



**CITY OF COLUMBUS
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
(February 24, 2026 Meeting)**

STAFF REPORT

Docket No. / Project Title: BZA-25-14 (Mona Jalal)
Staff: Melissa Begley

Applicant: Mona Jalal
Property Size: +/- 8,712 square feet
Current Zoning: RS3 (Residential: Single Family 3)
Location: 2068 Abbey Lane, in the City of Columbus

Background Summary:

The applicant has indicated that the proposed 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.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:

Denial, criterion #3 has not been met.

Zoning Ordinance Considerations:

District Intent: The intent of the RS3 (Residential: Single-Family 3) zoning district is as follows:
To provide high 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 home
Flood Hazards:	No flood hazards exist on this site.
Street/Road Frontage:	Ashworth Lane (Local, Residential, Suburban) Abbey Lane (Local, Residential, Suburban)

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:		
	Zoning:	Land Use:
North:	RS3 (Residential: Single Family 3)	Single-Family Residential
South:	RS3 (Residential: Single Family 3)	Single-Family Residential
East:	RS3 (Residential: Single Family 3)	Single-Family Residential
West:	RS3 (Residential: Single Family 3)	Single-Family Residential

Interdepartmental Review:	
City Engineering:	No Response
City Utilities:	No Response
Code Enforcement:	No Response
Fire Inspector:	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 Ashworth Lane street frontage of the property. The fence encroaches 8 feet into the front yard.
2. The applicant has specified that the purpose of the 6-foot tall privacy fence is for the use of keeping a large breed dog safely and securely inside the yard.
3. The subject property is a corner lot which has frontage on both Abbey Lane and Ashworth Lane . The home on the property faces Abbey Lane and has its vehicle access on Abbey Lane.
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). The proposed fence would not impede visibility at the street intersection or for any neighbor's driveway. The fence, if approved, will be 17 feet from the front property line along Ashworth Lane.
5. The size of the applicant's back yard, with a 6-foot tall fence that does not encroach into the front yard, would be 2,475 square feet, which is smaller than similarly sized lots not located on a corner lot. Extending the fenced area 8 feet into the front yard would increase the back yard to 2,915 square feet, which would be comparable to other lots.
6. Through lots, as defined by the zoning ordinance and have two frontages, are exempt from this section of the Zoning Ordinance and fence height is only restricted on the side where the front door is located – the other "frontage" is considered a rear yard. Corner lots do not have this same exemption.
7. The fence will encroach into a 20 foot drainage and utility easement located adjacent to Ashworth Lane. The applicant will need to seek approval from the City Engineering Department to locate the fence in the easement.

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 departments have expressed any public safety concerns regarding the taller-than-permitted privacy fence encroaching into the front yard along Ashworth Lane. 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, taller privacy fence in the front yard along Ashford Lane will not adversely affect the neighbor's use and enjoyment of their property. The fence will be located outside of the sight visibility triangle and therefore will not adversely affect the safety of the adjacent street intersection. The fence will also be 17 feet from the front property line along Ashworth Lane and, therefore, will not obstruct visibility from the adjacent 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: Building a 6-foot tall fence that is compliant with the zoning ordinance creates a back yard that is smaller than average within the subdivision, but does not create a practical difficulty in the use of the property. *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-25-14

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)
Application

Status: Active

Submitted On: 12/26/2025

Primary Location

2068 ABBEY LN
COLUMBUS, IN 47201

Owner

Mona Jalal
Abbey LN 2068 COLUMBUS, IN 47201

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)

Please provide the details of the variance request:*

to allow a 6ft tall white vinyl privacy fence to be located 8ft away from
side of building (still within 17 ft of property line) on Ashworth Lane side

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.*

Approval of this variance will not be injurious to public health or safety. The fence will be professionally installed by Indy's Finest Fence (ranked top 3 in Indiana), ensuring a secure structure that meets all safety standards. Crucially, we have incorporated a 5-foot wide gate directly over the Drainage and Utility Easement (DUE) line. This specific design choice guarantees that utility providers will have unobstructed, easy access for any future maintenance or inspection needs. The fence will be located entirely on private property, set back to maintain clear sight lines for traffic on Ashworth Lane, and will not impede public access.

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?*

The variance will positively impact the neighborhood's visual character. The 6-foot white vinyl fence is designed to add a symmetrical look to the property and provide a striking visual contrast against the deep navy exterior of my highly upgraded modern farmhouse. This aesthetic improvement enhances the curb appeal of the home and the surrounding area. Neighbors will benefit from a tidy, attractive boundary that is professionally installed and maintained, adding to the overall value of the street rather than diminishing it.

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.*

Strict application of the Zoning Ordinance presents two significant challenges to the functional and structural integrity of this project. First, regarding the care of our Newfoundland puppy (born August 4, 2025), adhering strictly to the setback line excludes an 8-foot by 55-foot strip of land from the secure area. Granting this variance allows us to recapture this 440 square feet of yard space, which creates a vastly superior environment for a giant breed's quality of life, joint health, and exercise needs compared to the restricted layout. Newfies are projected to be 130-150 lbs and 28-30 inches tall and a 6ft tall fence (allowed by HOA is an excellent option for them).

Second, based on a technical review of the property layout, the experts at Indy's Finest Fence have strongly advised against installing a heavy-duty vinyl gate post flush with the house corner. Their professional opinion is that the ground immediately adjacent to a foundation corner often lacks the soil compaction necessary for long-term stability. The requested offset is not merely for convenience, but to allow the post to be anchored in a secure, independent concrete footer away from the foundation edge. This approach ensures a durable, professional installation that avoids the risk of the fence leaning over time.

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/>.

Mona Jalal

HOME ADDRESS:

SEC. 11 TWP. 9 N RGE. 5 E

05/08/25 25-0389 JRJ

