of the zoning ordinance, maintain public safety and welfare, and ensure substantial justice for both the applicant and neighboring property owners.

The primary purpose of setback and buffer regulations is to ensure orderly development, reduce conflicts between land uses, and protect adjacent properties, particularly when industrial uses abut residential areas. In this case, the requested variances would allow for reasonable development of a permitted use on a constrained, legally nonconforming lot, without creating overcrowding or disrupting the general character of the I-2 District.

While the request includes a reduction to the required 25-foot-wide landscaped buffer along the rear yard, with no landscaping proposed, the proposed condition to install a 6-foot masonry or decorative opaque wall will provide visual screening. This wall would help uphold the intent of the ordinance by offering physical separation from the adjacent R-3 multi-family development, even in the absence of landscaping. Without this condition, the spirit of the buffer requirement would be significantly diminished.

No adverse impacts on public health, safety, or welfare are anticipated. The project remains subject to final site plan review, which will ensure compliance with fire access, circulation, lighting, stormwater

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management, and other applicable zoning and safety regulations. The proposed use is low-intensity and is not expected to generate nuisance conditions for nearby residents or businesses.

Given the site's longstanding constraints and the applicant's willingness to incorporate a screening condition in place of the buffer, the proposed variances appear to reflect a balanced and responsible approach that preserves the ordinance's goals while allowing for reasonable use of the property.

**Criteria 6: There is compliance with the standards set forth in Section 74-9.403B.**

Section 74-9.403B establishes the following additional criteria required to approve a variance request. Namely, that the proposed variance will not:

- a. *Impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property.*  
The requested setback and buffer reductions are modest and consistent with surrounding development patterns. The proposed building will not cast significant shadows or obstruct airflow to neighboring properties. The mini-warehouse use is low-intensity and not expected to produce emissions or air quality impacts. While the required buffer is being reduced and landscaping eliminated, a condition requiring a masonry or opaque wall will help define the site boundary and minimize potential impacts to the adjacent R-3 residential development. No adverse effects on light or air access are anticipated.
- b. *Unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets.*  
The proposed variance will not increase congestion in public streets. The setback and buffer reductions do not affect driveway locations, site access, or circulation patterns. The use itself generates limited traffic, and no modifications to public rights-of-way are proposed. Any measurable impact on local traffic flow is not anticipated.
- c. *Increase the danger of fire or endanger the public safety.*  
The proposed variances do not interfere with fire access routes or emergency vehicle movement. The site remains subject to site plan review to ensure compliance with fire code and safety standards, including access lane width, hydrant locations, and building separation requirements. Public safety will not be compromised as a result of the requested relief.
- d. *Unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding area.*  
The requested variances are not expected to diminish property values. The building is compatible in scale with nearby industrial development and the proposed use is permitted within the I-2 District. The rear yard abuts residential zoning, which normally requires a 25-foot-wide landscaped buffer. While this will be reduced to 6 feet with no plantings, a condition requiring a masonry or opaque wall will help preserve the intent of the buffer and reduce the visual impact on neighboring properties. Reuse of a vacant site for a clean, low-impact use may also improve the area's visual character and contribute positively to property values.



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- e. *In any other respect impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or welfare of the inhabitants of the city.*

The proposed mini-warehouse facility is a permitted use in the I-2 District and is not anticipated to generate land use conflicts, safety concerns, or environmental hazards. While the buffer will not include landscaping, the proposed wall will provide separation from residential uses and help maintain compatibility. Final site plan review will address remaining concerns related to lighting, stormwater, access, and visual screening. No impairment of public health, safety, or welfare is anticipated as a result of the requested variances.

**Criteria 7: There is compliance with the discretionary standards contained in Section 74-9.303.**

The proposed use of the property is not subject to Special Land Use review and approval. However, the general discretionary standards set forth in Section 74-9.303 provide guidance for evaluating land use compatibility. While this request is not a special land use, the requested variance complies with the intent of these standards:

- A. *Be harmonious with and in accordance with the general principles and objectives of the comprehensive master plan of the City of Williamston. Complies, the future land use of this site is designated as Industrial.*
- B. *Be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity and that the use will not change the essential character of the area in which it is proposed.* While the reduced buffer departs from the standard requirement, the addition of a 6-foot masonry or decorative opaque wall would help maintain visual compatibility with adjacent residential development.
- C. *Not be hazardous or disturbing to existing or future uses in the same general vicinity and will be a substantial improvement to property in the immediate vicinity and to the community as a whole.* The recommended wall provides added mitigation for the adjacent R-3 property.
- D. *Be served adequately by essential public facilities and services, such as highways, streets, police, fire protection, drainage structures, refuse disposal water and sewage facilities and schools. Not anticipated to adversely affect public facilities and services.*
- E. *Not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, and equipment or conditions of operation that will be detrimental to any person, property or general welfare as a result of producing excess traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare, odors.* While landscaping is not proposed, the screening wall would reduce visual impact.

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- F. *Be necessary to meet the intent and purpose of the zoning regulations; be related to the standards established in this ordinance for the land use or activities under consideration; and be necessary to ensure compliance with those standards. N/A – variances requested.*
- G. *Be related to the valid exercise of police power and purpose which are affected by the proposed use or activity.* Considering the approval criteria described above, the proposed variances, with the recommended screening condition, are consistent with the discretionary standards and are not expected to result in any adverse effects on the character or welfare of the surrounding area.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Zoning Board of Appeals may grant a variance from the Zoning Ordinance only if it determines that a practical difficulty exists. In making this determination, the ZBA must specify the grounds for the decision.

Based on the findings of fact outlined below, and subject to any additional information presented and discussed during the public hearing, we recommend that the ZBA grant the requested variances for the property located at 3448 Corwin Road, subject to the following condition:

**Condition:** The applicant shall install a 6-foot masonry or decorative opaque wall along the rear property line in place of the required landscaped buffer, to provide screening for the adjacent R-3 residential development.

### **Findings of Fact:**

1. Strict compliance with the rear and side yard setbacks and the required 25-foot-wide landscaped buffer would prevent reasonable use of the property due to its legally nonconforming lot size, width, and irregular shape, which significantly limit the developable area.
2. Granting the variances provides substantial relief to the applicant while maintaining fairness to other property owners, particularly when paired with a masonry screening wall to mitigate visual impacts on adjacent residential uses.
3. The requested variances represent the minimum necessary adjustments to allow reasonable and functional development of the property while preserving the general intent of the zoning ordinance.
4. The property's unique physical constraints, including its nonconforming size and shape, create a practical difficulty that justifies the requested relief.
5. The need for the variances is not self-created, as the existing lot conditions were established prior to the applicant's ownership and result from a historic land division and regulatory changes over time.

Respectfully submitted,

**McKENNA**

Liz Hart, AICP, Senior Planner



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**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

**PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS**

**GRANTING AND/OR DENYING**

**REQUESTED VARIANCES**

**FOR**

**Storage Near Me, LLC,  
Applicant**

**May 13, 2025**

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**PROPOSED RESOLUTION  
OPTION 1 - GRANTING VARIANCES**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Williamston Board of Zoning Appeals hereby finds, with respect to the request for the variances requested by Storage Near Me, LLC, Applicant, of 1057 Frost Rd., Williamston, Michigan, (a) from the rear yard setback requirements under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamston, Article 2, Section 2.311, for a 21 foot variance in the 50 foot rear yard setback in the I-2 Industrial District, (b) from the side yard setback requirements under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamston, Article 3, Section 3.102, for a 3 foot variance in the 30 foot side yard setback in the I-2 Industrial District, and (c) from the landscaping buffer requirements under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamston, Article 7, Section 7.305, for a 19 foot variance in the 25 foot rear landscaping buffer in the I-2 Industrial District, to allow for the construction of a 12,000 sq. ft. storage facility (mini-warehouse) on the property located at 3448 Corwin Rd., Williamston, Michigan, Tax ID No. 33-18-07-02-126-008, as follows:

1. That the rear yard setback, side yard setback, and rear landscaping buffer variances are necessary because compliance with the strict letter of the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance will unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose, or will render conformity with the standards unnecessarily burdensome. The 0.8 acre property was previously split from a larger parcel, and does not meet the current minimum 2-acre lot size, which would have accommodated the proposed 12,000 sq. ft. building without a setback or landscaping buffer variance. A smaller building for the intended use that met setback and buffer requirements would not be economically feasible.
2. That the rear yard setback, side yard setback, and rear landscaping buffer variances are necessary because a grant of the variances will do substantial justice to the applicant as well as to other property owners in the zoning district, and lesser variances will not give substantial relief to the applicant as well as be more consistent with justice to other property owners in the district. The variances will allow the economical development of the vacant property, create jobs, and revitalize the industrial district. Lesser variances are not possible due to the non-conforming lot size and the need for a building large enough to be financially feasible.
3. That the plight of the applicant is due to the unique circumstances of the property. The property is unique in that it was split from a larger parcel and does not conform to the minimum lot size. A financially feasible structure cannot be constructed elsewhere on the property.
4. That the problem to be addressed by the requested variances is not self-created. The lot was split from a larger parcel before the applicant acquired it. Without the variances, a financially feasible structure could not be built on the property.
5. That the rear yard setback, side yard setback, and rear landscaping buffer variances will allow the spirit of the Zoning Ordinance to be observed, public safety and welfare secured,



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and substantial justice done. A grant of the variances would permit economically reasonable development of the property, which is adjacent to other industrial property, consistent with the City's Master Plan, and is harmonious with similar setbacks and buffers in the I-2 district and surrounding properties. Public safety will not be impaired.

6. That the variances will not impair adequate supply of light and air to adjacent properties, unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets, increase the danger of fire or endanger public health, or unreasonably diminish established property values within the surrounding area. Approval of the variance will not negatively impact other properties, property values, or the public health. The actual development of the property will require Planning Commission approval of a site plan.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that based in the aforementioned findings, the Applicant's variances are hereby granted to permit the development of the property by allowing (a) a 21 foot variance in the 50 foot rear yard setback requirement, resulting in a 29 foot setback on the rear (east) line of the property, (b) a 3 foot variance in the 30 foot side yard setback, resulting in a 27 foot setback on southwest side of the property, and (c) a 19 foot variance in the 25 foot rear landscaping buffer, resulting in a 6 foot landscaping buffer on the rear (east) line of the property, to allow the construction of a 12,000 sq. ft. storage facility (mini-warehouse), consistent with an approved site plan.

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**PROPOSED RESOLUTION**  
**OPTION 2 – GRANTING VARIANCES WITH CONDITIONS**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Williamston Board of Zoning Appeals hereby finds, with respect to the request for the variances requested by Storage Near Me, LLC, Applicant, of 1057 Frost Rd., Williamston, Michigan, (a) from the rear yard setback requirements under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamston, Article 2, Section 2.311, for a 21 foot variance in the 50 foot rear yard setback in the I-2 Industrial District, (b) from the side yard setback requirements under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamston, Article 3, Section 3.102, for a 3 foot variance in the 30 foot side yard setback in the I-2 Industrial District, and (c) from the landscaping buffer requirements under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamston, Article 7, Section 7.305, for a 19 foot variance in the 25 foot rear landscaping buffer in the I-2 Industrial District, to allow for the construction of a 12,000 sq. ft. storage facility (mini-warehouse) on the property located at 3448 Corwin Rd., Williamston, Michigan, Tax ID No. 33-18-07-02-126-008, as follows:

1. That the rear yard setback, side yard setback, and rear landscaping buffer variances are necessary because compliance with the strict letter of the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance will unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose, or will render conformity with the standards unnecessarily burdensome. The 0.8 acre property was previously split from a larger parcel, and does not meet the current minimum 2-acre lot size, which would have accommodated the proposed 12,000 sq. ft. building without a setback or landscaping buffer variance. A smaller building for the intended use that met setback and buffer requirements would not be economically feasible.
2. That the rear yard setback, side yard setback, and rear landscaping buffer variances are necessary because a grant of the variances will do substantial justice to the applicant as well as to other property owners in the zoning district, and lesser variances will not give substantial relief to the applicant as well as be more consistent with justice to other property owners in the district. The variances will allow the economical development of the vacant property, create jobs, and revitalize the industrial district. Lesser variances are not possible due to the non-conforming lot size and the need for a building large enough to be financially feasible.
3. That the plight of the applicant is due to the unique circumstances of the property. The property is unique in that it was split from a larger parcel and does not conform to the minimum lot size. A financially feasible structure cannot be constructed elsewhere on the property.
4. That the problem to be addressed by the requested variances is not self-created. The lot was split from a larger parcel before the applicant acquired it. Without the variances, a financially feasible structure could not be built on the property.
5. That the rear yard setback, side yard setback, and rear landscaping buffer variances will allow the spirit of the Zoning Ordinance to be observed, public safety and welfare secured,



and substantial justice done. A grant of the variances would permit economically reasonable development of the property, which is adjacent to other industrial property, consistent with the City's Master Plan, and is harmonious with similar setbacks and buffers in the I-2 district and surrounding properties. Public safety will not be impaired.

6. That the variances will not impair adequate supply of light and air to adjacent properties, unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets, increase the danger of fire or endanger public health, or unreasonably diminish established property values within the surrounding area. Approval of the variance will not negatively impact other properties, property values, or the public health. The actual development of the property will require Planning Commission approval of a site plan.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that based in the aforementioned findings, the Applicant's variances are hereby granted to permit the development of the property by allowing (a) a 21 foot variance in the 50 foot rear yard setback requirement, resulting in a 29 foot setback on the rear (east) line of the property, (b) a 3 foot variance in the 30 foot side yard setback, resulting in a 27 foot setback on southwest side of the property, and (c) a 19 foot variance in the 25 foot rear landscaping buffer, resulting in a 6 foot landscaping buffer on the rear (east) line of the property, to allow the construction of a 12,000 sq. ft. storage facility (mini-warehouse), consistent with an approved site plan.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the variances granted to Applicant shall be subject to strict compliance with the following conditions:

1. The variances must be used within one (1) year from this date.
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

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**PROPOSED RESOLUTION  
OPTION 3 - DENIAL OF VARIANCES**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Williamston Board of Zoning Appeals hereby finds, with respect to the request for the variances requested by Storage Near Me, LLC, Applicant, of 1057 Frost Rd., Williamston, Michigan, (a) from the rear yard setback requirements under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamston, Article 2, Section 2.311, for a 21 foot variance in the 50 foot rear yard setback in the I-2 Industrial District, (b) from the side yard setback requirements under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamston, Article 3, Section 3.102, for a 3 foot variance in the 30 foot side yard setback in the I-2 Industrial District, and (c) from the landscaping buffer requirements under the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Williamston, Article 7, Section 7.305, for a 19 foot variance in the 25 foot rear landscaping buffer in the I-2 Industrial District, to allow for the construction of a 12,000 sq. ft. storage facility (mini-warehouse) on the property located at 3448 Corwin Rd., Williamston, Michigan, Tax ID No. 33-18-07-02-126-008, as follows:

1. That the variances requested are not necessary because the rear yard setback, side yard setback, and rear landscaping buffer requirements are a general condition of other properties in industrial areas of the City, and conformity with those requirements will not unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose.
2. That the granting of the variances would detrimentally affect other property owners in the district.
3. That the parcel may be used in full conformity with the zoning ordinance without variances.
4. That the need for variances was self-created by the Applicant.
5. That the granting of the variances would not be consistent with the general purposes of the Williamston Zoning Ordinance, would not secure public safety and welfare, nor result in substantial justice.
6. That the granting of the variances would not comply with Sec. 9.403(B) of the Zoning Ordinance.

**BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED**, that based on the aforementioned findings, Applicant's request for variances is hereby denied.