

The Minutes of the City of Ocean Springs
Special Call Zoning & Adjustment Board
Wednesday, December 17, 2025

1. Call meeting to order

A Special Call Meeting of the City of Ocean Springs Zoning and Adjustment Board was called to order by Chairman Nick Gant at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 17, 2025. Members present were Nick Gant, William Thompson, Lethel Bowden, and Don Atwell. Also present were Amanda Crose, Planning Director; Sirrae Williams, Planning Administrator; Elizabeth Dill, Planning Technician; Darrell Stringfellow, Building Official; and David Harris, City Attorney.

2. Approval of Special Call Agenda

A motion was made by Don Atwell, seconded by William Thompson, to approve the agenda for the Special Call Meeting as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

3. Approval of Minutes

- a) November 12, 2025

A motion was made by William Thompson, seconded by Don Atwell, to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2025, meeting as presented. The motion was unanimously carried.

4. Old Business

- a) None

5. New Business

- a) **236 Holcomb Blvd - PIDN: 61180025.000 - Request approval of a variance for a side setback form 10' to 7'-10" on the south side of the property for an addition to the existing house – Jonathan Jandorf**

Amanda Crose, Planning Director, introduced the proposal. She stated that the property is zoned R-2 Low-Medium Density Residential and contains an existing single-family dwelling. The applicant is proposing an addition on the south side of the residence. Ms. Crose explained that the property meets the minimum lot area requirement but does not meet the minimum lot width requirement of the R-2 zoning district, as the recorded plat reflects a width of seventy-seven (77) feet rather than the required eighty (80) feet.

She further noted that a side yard setback variance was approved in 2021 for the north side of the property; however, that variance was not fully utilized by the previous owner. She confirmed that all public notice requirements had been met and that no written comments were received prior to the meeting.

Jon Jandorf, applicant, addressed the Board. He explained that the proposed addition is intended to provide functional bedroom space suitable for older children. He stated that the requested encroachment of approximately twenty-six (26) inches is necessary to maintain reasonable bedroom and closet dimensions. Mr. Jandorf explained that relocating the addition further into the rear yard would require a longer interior hallway, inefficient use of space, and additional exterior demolition, including window removal. He stated that the proposed location minimizes disruption to the existing structure and would not negatively impact the adjacent property to the south.

Jim Sonnier, owner of the adjacent property at 234 Holcomb Boulevard, addressed the Board in opposition. He stated that he was not opposed to property improvements but questioned the necessity of the variance. Mr. Sonnier stated that, based on his professional experience in engineering and architectural design, the addition could be redesigned to comply with the ten-foot setback requirement. He expressed concern regarding precedent and consistent application of zoning standards.

Nick Gant asked Mr. Jandorf to clarify why the addition could not be relocated further toward the rear of the property while maintaining compliance with the required setback.

Jon Jandorf responded that relocating the addition rearward would require an extended interior hallway, reduce usable living space, and necessitate additional demolition of exterior walls and windows, increasing construction impacts and cost.

William Thompson asked whether reducing the size of the proposed bedrooms could eliminate the need for a variance.

Jon Jandorf responded that the proposed room sizes were selected to accommodate older children and that further reductions would primarily affect closet space, resulting in non-standard and functionally inadequate storage.

Lethel Bowden asked whether the addition could be placed on the opposite side of the residence near the master bathroom area.

Jon Jandorf responded that the existing layout and offsets of the house do not allow for a reasonable addition on that side without significant interior reconfiguration.

Don Atwell asked staff whether the nonconforming lot width contributed to the variance request.

Amanda Crose responded that the recorded lot width of seventy-seven (77) feet does not meet the minimum requirement and that this nonconformity was a factor considered in the review.

Nick Gant stated that the Board must evaluate the request based on statutory variance criteria, including whether strict application of the ordinance would result in undue hardship, whether reasonable alternatives exist, and whether the request represents the minimum relief necessary.

A motion was made by Don Atwell to recommend approval of the variance. The motion died for lack of a second.

A second motion was made by William Thompson, seconded by Lethel Bowden, to recommend denial of the requested variance. The motion carried by a vote of four (4) to one (1), with Don Atwell voting Nay and all other members voting in favor of denial.

b) 7616 Trout Street – PIDN: 63013030.000 – Jason Miller – Request appeal of the Building Official’s decision regarding the construction of a 3,889 sq ft house and a 40’x60’ pole barn in a floodway zone – Signature Building, Applicant

Amanda Crose, Planning Director, introduced the appeal. She explained that the applicants are appealing the Building Official’s determination denying construction of a proposed 3,889-square-foot single-family residence and a 40’ x 60’ pole barn due to encroachment within a regulatory floodway. Ms. Crose stated that the subject property is located within an AE floodplain and that a regulatory floodway bisects the parcel, resulting in portions of the proposed development being located within the floodway boundary. She reviewed the City’s Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (Appendix A) and explained that new construction within a regulatory floodway is prohibited unless variance criteria are met. Ms. Crose noted that the Zoning & Adjustment Board serves as the appeals authority and that the Board’s decision constitutes final City action.

Darrell Stringfellow, Building Official and Floodplain Administrator, provided additional background. He explained the distinction between floodplain and floodway areas, noting that floodways are intended to convey floodwaters and debris during major storm events and are considered high-hazard areas. Mr. Stringfellow stated that under the City’s ordinance, any portion of a structure encroaching into the floodway renders the entire structure noncompliant, including roof overhangs or accessory elements. He further explained that while FEMA establishes minimum standards, the City has adopted more restrictive regulations to maintain Community Rating System (CRS) points, which provide flood insurance premium reductions citywide.

Elizabeth Miller, appellant, addressed the Board in support of the appeal. She stated that the property was purchased and initially permitted under Jackson County regulations prior to annexation by the City of Ocean Springs. Ms. Miller explained that FEMA and the County allow construction within a floodway when supported by a

certified “no-rise” engineering analysis and stated that the applicants obtained such certification. She stated that relocating the proposed residence outside the floodway would significantly diminish the functional use of the property, including loss of waterfront access and outdoor living space. Ms. Miller also questioned the ordinance’s definition of hardship and stated that annexation resulted in the application of regulations that were not contemplated at the time the property was purchased.

Jason Miller, appellant, added that the property was intended to be the family’s permanent residence and stated that denial of the appeal would significantly impact the value and reasonable use of the property.

Nick Gant asked staff to clarify whether the proposed structures could be relocated on the lot in a manner that would allow construction to proceed in compliance with the ordinance.

Darrell Stringfellow responded that relocation could be permissible only if all portions of the structures, including any overhangs, remained entirely outside the floodway boundary. He stated that even minimal encroachment into the floodway would render the structures noncompliant.

William Thompson asked whether relocating the residence closer to Trout Street could remove the structure from the floodway.

Darrell Stringfellow responded that relocating the residence toward the front of the property could potentially allow construction to proceed, provided the structure remained fully outside the floodway and complied with required zoning setbacks.

William Thompson further asked whether subdivision of the parcel could resolve the floodway issue.

Amanda Crose responded that subdivision alone would not eliminate floodway restrictions, as floodway regulations apply regardless of zoning classification or parcel configuration.

Lethel Bowden asked the applicants to explain why relocating the residence toward the front of the property was not feasible.

Elizabeth Miller responded that relocation toward Trout Street would significantly diminish the intended use of the property, including loss of waterfront views and outdoor living space, which were primary considerations in the design and purchase of the property.

Don Atwell asked staff to explain the difference between FEMA floodplain standards and the City’s floodway regulations.

Darrell Stringfellow responded that FEMA establishes minimum requirements but allows local governments to adopt more restrictive standards. He stated that the City's ordinance exceeds FEMA minimums in order to improve flood resilience and maintain CRS standing, which benefits the broader community through reduced insurance premiums.

Nick Gant opened the floor for public comment

Cody Crane, 7800 Trout St, spoke in support of the appeal and stated that he owns property in the same annexed area affected by the regulatory floodway designation. He explained that his home was constructed under Jackson County regulations prior to annexation and was intended as a long-term investment and future residence. He expressed concern that denial of the appeal would significantly diminish property values and marketability for properties along Trout Street. He stated that if rebuilding or substantial improvement is prohibited due to floodway restrictions, financial institutions may be unwilling to lend on such properties, effectively rendering them unsellable. Mr. Crane emphasized that property owners relied on county regulations in place at the time of construction and did not request annexation into the City. He urged the Board to consider the broader neighborhood impacts of floodway restrictions beyond the subject property.

Lanis Noble, 411 Bechtel Boulevard (Owner of 7704 Trout Street), stated that he and his wife own the property immediately west of the Miller property and have resided there for approximately ten years. He noted that the residence and large accessory structure on his property were constructed decades ago and have existed without documented interference with floodwaters. He expressed concern that denial of the appeal could negatively impact existing property owners who are now subject to City taxes while facing restrictions that limit rebuilding or resale. He stated that the application of new floodway regulations to annexed properties creates inequities between long-standing structures and new development. Mr. Noble voiced support for the appeal and encouraged the Board to consider the cumulative effects of the ordinance on annexed neighborhoods.

Amy Zinder, 7824 Trout Street, addressed the Board in support of the appeal and stated that she owns multiple parcels at the end of Trout Street and has lived in the area since 2011. She described flooding conditions in the area as primarily storm-surge related rather than prolonged riverine flooding and stated that floodwaters typically recede quickly. She expressed concern that strict floodway restrictions could prevent property owners from rebuilding after significant damage, resulting in loss of homes and long-term financial hardship. She stated that denial of the appeal could negatively affect many residents in the annexed area and urged the Board to consider both regulatory intent and lived experience in the neighborhood.

Tony Miller, 9108 Dixie Street (Builder for the Applicant), stated that he is the licensed builder for the proposed residence and has experience with floodplain and elevated construction. He expressed concern regarding how the City's floodway ordinance is

being applied to properties that were developed or planned under county regulations prior to annexation. He questioned how existing floodway structures are treated under the City's floodplain management program and whether those structures were incorporated into Community Rating System (CRS) calculations at the time of annexation. He expressed concern that new construction is being prohibited while existing structures remain, creating inconsistent treatment among properties in the same area. Mr. Miller encouraged the Board to consider fairness, consistency, and long-term impacts on property owners.

Nick Gant asked David Harris, City Attorney, to clarify how annexation affects application of City ordinances.

David Harris responded that ordinances of general application become effective upon annexation and apply uniformly to all properties within City limits. He stated that prior county approvals do not exempt property from compliance with City ordinances and that any appeal of the Board's decision would be reviewed based on the administrative record created during the hearing.

Nick Gant closed public comment portion of the hearing.

A motion was made to recommend approval of the appeal and overturn the Building Official's decision denying construction within the regulatory floodway. The motion was made by Lethel Bowden, but no second was offered. As a result, the motion died for lack of a second and was not considered further.

A second motion was made to recommend denial of the appeal and uphold the Building Official's determination. The motion was initiated by William Thompson and seconded by Chairman Nick Gant. The motion was put to a vote but failed to receive a majority vote and therefore did not carry.

Following the failure of the denial motion, further discussion occurred among Board members regarding the need for additional information in order to fully evaluate the appeal. Board members discussed the potential need for more detailed documentation regarding floodway impacts, CRS implications, and whether the hardship criteria under the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance could be met.

The previous motion made by William Thompson was withdrawn

A third motion was then made by Don Atwell to table the appeal in order to allow the applicants time to submit additional information and for staff to further evaluate the request. The motion to table was seconded by David Hayden. The motion was carried by a vote of four (4) to one (1), with William Thompson voting Nay and all other members voting in favor of tabling the appeal.

6. Audience Request

N Gant opened the floor for audience requests.

Cody Crane, 7800 Trout Street, asked whether the Zoning & Adjustment Board has the authority to reconsider or revise floodway regulations that affect properties located within recently annexed areas of the City, particularly as those regulations relate to rebuilding rights and long-term property value.

Nick Gant responded that the Zoning & Adjustment Board's authority is limited to hearing appeals and variance requests under the existing ordinances and that the Board does not have the authority to amend or revise City regulations.

Lance Noble, 411 Bechtel Boulevard (owner of 7604 Trout Street), asked how property owners in annexed areas could seek relief or clarification regarding floodway restrictions and whether there is a process to request review of the City's flood damage prevention regulations.

Amanda Crose, Planning Director, responded that any changes to floodplain or floodway regulations would require an ordinance amendment adopted by the Board of Aldermen. She explained that property owners may submit concerns or requests through City staff or participate in public hearings when ordinance amendments are proposed.

Amy Zinder, 7824 Trout Street, asked how existing homes and structures currently located within the regulatory floodway are treated under the ordinance and whether those properties are allowed to remain or be rebuilt following damage.

Darrell Stringfellow, Building Official and Floodplain Administrator, responded that existing structures within the floodway may remain as legal nonconformities, subject to limitations outlined in the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. He explained that expansion, reconstruction, or rebuilding after substantial damage may trigger additional regulatory requirements, including compliance with floodway restrictions.

Tony Miller, 9108 Dixie Street, asked whether existing floodway structures were considered in the City's floodplain management and Community Rating System (CRS) calculations and expressed concern about how pre-annexation and post-annexation properties are regulated.

Darrell Stringfellow responded that existing structures are accounted for in floodplain management records and that variances and development activity within floodways must be documented and reported. He stated that multiple floodway variances could potentially impact the City's CRS standing, which affects flood insurance premiums citywide.

Nick Gant clarified that the Audience Request portion of the meeting is intended to allow general questions and comments, but that no formal action may be taken by the Board during this agenda item.

Nick Gant closed the Audience Request portion of the meeting.

7. Adjourn

A motion was made by Nick Gant, seconded by William Thompson to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting ended at 5:34 p.m.