



# City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

## Meeting Minutes - Final Board of Zoning Appeals

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Monday, May 18, 2026

4:00 PM

Council Chambers  
City Hall, First Floor

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### Call to Order

*Chair Cherf called the meeting to order and explained the meeting procedures.*

### Roll Call

**Present:** 4 - James Cherf, Ben Stepanek, Andrew Sherman, Rachel MacFarland

### Election of Vice Chair

*Chair Cherf deferred the election of Vice Chair to the next meeting due to attendance.*

### Variance Appeals:

#### 2701

An appeal regarding the requirement to provide a 7-foot required side yard and 28-foot required rear yard at 1552 Loomis Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin.

*Andy Berzinski, representing the Building and Inspections Department, was sworn in to speak. Berzinski reviewed the three requirements for granting a variance: unnecessary hardship, hardship due to unique property limitations, and no harm to public interest. Berzinski stated that the applicant has applied for a permit for a proposed addition to attach two principal structures that does not meet the required side and rear yard setbacks. Berzinski reviewed Municipal Code Sec. 115-144(c)(2) "a. On every lot in the Special Residence District, there shall be two side yards, one on each side of the building, and except as hereinafter provided, neither of such side yards shall be less than six feet in width, and provided further that for any main building other than one-family dwelling neither of such side yards shall be less than seven feet in width," and "(3) Rear yards. On every lot in the Special Residence District, there shall be a rear yard having a depth of not less than 20 percent of the depth of the lot." Berzinski stated that two variances would need to be granted for this project to proceed as proposed: 7 feet for the side yard setback and 20.5 feet for the rear yard setback. Berzinski showed a site plan of the property. Berzinski explained that the front of the property has an existing duplex and the applicant is proposing to attach the two principal structures, including the one-unit apartment at 1402 Gillette Street at the rear of the property. Berzinski added that the reason the applicant is proposing to attach the buildings is to avoid having two principal structures on one property. Berzinski stated that the applicant is also proposing to rezone the property to R3 so the structure would be conforming.*

*Cherf asked for a point of clarification to confirm that 1402 Gillette Street is a one-unit cement block building and 1552 Loomis Street is a two-unit house. Berzinski*

confirmed and showed street view pictures of the two buildings.

Stepanek asked for clarification on why the recommendation from staff is to grant the variance. Berzinski stated that the applicant's testimony will likely answer that question.

Nick Webb, S1350 Garlick Road, was sworn in to speak. Webb stated that he purchased the property last fall with the understanding, based on the condition report, that it was zoned properly and inspected. Webb stated that he found out that the property was not zoned properly after he purchased the property and he inherited the non-compliance without knowing. Webb stated that if he had known, he would have had it fixed before he purchased the property, but now he's stuck in the middle. Webb was told that installing a roof connecting the two structures would be a solution and he found someone to do it because he would hate to kick someone out of a unit when they are living there. Webb stated that he is trying to follow the rules to be in compliance.

Stepanek asked for confirmation that the applicant is stuck between a couple zoning laws because the back unit is zoned improperly and to bring it into compliance, they need to put a roof on, which they need a variance for. Berzinski stated that the property never had any permits to convert the single unit from a garage/office space into a residence. Berzinski stated that this is an existing non-conforming structure that cannot have improvements done until it becomes conforming, and the only way to make the property conforming would be to connect the buildings with the proposed roof and be rezoned into R3 to have three units on the property.

Sherman asked what the unique property limitation is. Webb stated that there is a need for housing in La Crosse and the current tenants want to stay, so he would like to keep all three units on the property.

Sherman asked, based on reading through R3 Special Residence Districts, if this property would qualify for reverse side lot. Berzinski stated that this property does not qualify for reverse side lot because it has a distinct front yard.

**A motion was made by Sherman, seconded by Stepanek, to grant a variance of 7 feet for the side yard setback and 20.5 feet for the rear yard setback specific only to the cinder block building (1402 Gillette Street). Motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 4 - Cherf, Stepanek, Sherman, MacFarland

## Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:27 p.m.