



Board of Zoning Appeals

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Public Hearing

Minutes

Lisa Eschman
770.254.2635

October 23, 2025

6:00 PM

Commission Chambers - 37
Perry Street, Newnan

Board of Zoning Appeals

Roll Call/Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Lisa Mitchum	District 1 - Chairperson	Present
Billy Cranford	District 4 - Vice Chairperson	Present
Mike Yeager	District 2	Present
Russell Berry	District 3	Present
Dee Crouch	District 5	Present
Ben Sewell	Community Development Director	Present
Lisa Eschman	Zoning Manager	Present
Nicole Blackwell	Zoning Associate	Present
Madonna Overton	Community Development Clerk	Present

The Coweta County Board of Zoning Appeals conducted a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 23, 2025.

Chairperson Mitchum called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chairperson Mitchum explained that the rules governing the meeting could be located on the County's website and on the table in the lobby outside the meeting room.

Chairperson Mitchum explained that the Board of Zoning Appeals serves as a recommending board to the Coweta County Board of Commissioners. She informed everyone that the Board of Commissioners will consider all of tonight's cases for a final decision on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

1. Request Approval of the Minutes from the Public Hearing Held on September 25, 2025

Motion to: Approve

The Board voted to approve the minutes from the Public Hearing held on Thursday, September 25, 2025.

RESULT: Passed (UNANIMOUS)

MOVER: Dee Crouch

SECONDER: Russell Berry

AYES: Dee Crouch, Lisa Mitchum, Russell Berry, Billy Cranford, Mike Yeager

Petitions

2. Public Hearing Regarding Petition # VAR 25-20 Filed by Randy Hoppe Requesting a Distance Between Buildings Variance for Property Located at 197 Cannon Road, Sharpsburg - District 2

Zoning Associate Nicole Blackwell presented Petition # VAR 25-20 filed by Randy Hoppe requesting a distance between buildings variance for property located at 197 Cannon Road, Sharpsburg (Parcel # 113-1024-009). She explained that the subject property is located in the Imperial Estates Subdivision, consists of 20± acres and is zoned *RC (Rural Conservation)*. The applicant wishes to construct an attached covered patio (19'7" x 17'11") to the principal residence. According to the site plan, the patio would be located approximately two (2) feet from the edge of the existing pool. *Article 4, Section 47* of the *Coweta County Zoning and Development Ordinance* requires a minimum separation of ten (10) feet between principal and accessory structures, and pools are classified as accessory structures. The applicant is requesting a variance to reduce this requirement from ten (10) feet to two (2) feet, representing an eight (8) foot reduction. The applicant states that the covered patio is intended to accommodate a growing, multi-generational family by providing additional space for outdoor entertaining while allowing visual supervision of the pool area from the main house. Maintaining the 10-foot setback would limit the covered patio to only 10 feet in width, which they believe would not provide adequate space for these purposes.

Ms. Blackwell highlighted the following factors for consideration in reviewing the variance request.

1. The existing pool and its location limits the amount of space available to construct a covered patio that meets the 10-foot separation requirement.

2. The Board should consider if this request is justified by a hardship as the ordinance requires.

Ms. Blackwell explained that should the Board of Zoning Appeals recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the request, the Community Development Department submits the following conditions for consideration:

1. The covered patio shall be located no closer than two (2) feet from the pool and shall comply with all other applicable setback and development requirements.
2. The foundation shall be designed/engineered as to not apply any load from the structure to the walls of the pool.

Chairperson Mitchum asked if there were any questions from the Board for staff. There were none.

Chairperson Mitchum asked if the applicant was present.

Mr. Randy Hoppe, applicant, Sharpsburg, Georgia, explained the need for the variance is to provide a comfortable, covered space for furniture and a hot tub.

Chairperson Mitchum called for any comments in support or opposition of the proposed variance request. There were none.

Motion to: Close Public Hearing

The Board voted to close the Public Hearing regarding Petition # VAR 25-20 filed by Randy Hoppe requesting a distance between buildings variance for the property located at 197 Cannon Road, Sharpsbug (Parcel # 113-1024-009).

RESULT: Passed (UNANIMOUS)

MOVER: Mike Yeager

SECONDER: Billy Cranford

AYES: Dee Crouch, Lisa Mitchum, Russell Berry, Billy Cranford, Mike Yeager

Motion to: Recommend Approval

The Board voted to recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve an 8-foot distance between buildings reduction (from 10-feet to 2-feet) for property located at 197 Cannon Road, Sharpsbug (Parcel # 113-1024-009) as requested in Petition # VAR 25-20 filed by Randy Hoppe, subject to the following conditions:

1. The covered patio shall be located no closer than two (2) feet from the pool and

- shall comply with all other applicable setback and development requirements.
2. The foundation shall be designed/engineered as to not apply any load from the structure to the walls of the pool.

RESULT: Passed (UNANIMOUS)

MOVER: Billy Cranford

SECONDER: Mike Yeager

AYES: Dee Crouch, Lisa Mitchum, Russell Berry, Billy Cranford, Mike Yeager

Chairperson Mitchum reminded the applicant that a final decision regarding this variance request will be rendered by the Board of Commissioners on November 18, 2025.

3. **Public Hearing Regarding Petition # VAR 25-21 Filed by Sean Harkins Requesting a Variance to Utilize a Private Easement for Property Located at 945 Lawshe Road, Senoia - District 1**

Zoning Associate Blackwell presented Petition # VAR 25-21 filed by Sean Harkins requesting a variance to utilize a private easement for property located at 945 Lawshe Road, Senoia (Parcel # 150-1162-034). She explained that the subject property (Lot 29 in The Farm at Lawshe subdivision) consists of 5± acres and is zoned *RC (Rural Conservation)*. She further explained that *Article 7, Section 71* of the *Coweta County Zoning and Development Ordinance* limits private roadway easements to serving no more than six (6) lots. The applicant is seeking approval for this variance to allow his property to be the seventh access point onto Serenity Farm Walk, a private road.

Ms. Blackwell provided the following summary of prior history related to Serenity Farm Walk.

- 2020 — A variance request to utilize the private easement was denied by the Board of Commissioners.
- Following the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy in November 2020, aerial images indicate the driveway connection to Serenity Farm Walk was reestablished sometime between late 2020 and early 2023.
- 2024 — A Notice of Violation was issued for the unauthorized driveway connection.
- 2025 — A formal complaint was filed, and a Court Order deferred the prosecution pending submission of this variance application.
- This variance request was filed on August 28, 2025, in compliance with the Court Order.

Ms. Blackwell explained that the subdivision plat for The Farm at Lawshe (Plat Book 97, Page 202) was reviewed and approved by County staff, confirming compliance with sight-distance and driveway access requirements prior to issuing permits. The Serenity Farm

Walk easement, recorded on the plat, serves only Lots 30–35 (six parcels). To utilize this easement, the applicant must obtain permission from the property owners of Lots 27, 28, and 35 of The Farm at Lawshe.

Ms. Blackwell further explained that the applicant states that the current driveway access on Lawshe Road is unsafe because of the road's curvature, creating daily safety risks for family, residents, visitors, and delivery services. Challenges such as large trees, a Georgia Power transformer, a drainage pipe and easement under the road, and overhead power poles limit options for driveway placement and impair sight distance.

Ms. Blackwell highlighted the following factors for consideration in reviewing the variance request.

1. Utilizing the easement requires permission from the property owners of Lots 27, 28 and 35. While easements are permitted for lot access, limits are imposed to prevent overuse. Exceeding limits increases the likelihood the easement will function as a roadway, creating long-term maintenance and expectations for County involvement.
2. Site access from Lawshe Road was approved during the subdivision review process. A sight distance certificate, signed by a professional engineer, was included in the plat for The Farm at Lawshe subdivision. Sight Distance was again reviewed by the Public Works Department as part of this variance request and was found to be adequate.

Ms. Blackwell explained that should the Board of Zoning Appeals recommend that the Board of Commissioners approve the request, the Community Development Department submits the following conditions for consideration:

1. The variance shall not become effective until Conditions 2 through 4 have been satisfied.
2. The applicant, and any successors or assigns in the title to the subject property, shall obtain and record a written, notarized access easement from each of the current property owners of Lots 27, 28 and 35 of The Farm at Lawshe. Said easement shall be perpetual in nature and filed with the Coweta Clerk of Superior Court prior to use of the easement.
3. The applicant, and any successors or assigns in title to the subject property, together with the Homeowners Association, shall execute a perpetual maintenance agreement for upkeep of the Serenity Farm Walk. Said agreement shall be recorded with the Coweta Clerk of Superior Court.
4. The applicant, and any successors or assigns in title to the subject property, shall amend the final plat to show Serenity Farm Walk/Egress/Utility Easements serving Lots 29-35 pursuant to Petition # VAR 25-21.

Chairperson Mitchum asked if there were any questions from the Board for staff.

In response to a question from Board Member Yeager, Ms. Blackwell explained that responses from the property owners of Lots 27 and 28 of Serenity Farm Walk have not been received. She added that a letter of opposition from the owner of Lot 35 Serenity Farm Walk was received this afternoon.

In response to a question from Board Member Cranford, Community Development Director Ben Sewell explained that during the building permit approval process, the home site was indicated as facing the opposite direction of Lawshe Road. At that time, the applicant was informed that they could not have a driveway accessing the easement on Serenity Farm Walk. The applicant proceeded with building in the opposite direction because there is no rule that states which direction a house should face on a parcel of this size. Director Sewell reiterated that the applicant had been advised that he would not be able to get permission to use Serenity Farm Walk Farm, except through a variance, and obtaining such a variance could be difficult.

Chairperson Mitchum asked if the applicant was present.

Mr. Sean Harkins, applicant, stated that there was email correspondence between Commissioner Reidelbach and himself. He explained that the driveway installation had been verbally approved by Commissioner Reidelbach. He further explained that he installed the driveway for safety reasons, citing multiple near-miss accidents and limited sight distance from the existing driveway on Lawshe Road. He expressed concern for the safety of his two teenage drivers. Mr. Harkins also provided the *First Amendment to the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, Restrictions, and Easements* for The Farms at Lawshe HOA, Inc., noting that the amendment was recorded with the Clerk of Superior Court in 2024.

In response to a question from Board Member Cranford, Mr. Harkins explained that he had submitted a site preparation permit, which was approved by Community Development. He stated that he installed the temporary driveway when he purchased the lot in April 2019, prior to the ordinance adoption in June 2019. He further explained that during one of the required inspections, an inspector informed him that he could not have a driveway on the easement, to which he responded that it was necessary because it was difficult for large trucks to turn in from Lawshe Road. Mr. Harkins also referenced the HOA bylaws, which allowed perpetual access during construction. After the home's construction was complete, he removed the driveway on the easement.

In response to a follow-up question from Board Member Cranford regarding a Stop Work Order issued in May and a denied access in a variance application, Mr. Harkins stated that

he did not install the driveway until 2023, after having a conversation with Commissioner Reidelbach, who approved the driveway at that time.

Chairperson Mitchum stated that the subject property lies within Commission District 1, which was represented by Commissioner Paul Poole in 2023.

In response to an additional question from Board Member Cranford, Mr. Harkins explained that his house was built in the area designated by the engineer because of the land being in a floodplain, and the requirement that the house be built above the 100-year floodplain.

Ms. Blackwell explained to the Board that upon researching the parcel, there is no floodplain; however, there is a drainage easement that crosses the parcel.

Mr. Harkins again expressed concern for his family's safety while entering and exiting the driveway onto Lawshe Road. He explained that approximately two (2) years ago, the speed limit on Lawshe Road was reduced from 45 mph to 25 mph.

Engineering Division Director Jon Amason noted that Public Works may have installed a curve advisory sign warning of a lower speed than the posted limit. However, this sign would not carry any authority in regulating sight distance.

In response to a question from Board Member Cranford, Mr. Harkins explained that he is unable to move the existing driveway on Lawshe Road for an extended sight distance because of the placement of a utility pole and a pad mount transformer.

In response to a question from Board Member Yeager, Mr. Harkins stated that he is a current and active member of The Farms at Lawshe Homeowners' Association.

Chairperson Mitchum called for any comments in support of the proposed variance request.

Mr. Harkins presented letters of support from the following:

- Claude and Kendra Foreman, Lot 8, The Farm at Lawshe, Lawshe Road, Senoia
- Gregory and Brandy Adams, Lot 30, Serenity Farm Walk, Senoia

Mr. Claude Forman, Lawshe Road, Senoia explained that there has been a consistent issue with storm water drainage which negatively affects the usage of the applicant's current driveway located on Lawshe Road.

Chairperson Mitchum called for comments in opposition to the proposed variance

request.

Ms. Blackwell explained that the following residents of Serenity Farm Walk in Senoia did not wish to address the Board but submitted audience participation forms opposing the proposed variance.

- Elizabeth Jenkins, Lot 31, Serenity Farm Walk, Senoia
- Charles and Holly Grisamore, Lot 32, Serenity Farm Walk, Senoia
- Michael and Melinda Newton, Lot 33, Serenity Farm Walk, Senoia
- Derrick and Katina Owens, Lot 34, Serenity Farm Walk, Senoia
- John L. Lanier, Lot 35, Serenity Farm Walk, Senoia

Motion: Close the Public Hearing

The Board voted to Close Public Hearing regarding Petition # VAR 25-21 filed by Sean Harkins requesting a distance variance to utilize a private easement for the property located at 945 Lawshe Road, Senoia (Parcel #150-1162-034).

RESULT: Passed (UNANIMOUS)

MOVER: Dee Crouch

SECONDER: Billy Cranford

AYES: Dee Crouch, Lisa Mitchum, Russell Berry, Billy Cranford, Mike Yeager

Motion to: Recommend Denial

The Board voted to recommend the Board of Commissioners deny Petition VAR 25-21 filed by Sean Harkins requesting to utilize a private easement for property located at 945 Lawshe Road, Senoia (Parcel # #150-1162-034).

RESULT: Passed (UNANIMOUS)

MOVER: Billy Cranford

SECONDER: Mike Yeager

AYES: Dee Crouch, Lisa Mitchum, Russell Berry, Billy Cranford, Mike Yeager

Chairperson Mitchum reminded the applicant that a final decision regarding this variance request will be rendered by the Board of Commissioners on November 18, 2025.

Additional Business

Zoning Manager Eschman explained that the next Board of Zoning Appeals meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion to: Adjourn

The Board voted to adjourn the meeting.

RESULT: Passed (UNANIMOUS)

MOVER: Billy Cranford

SECONDER: Russell Berry

AYES: Dee Crouch, Lisa Mitchum, Russell Berry, Billy Cranford, Mike Yeager