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**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS**

**MEETING DATE:** Thursday, November 20, 2025

**MEETING LOCATION:** Council Chambers, City Hall, 1707 St. Johns Avenue, Highland Park, IL

**CALL TO ORDER**

At 7:30 p.m., Chairperson Bay called the meeting to order. This Commission meeting takes place on-site. Staff was asked to call the roll.

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Bay; Commissioners Aronoff, Treshansky, Weisberg, Yablon, & Zaransky

Commissioner Absent: Chase

Councilmember Absent: Center

Student Council Absent: Duenow

Staff declared that a quorum was present.

Guests Present: Brett Caplan/Petitioner

Staff Present: Hoffmann

Others Present: Gale Cerabona, Recorder

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Regular Meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals – November 6, 2025*

Commissioner Yablon moved to approve the November 6, 2025, regular meeting minutes as drafted.

Commissioner Zaransky seconded the motion.

On a roll call vote

Voting Yea Chairperson Bay; Commissioners Aronoff, Treshansky, Weisberg, Yablon, & Zaransky

Voting Nay: None

Chairperson Bay declared that the motion passed unanimously.

**BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There was no Business from the Public.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no Old Business.

1  
2 **NEW BUSINESS**

3 1. #VAR-2025-00057

4 Property: 1331 Hilary Lane

Appellant: Brett Caplan

5 Zoning District: R4 & R5

Address: 1331 Hilary Lane, Highland Park, IL 60035

6  
7 The petitioner and owner, Brett Caplan of 1331 Hilary Lane, Highland Park, IL 60035 requests by authority of  
8 Section 150.1204(A)(4) of the Highland Park Zoning Code, variations of provisions of Section 150.703.3, to  
9 construct a screen-porch addition that will exceed the allowable Floor-Area-Ratio/FAR.

10  
11 Planner Hoffmann reviewed the proposal:

- 12 • Project Background
  - 13 ○ R6 zoning district
  - 14 ○ built in 2000
- 15 • Site Location
- 16 • Aerial View was shown
- 17 • Plat of Survey
- 18 • Property Photos were displayed (from Google)
- 19 • Proposed Work
  - 20 ○ proposed screened-in porch
- 21 • Elevations were illustrated
- 22 • Floor-Area-Ratio/FAR
- 23 • Variation
  - 24 ○ approved in 2006 for FAR (discrepancy from what's there today)
- 25 • Other Comments
  - 26 ○ there were none
- 27 • Review

28  
29 Some questions/comments from ZBA to Staff are.....

- 30 • Chairperson Bay asked:
  - 31 ○ about the variance in 2006, and Planner Hoffmann said it was for an addition.
  - 32 ○ if this is a larger amount. Planner Hoffmann noted it is the same footprint; could have been
  - 33 a miscalculation.
  - 34 ○ if the owner is different from 2006. Planner Hoffmann advised the home is still in the family.
- 35 • Commissioner Yablon asked:
  - 36 ○ if the existing porch goes toward FAR. Planner Hoffmann said it does, when it's enclosed.
  - 37 ○ what the dimensions are. Planner Hoffmann will review same.
- 38 • Chairperson Bay asked if there is any foundation work. Planner Hoffmann stated there would be
- 39 some new coverage; no setback request.
- 40 • Commissioner Weisberg asked if the pergola is not enclosed. Planner Hoffmann said it would not
- 41 count in the FAR.
- 42 • Commissioner Zaransky asked if the whole neighborhood is over the lot area. Planner Hoffmann
- 43 reviewed same.
- 44 • Commissioner Bay asked:
  - 45 ○ what the allowable FAR is. Planner Hoffmann stated it is based on the lot area and
  - 46 illustrated that section of the code.

- 1           ○ if the other houses are over the FAR like this Petitioner is requesting. Planner Hoffmann said
- 2           this proposal is 5% over the others.
- 3           ○ asked, and Planner Hoffmann referred to the packet for other lot sizes and displayed same.
- 4       • Commissioner Yablon identified Page 17, and stated there's a wide range (of lot sizes).
- 5       • Commissioner Bay asked if there is a current survey. Planner Hoffmann said Staff accepts the
- 6       architect's drawings, as they are licensed by the State.
- 7       • Commissioner Yablon asked if there is a bonus FAR. Planner Hoffmann stated this is over.

8  
9 Chairperson Bay swore in Petitioner Brett Caplan who advised the existing deck is deteriorating, The balcony  
10 off the primary bedroom is not structurally sound; has become a window. The deck size is being reduced.  
11 They always envisioned this as a porch; fits in; cannot be seen from the street; backs up to a highway.

12  
13 Mr. Caplan stated his parents owned the house in 2006. Regarding the difference in calculations, the garage  
14 may not have been included. The standards were addressed (they are not reselling, other houses have  
15 similar structures, is consistent).

16  
17 More ZBA comments are.....

- 18       • Chairperson Bay asked what the hardship is (if this isn't granted). Mr. Caplan shared, as they are
- 19       next to a highway, it is very buggy and noisy, so they would like a nice area in which to sit outside.
- 20       • Commissioner Treshansky asked if the lot size would be a hardship. Mr. Caplan said there is an
- 21       angle, and it slopes down; is gradient.
- 22       • Commissioner Yablon asked how large the porch is. Mr. Caplan believes it is 11x22. Planner
- 23       Hoffmann clarified it is 15.5x23.

24  
25 Chairperson Bay asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak on this matter. There was no one.

26  
27 Final ZBA comments are.....

- 28       • Chairperson Bay asked if notice was provided to neighbors. Mr. Caplan reported the neighbors are
- 29       excited to celebrate this.
- 30       • Commissioner Aronoff doesn't see a hardship, but the explanation suffices. He is in favor.
- 31       • Commissioner Weisberg said it makes a lot of sense to enclose it but doesn't believe standard #2 is
- 32       met. He could be persuaded.
- 33       • Commissioner Zaransky said it seems like a big ask; exceeds the ratio. There could be a math error.
- 34       He is sympathetic to highway noise; makes sense; is reasonable.
- 35       • Commissioner Treshansky said a deck could be repaired. The packet addresses the hardship. Seems
- 36       like a big ask. Alternatives were considered but aren't feasible options. He is in favor.
- 37       • Commissioner Zaransky asked if there is a wetland. Planner Hoffmann said there's a river; flood
- 38       plain area; has a lot of detention/easements; can't be built on due to Skokie River. He reminded that
- 39       Engineering Staff would review this.
- 40       • Commissioner Yablon believes the standards have been met. The letter spells out the hardship
- 41       (water, flood plain). She sees the need for an outside area that is inside and elevated; is in favor. FAR
- 42       is high; the ask is not unreasonable.
- 43       • Chairperson Bay doesn't believe the standards have been met, FAR is substantially over. He is not in
- 44       favor and doesn't see justification for a larger structure.

45  
46 A straw poll was taken:

- 1 • Commissioner Aronoff asked if the room is heated and cooled.....or just screened. Mr. Caplan said it
- 2 is only screened. They may add a heat lamp. Commissioner Aronoff is on the fence.
- 3 • Commissioner Weisberg said one should be able to screen in a porch; though, it's a convenience. He
- 4 is not in favor.
- 5 • Commissioner Zaransky asked if the Petitioner's house is bigger. Something seems missing, as all of
- 6 the houses are over. Chairperson Bay said that information would be relevant. They are bound by
- 7 the code; a gross ask. Commissioner Zaransky would approve this; hardship is what this backs up to.
- 8 • Commissioner Treshansky said he is in favor.
- 9 • Commissioner Yablon shared she would approve this. Seems like the numbers are off.
- 10 • Chairperson Bay is not in favor.
- 11 • Commissioner Aronoff asked about FAR. Commissioner Zaransky said the average is 37%.
- 12 • Commissioner Zaransky said the letter explains the hardship. He would be in favor.

13  
 14 Planner Hoffmann concluded if the motion to approve fails, Staff could draft a denial order; a continuance.

15  
 16 Commissioner Yablon moved to adopt the variance as drafted. Commissioner Treshansky seconded the  
 17 motion.

18  
 19 On a voice vote  
 20 Voting Yea Commissioners Aronoff, Treshansky, Yablon, & Zaransky  
 21 Voting Nay: Chairperson Bay; Commissioner Weisberg

22  
 23 Chairperson Bay declared that the motion passed 4-2.

24  
 25 **STAFF REPORT**

26 There is no Staff Report.

27  
 28 **MISCELLANEOUS**

29 1. Outgoing Member

30 Commissioner Yablon read the Proclamation for Chairperson Bay who thanked everyone. Commissioner  
 31 Zaransky said Chairperson Bay has been a phenomenal Board Member and is highly respected. Chairperson  
 32 Bay said, over the last 8 years, it has been an honor to serve and also work with Staff.

33  
 34 **ADJOURNMENT**

35 Commissioner Weisberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. Commissioner Treshansky seconded  
 36 the motion.

37  
 38 On a voice vote  
 39 Voting Yea Chairperson Bay; Commissioners Aronoff, Treshansky, Weisberg, Yablon, & Zaransky  
 40 Voting Nay: None

41  
 42 Chairperson Bay declared that the motion passed unanimously.

43  
 44 Respectfully Submitted,  
 45 Gale Cerabona/Recorder

46  
 47 **MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 6, 2025, WERE APPROVED WITHOUT CORRECTIONS.**