

**Exeter Township
Zoning Board of Appeals
Public Hearing Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2025**

Exeter Township Zoning Board of Appeals chairperson, Robert Strimple, called the public hearing to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present: Roger Bezek, Anthony Bruck, Don Miller, and Robert Strimpel
 Excused:
 Absent: June Olson
 Guests:
 NOTE: There were 7 township residents and other interested parties in attendance.

Introductions / Announcements:

Exeter Township Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) Chairperson Robert Strimpel introduced himself and the other ZBA committee members to the assembled residents.

ZBA Secretary Roger Bezek announced that an official notice of this Public Hearing was timely published and ZBA members were notified (by USPS mail) of this Public Hearing.

Purpose of Public Hearing / Applicant:

A request for a variance from current Exeter Township zoning ordinance was filed on by property owner Amanda Biela – Buchanan, property address of 12453 Timbers Road Carleton Michigan 48117 on parcel # 5806-017-007-00 to allow a new home to be constructed behind (beyond the front plane) an existing accessory building (pole barn).

The variance is requested by the property owners to construction of a new home which the applicant has requested to be sited farther away from Timbers Road. The applicant plans to demolition of an existing home (unoccupied) and 3 accessory buildings while preserving a larger existing barn (per applicant dates back to the 1800's). This would place the proposed new home behind the rear plane of the barn which is to be preserved. Current Exeter Township zoning does not allow any accessory building to extend beyond the front plane of the residence. The parcel is located in an AG (Agricultural / Residential district) and consists of approximately 20.0 acres (per applicant).

Copies of a site plan and aerial photo were provide to the ZBA members. The site plan indicated the approximate location of the current home, septic field, driveway, and location of existing 40 foot X 30 foot accessory building approximately 100 feet from Timbers Road. The parcel is overgrown with numerous mature hardwood trees, some which have been "thinned" and removed by the property owner. Additional trees and brush will be removed. The existing home and accessory buildings are not (currently) visible from the road.

Applicants Statements / Comments:

The applicant and family members were present at this public hearing and provided a written proposed use / request (copy attached) which outlined the plans for the property and their request for the zoning variance.

The applicants stated this was a family homestead of property owner Amanda Biela – Buchanan (applicant would be the 4th generation on this property) and their plans are to clean-up the property, demolish the abandoned home and dilapidated outbuilding while preserve the large barn and construct a new home. The existing home is currently unoccupied and un-livable. The applicant will be removing brush and larger popular trees on the property (around existing home) while planning on preserving certain hardwood trees. Constructing the proposed new home on the same location of the existing home would create issues for the applicant because this would place the new home close to both Timbers Road and limit access to the barn (to be preserved).

The applicant stated that the Monroe County Health Department personnel conducted two "perk test" for proper septic sites closed to the proposed location of the new home (behind existing barn). While one site would require a "slightly raised septic bed", both sites had passed the "perk test" and would be suitable.

Written Statements / Comments:

No written comments were received concerning this zoning variance request.

Public Comment:

The adjacent property owner / resident (with existing home south of applicants parcel) was present at the public hearing and supported the applicant plans for the property and their request for a zoning variance. There were no other comments offered from the public.

Questions from ZBA Members:

Zoning Board of Appeal member reviewed the proposed accessory building / site map and had several questions for the applicant.

Anthony Bruck asked about preserving some of the current desirable trees for screening The building site from Timber road.

Robert Strimpel asked if the applicant had considered constructing the new home where the existing home was located but to rotate the home to an "east-west" placement (instead of the site plan indication of a "north-south" placement). The applicant stated that this placement would put bedrooms close to the road and the garage (and driveway) too close to the barn to be practical.

Roger Bezek asked if the proposed new home would have a basement and the applicant plans for the area around the (to be demolished) existing home. The applicant stated the new home would have a full basement and the area where the existing home would be landscaped as a "front yard".

Robert Strimpel asked the applicant if they planned on documenting the age of the barn they wished to preserve. Applicant said they are planning to document age of this barn.

Robert Strimpel inquired about utilities currently on and what upgrades would be required. Applicant said an existing shallow well would be filled in and possibility of utility poles needed to supply electrical power to proposed new home. Electrical service is currently routed from the existing home and is now shut-off at the house.

At this time, the ZBA members along with the applicant / landowner traveled to the property to conduct an on-site visit to the property. Discussions with the landowner were conducted about their plans for the property and to give ZBA members a better understanding of the applicant's plans and concerns. ZBA members also looked at the numerous trees and brush around the property and the applicant issues with the location of the proposed new home. Monroe County Health Department "perk test" site were marked with red flags. ZBA members also discussed the general slope of the property the "swale" that was located near the proposed new home construction.

The ZBA members and applicants returned to the Exeter Township Hall to conclude the public hearing after spending approximately 30 minutes on-site.

Zoning Board of Appeals Determination:

After returning to the township hall, ZBA members recognized the applicant plans to rehab their family's property and re-establish a residence on the parcel.

❖ **Motion: Anthony Bruck, 2nd Don Miller:** To grant a zoning variance to Amanda Biela – Buchanan, property address of 12453 Timbers Road Carleton Michigan 48117 on parcel # 5806-017-007-00 to allow a new home to be constructed behind (beyond the front plane) an existing accessory building (pole barn) with the following conditions.

- The excavation of the basement for the new home must be done concurrently with the demolition and clean-up of the existing home and three small out-buildings.
- The new home can be located within (a minimum of) 10 feet distance from the rear plane of the existing accessory building (barn to be preserved).
- The new home can be located a minimum of 50 feet of the north side plane of the existing accessory building (barn to be preserved)
- Before construction of the new home can continue beyond the construction of the basement, all debris from building demolition, brush removal, and foundation / basement construction, and any other debris must be cleared and/or removed from the property.

Roll Call Vote: Roger Bezek	<u>YES</u>
Anthony Bruck	<u>YES</u>
Don Miller	<u>YES</u>
Robert Strimpel	<u>YES</u>

Motion Carried.

❖ **Motion: Anthony Bruck, 2nd Don Miller:** To adjourn the public hearing.

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted, _____

Roger Bezek, Secretary
Exeter Township Zoning Board of Appeals

Robert Strimple, Chairperson
Exeter Township Zoning Board of Appeals