City of Columbus – Bartholomew County
Planning Department

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CITY OF COLUMBUS
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
(January 27, 2026 Meeting)

STAFF REPORT

Docket No. / Project Title:	BZA-2025-12 (First Empire Holdings)
Staff:	Desiree Aldrich
Applicant:	First Empire Holdings
Property Size:	+/- 24,829 square feet
Current Zoning:	RS2 (Residential: Single-Family 2)
Location:	3103 Westenedge Drive, in the City of Columbus

Background Summary:
The applicant has indicated that the proposed development standards variance is for the purpose of allowing a fence to be 6 feet in height, 2.5 feet taller than the maximum 3.5 feet in a front yard. The applicant intends to put a 6-foot tall privacy fence in the front yard along the National Road frontage of the property. The subject property is a corner lot which has frontage on both National Road and Westenedge Drive.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:
Approval; All criteria have been met.

Zoning Ordinance Considerations:
District Intent: The intent of the RS2 (Residential: Single-Family 2) zoning district is as follows: To provide areas for moderate density single-family residences in areas with compatible infrastructure and services. Development in this zoning district should generally be served by sewer and water utilities. Such development should also provide residents with convenient access to Collector and Arterial streets, parks and open space, employment, and convenience goods.

Development Standards: Height Limits: No fence or wall shall exceed a height of 8 feet in any side or rear yard or 42 inches in any front yard. Corner lots shall be considered as having 2 front yards, consistent with other provisions of this ordinance.

Current Property Information:	
Land Use:	Single-Family Residential
Site Features:	Single-Family dwelling
Flood Hazards:	No flood hazards exist on this site.

Street/Road Frontage:	Westenedge Drive (Local, Residential, Suburban) National Road / US 31 (Principal Arterial, Commercial, Suburban)

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:		
	Zoning:	**Land Use:**
North:	RS2 (Residential: Single-Family 2)	Single-Family Residential
South:	P (Public / Semi-Public Facilities)	Northside Middle School
East:	RS2 (Residential: Single-Family 2)	Single-Family Residential
West:	RS2 (Residential: Single-Family 2)	Single-Family Residential

Interdepartmental Review:	
City Engineering:	No response
City Utilities:	No response
Columbus Fire Dept.:	No response
County Code Enforcement:	No response

Planning Consideration(s):

The following general site considerations, planning concepts, and other facts should be considered in the review of this application:

1. The applicant is requesting a development standards variance to allow a 6-foot tall privacy fence in the front yard along the National Road frontage of the property. The proposed privacy fence will encroach 14 feet from the residence towards National Road.
2. The fence will be 64 feet from the National Road right-of-way and 74 feet from the National Road sidewalk. It will not encroach into the Westenedge Drive front yard.
3. The subject property is a corner lot which has frontage on both Westenedge Drive and National Road. The home on the property faces and has its vehicle access from Westenedge Drive.
4. Fences, regardless of where they are located, must be constructed outside of any sight visibility triangle at vehicle intersections per Zoning Ordinance Section 9.3 (B)(4). There are no intersection visibility concerns with the fence location due to the proposed design only encroaching 14 feet to the South and leaving a large portion of yard open.
5. The proposed fence will be constructed of vinyl where it is in the front yard, and a small, 17-foot section that is outside of the front yard will be black chain link material.
6. There is a residential neighbor to the immediate east of the property. The proposed fence will be closer to National Road than the neighbor's home. This neighbor's driveway is on the east side of

their property – the far side from the subject property. Due to the location of the driveway and the small front yard encroachment proposed for the fence, visibility for the driveway will not be affected.

Provisional Findings of Fact/Decision Criteria:

The Board of Zoning Appeals may approve or deny variances from the development standards of the City of Columbus Zoning Ordinance. The Board may impose reasonable conditions as part of an approval. A variance from the development standards may only be approved upon a determination in writing that:

1. **The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community.**

   Provisional Findings: No city department/agencies have expressed any public safety concerns regarding the privacy fence encroaching into the front yard along National Road. The fence will be located outside of the sight visibility triangle and therefore will not adversely affect the safety of the adjacent vehicle intersection. *This criterion has been met.*

2. **The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.**

   Provisional Findings: The location of the proposed privacy fence in the front yard along National Road will not adversely affect the neighbors' use and enjoyment of their property. It will not encroach onto any neighboring property nor obstruct visibility from a neighbor's driveway. *This criterion has been met.*

3. **The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property. This situation shall not be self-imposed, nor be based on a perceived reduction of, or restriction on, economic gain.**

   Provisional Findings: The subject site being a corner lot, with the home placed in a corner of the property away from the street intersection, causes practical difficulty due to it substantially limiting the amount of area considered a backyard. Due to the subject site's layout, the front yard along National Road is a larger area than what is considered the backyard at this site. To get full use of the property in a safe manner a fence is requested encroaching into the large front yard along National Road. *This criterion has been met.*

Board of Zoning Appeals Options:

In reviewing a request for *development standards variance* the Board may (1) approve the petition as proposed, (2) approve the petition with conditions, (3) continue the petition to a future meeting of the Board, or (4) deny the petition (with or without prejudice). Failure to achieve a quorum or lack of a positive vote on a motion results in an automatic continuance to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Record No: BZA-25-12

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Application

Status: Active

Submitted On: 12/16/2025

Primary Location

3103 WESTENEDGE DR
COLUMBUS, IN 47203

Owner

FIRST EMPIRE HOLDINGS LLC
N 1000 E 4200 HOPE, IN 47246

Additional Application Information

What is your Company/Business/Institution Name (if applicable)?

First Empire Holdings

Are you the owner of the property?*

Yes

Application Information

Application Type*

Development Standards Variance

Property Type*

Residential (1 to 3 Units)

You may enter multiple requests for the same application type. If you are also requesting a different application type, you will need to submit a separate application.

Development Standards Variance Request

I am requesting a variance from the Zoning Ordinance Section (insert the ordinance section number below):*

9.3(C)(2) To Allow a fence in Front Side Yard To Be 6ft Along Highwayy

Please provide the details of the variance request:*

Request to build a 6ft Vinyl Privacy fence

The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community. For example: What harm could come from approving the variance? Would it create any public safety issues? Why or why not.*

Visibility, we have designed the fence location so it doesnt affect any of the exixting views.

The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner. For example: What impacts can the neighbors realistically expect to the use of their property and to their property values? Will approval of the variance cause any negative impacts to the neighbors? Why or why not?*

We have placed the fence line in question so it will coexist with the neighbors fence and add asthetics for both properties.

The strict application of the terms of the Zoning Ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property. This situation shall not be self-imposed; nor be based on a perceived reduction of, or restriction on, economic gain. For example: Is there a reason the property cannot be used without the variance? If so, what is that reason (does a stream, existing building, well, or septic system limit options for new construction)? Explain the reason.*

The extra footage is needed because the side yard (front) is so large it impacts the usable area inside the fence. More room is needed for outdoor activities and pets.

The City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan can be found at: https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/.

The Bartholomew County Comprehensive Plan can be found at: https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/comprehensive-county-plans/.

Applicant Signature

The undersigned acknowledges that the information included in and with this application is completely true and correct to the best of his/her knowledge and belief. * Denotes a required field

Signature*

Herman Craig Fields
Dec 16, 2025

(317) 315-2999
6625 Massachusetts Ave
Indianapolis, IN 46226
TimberRidgeFenceCompany.Com

TIMBER RIDGE FENCE

Proposal Date:	Permit:
12-1-25	HOA Approval / Survey Provided ✓
Target Install Date:	811

Name	Phone	Phone
Herman Fields	812-447-9858	
Address	**City State Zip**	
3103 Westernedge Dr	Columbus 47203	
Email	**Subdivision**	**County / Township**

Type of Fence

☒ Chain Link ☒ Vinyl ☐ Aluminum ☐ Wood

Color: Black Color: white

Height

☐ 42" ☒ 4ft ☐ 5ft ☐ 6ft ☐ 8ft

Custom Height: _____

Fence Description

Wood Fence

Fence Style:
Solid Privacy (Reg/ B Batton)
Spaced Picket Shadow Box
Rail Fence AMT_____

Fence Pattern:
Traditional Straight Top
Rolling Arch Cut Arch
Cut Scallop Decorative Scallop
Horizontal Lattice Top

Board: 1x4 1x6

Board Cut:
Dog Ear Diamond Point No Cut

Frame Amt: 2 3 4

Construction:
Face Nail Fitted Toe Nail

Post Top:
6" Cap 8" Cap Gothic
Pyramid Flat Cut

Post Size: 4x4 5x5 4x6 6x6

Aluminum Fence

Fence Style:
Classic Chicago Blue Ridge
Willmington Puppy Pickets

Pickets: 5/8"x5/8" 1"x5/8" 3/4"x3/4" 1"x1"

Picket Top:
Flat Top Pressed Spear
Triad Finial Quad Finial

Options:
Rings (Welded /Screw On) Ball Caps
Butterfly Scroll Estate Scroll

Rail Type: 15 Hole 21 Hole P. Picket

Construction:
Fitted Bracket

Vinyl Fence

Fence Style:
Solid Privacy Semi-Privacy
Spaced Picket Rail Fence AMT____

Fence Pattern:
Traditional Straight Top
Arch Scallop
Open Top (Criss Cross 2x2 1x3)

Slat: 2x2 1x3 1x6 T&G

Slat Top:
Dog Ear Spade Pyramd No Cut

Frame:
Top: 2x4 2x6 2x7
Mid: 2x4 2x6
Bottom: 2x4 2x6 2x7

Post Top:
New England Gothic
External Cap Coachman

Alum Stiffner in Bottom Rail:
☐ Yes ☐ No

Customer Responsibilities

- Obtain Permit / Varience
- Seek HOA Approval
- Provide a Legal Survey
- Clear Fence Lines as Needed
- Contain Animals
- Dirt Removal Not Included
- Locate Private Utilities

Customer Acknowledges that the fence will follow the natural contours of the property unless otherwise specified.

Timber Ridge calls Holey Moley (811) for Public Utility locates. Customer to locate private utilities (including sprinkler lines, drain tiles, electric fence, sump pump, and other private utility lines).

Customer acknowledges that Timber Ridge is not responsible for removal of the dirt; however, we offer the service of dirt removal for an additional fee (see below)

Customer Initial HCF Co Rep Initial

☐ Leave Dirt by Posts ☐ Haul Dirt ☐ Move Dirt to a spot in the Yard
☐ Take Out and Haul Existing Fence ☐ Take Out and Stack Existing *Wood / Chain Link / Alum / Vinyl / Steel*
☐ Rem. Sections Amt _____ ☐ Asp / Con Breaks Amt _____ ☐ New Sod ☐ Dirt Grade ☐ Unfinished Grade
☐ Attach to Home *(circle one)* Concrete Brick Wood Siding
☒ Ready to Go

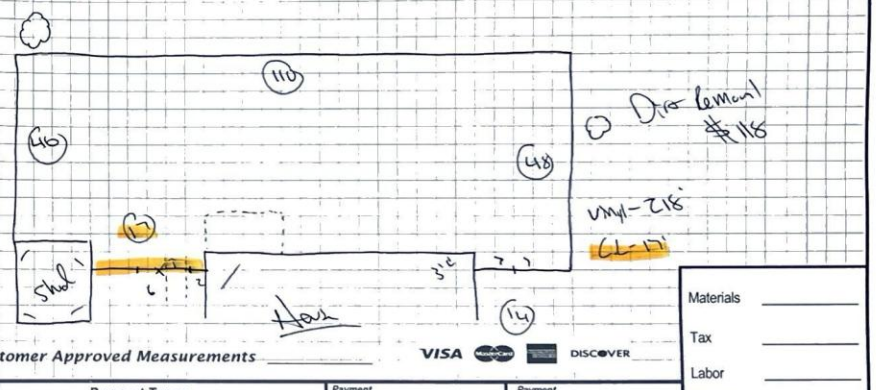
- Install 4' black vinyl coated Link
- Bottom tension wire
- All posts 5'x 36" deep in cement
- (1) 6' gate

17' $643.

w/ (24) -$496

- Install 16'± white vinyl privacy
- THD steel traditional Privacy
- (2) 2" commercial grade frame in fitted Cond.
- 5'x5'x9' posts 5'x 36" deep in Cement w/ weep holes

5-$5,938 6-$9,156.



Dog removal $118

vinyl-218'

6L-17'

Customer Approved Measurements _____ VISA DISCOVER

Payment Terms

☐ 1/3 ____ % down. Balance Due to Crew Chief or Office upon Completion

☐ ____ % down. Financing Terms _____

Third Party financing may be available to qualified applicants. If customer does not complete and return all documents or instruments required by the third party or qualify for third party financing, payment will be due in full to Timber Ridge.

Payment	Payment
Amount $	Amount $
CK # Date V M D A	CK # Date V M D A
Exp. Appr	Exp. Appr

Materials	
Tax	
Labor	
Grand Total	
Deposit	
Balance	

Acceptance of proposal: **"YOU, THE CONSUMER, MAY CANCEL THIS CONTRACT BY NOTIFYING TIMBER RIDGE, IN WRITING, ANY TIME PRIOR TO MIDNIGHT OF THE THIRD BUSINESS DAY AFTER THE DATE OF THIS TRANSACTION."**

The signer has read each of the provisions on this page and the specifications on page 1 and the conditions of sale on the back of the contract. The above prices, specifications, and conditions of sale are hereby accepted. This proposal becomes a binding and enforceable contract when received by Timber Ridge either (a) bearing the customer's signature or (b) without signature but accompanied by down payment from the customer as required. All materials are specified as above and all work is to be completed in a workmanlike manner according to standard practices. Any alteration or deviation from above specifications involving extra charges will be executed upon (a) written order or (b) customer consent and will become an extra cost over and above the sale.

Customer Date

Company Representative Date

South Fence Line