



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

STAFF REPORT

Docket No. / Project Title: BZA-26-13 (Doc Chumley's)
Staff: Desiree Aldrich

Applicant: Eric Neal
Property Size: 1 Acre
Current Zoning: CC (Commercial: Community)
Location: 8030 West Goeller Road, in Harrison Township

Background Summary:

The applicant has indicated that the proposed variances are to enable an expansion of the parking lot for this business. The applicant proposes allowing parking spaces to encroach approximately 37 feet into the minimum required 55-foot parking front setback along Goeller and to allow up to 21 parking spaces to be 8 feet in width, 1-foot smaller than the 9-foot requirement.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:

Variance #1 (Parking Setback Encroachment) – Denial, criterion #3 has not been met. If approved, (1) the extent of the encroachment (including vehicle parking, golf cart parking, or any other paved area) should be limited to that matching the existing parking lot encroachment, +/-27 feet, along Goeller Boulevard and (2) the 525 West frontage shall be reconstructed such that a clear driveway entrance/exit meeting the width standard of the zoning ordinance is provided with the remainder of that setback not used as parking spaces restored to a grass lawn.

Variance #2 (Parking Space Width) – Denial, criterion #3 has not been met.

Zoning Ordinance Considerations:

District Intent: The intent of the CC (Commercial: Community) zoning district is as follows: To establish appropriate locations for a variety of businesses providing a variety of goods and services to (1) community-wide consumers and (2) those who travel through or visit the area. This zoning district is not intended for use along traffic corridors, but should instead be applied at significant intersections along major transportation routes. This zoning district should be applied only to areas with adequate infrastructure and road access to accommodate moderately high traffic volumes.

Development Standards: Section 7.2(Part 4)(B)(1) states all parking spaces and driveways shall maintain a minimum setback of 10 feet from the existing or planned right-of-way, whichever is greater, of all adjacent streets and roads. Section 7.2(Part 1)(B) Table 7.6 states that minimum parking space size is 9 feet in width by 18 feet in length for 45-, 60-, and 90-degree parking and 9 feet in width by 23 feet in length for parallel parking.

Current Property Information:

Land Use:	Restaurant / Market
Site Features:	Commercial building / Legal-Nonconforming Gravel Parking Area
Flood Hazards:	The site does not contain any flood hazards.
Street/Road Frontage:	Goeller Road (Minor Arterial, Residential, Rural) 525 West (Minor Arterial, Residential, Rural)

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:		
	Zoning:	Land Use:
North:	AP (Agriculture: Preferred)	Single-family residential
South:	CC (Commercial: Community)	Commercial
East:	P (Public / Semi-Public Facilities)	Worship Facilities (Hindu Society of Southern Indiana / Unitarian Universalist Fellowship)
West:	AP (Agriculture: Preferred)	Single-family residential Agricultural

Interdepartmental Review:	
County Engineering:	No comments provided.
City Utilities:	No Concerns
County Code Enforcement:	No issues
County Fire Inspector:	No issues as submitted.
County Health Department:	Care must be taken to ensure the parking area does not encroach upon the perimeter drain outlet which is located west of the utility pole shown on the site plan. No application has been submitted for any type of permit or certificate in association with this variance request.

Planning Consideration(s):

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

1. The existing parking is considered legal non-conforming in that it is stone / millings and there are no striped spaces or marked Handicap spaces. It encroaches completely into the 525 West setback, with no separation from the 525 West pavement. It encroaches +/-27 feet into the Goeller Road setback, with a +/-20 foot wide lawn separating it from the Goeller Road pavement. It is estimated that 17 vehicles can be parked in this existing parking area.
2. The Zoning Ordinance requires approximately 13 parking spaces at the subject location.
3. On September 30, 2025 a prior Zoning Compliance Certification (CZC-2025-095) was issued to approve a 640 square foot accessory structure onsite (a storage building), a 320 square foot carport, and six new 9 foot wide by 18-foot-deep paved parking spaces that met setback requirements.
4. The applicant has now proposed paving the existing parking area, striping individual spaces, and redesigning the previously approved new spaces. He proposes 15 90-degree spaces at 8 feet wide by 18 feet deep, 3 90-degree spaces at 9 feet wide by 18-feet deep, 2 parallel spaces at 8 feet wide by 23 feet long, and one Handicap space at 10 feet wide by 18 feet deep. Of these 17 spaces, 14 would not meet the minimum required 9-foot width.
5. His Handicap space also does not appear to meet American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements – it must be van accessible and be 11 feet wide with an additional 5-foot-wide access aisle.
6. The applicant also proposes 4 new spaces and an area for golf cart parking that will encroach into the front parking setback off Goeller Road. The new spaces are also proposed to be 8 feet wide by 18 feet deep.
7. The new parking spaces would encroach 31 feet into the minimum required 55-foot setback from Goeller Road. There is a +/- 6-foot further encroachment by a proposed golf cart parking area. This would leave a setback of approximately 3 feet from the Goeller Road right-of-way and approximately 7 feet from the Goeller Road pavement.
8. There is existing green space east of the existing parking lot that could be used for an expanded parking area that complies with the zoning ordinance.

Provisional Findings of Fact/Decision Criteria (Variance #1 - Parking Setback Encroachment):

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: Neither the County Fire Inspector nor County Highway Department have concerns regarding allowing the parking lot to encroach into the parking front setback off Goeller Road. The parking encroachment would not interfere with intersection sight visibility along the adjacent streets and wouldn't create any access problems for emergency services. *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: Allowing 4 parking spaces and the golf cart parking area to encroach into the required 55-foot front setback along Goeller Road would not negatively impact the neighbors' ability to use their properties. The parking area would not interfere with other's driveways nor encroach into any setbacks along other's property lines. *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 existing building was constructed in 1939, prior to the adoption of current setback requirements. The existing parking area also pre-dates the current zoning ordinance and

encroaches into now-required minimum setbacks. However, the property is approximately 1 acre in size with a grass lawn to the east of the building and existing parking area that could accommodate a parking lot expansion with no or minimized encroachment into the Goeller Road setback. The applicant's submitted site plan shows no barriers to extending the parking to the east *This criterion has not been met.*

Provisional Findings of Fact/Decision Criteria (Variance #2 - Parking Space Width):

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 or County Department expressed any concerns regarding allowing the parking spaces on the subject site to be 8 feet in width, 1 foot less than the required 9-foot requirement, indicating no concerns for public health, safety, morals, or general welfare. *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: Allowing 18 out of 21 parking spaces to be 8 feet in width would not negatively impact the neighbors' ability to use their property. While this reduced space size may have impacts on circulation within the parking lot, it will not affect adjoining properties. *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 property is approximately 1 acre in size with a grass lawn to the east of the building and existing parking area that could accommodate a parking lot expansion. That expansion could likely accommodate an overall parking lot design that provides spaces at the required 9-foot minimum width. The applicant's submitted site plan shows no barriers to extending the parking to the east *This criterion has not 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-26-13

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)
Application

Status: Active

Submitted On: 2/14/2026

Primary Location

8030 W GOELLER RD
COLUMBUS, IN 47201

Owner

DOCCHUMLEY LLC
W MIRROR RD 9378 COLUMBUS, IN 47201

Additional Application Information

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

DOC Chumley's LLC

Are you the owner of the property?* 

Yes

Application Information

Application Type*

Development Standards Variance

Property Type*

Non-Residential

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.

Pre-Application Meeting

Have you had a pre-application meeting with the Planning Department?*

Yes

What staff member did you meet with?*

Desiree Aldrich

When did you meet?*

02/13/2026

Development Standards Variance Request

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

7.2 (Part 1)(B) Table 7.6

Please provide the details of the variance request:*

To allow parking spaces to be 8ft in width – 1 ft smaller than required 9ft in width. Handicap parking will be 10ft wide – 1ft wider than the requirement.

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.*

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Because the property has limited on-site parking capacity, the variance will help ensure safer access for emergency vehicles and reduce the likelihood of vehicles parking along Goeller Road and/or 525, both of which are high-traffic corridors. By allowing the requested setback variance and an improved parking layout, the site will be able to accommodate more vehicles on the property rather than spilling into the roadways.

This variance and other measures we are prepared to take, will improve traffic flow at the intersection, reduce congestion, and create a much safer environment for the public. As a result, approval of the variance will not be injurious to public health, safety, or general welfare; instead, it will enhance overall safety conditions and general welfare of the area.

Other Improvements: The current parking lot is loose gravel & millings which do not promote a structured parking marking system or adequate snow removal. As another way to help promote the most efficient parking system and contingent upon this variance, we are prepared to completely pave the entire lot to provide better flow, aesthetics and capacity. We also believe that with the proximity to Tipton & Harrison lakes and the popularity of legalized golf carts and motorcycles in this immediate area, some of the proposed 8ft foot spots will not be as congested as one might think this reduction could cause.

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 property immediately to the south is occupied by a commercial contractor, and inadequate on-site parking could lead visitors to park along Goeller Road, potentially disrupting the flow of commercial vehicles entering and exiting that business. There are also residential homes along 525 that could be negatively affected if overflow parking were forced onto the roadway due to the site's limited parking capacity.

Granting the setback variance and allowing slightly narrower parking spaces will maximize the number of on-site parking spaces within the property's constraints (going from 17 to 21 total spots). This reduces the likelihood of roadside parking, minimizes traffic congestion near the intersection, and helps ensure that neighboring commercial and residential properties are not adversely impacted.

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 existing building was constructed in 1939, prior to the adoption of current setback requirements, and its placement on the lot significantly limits available options for meeting today's standards. The west, north, and east sides of the property are bordered by required septic systems, which prevent any expansion of parking or reconfiguration in those directions. Along the east frontage (Goeller Rd), a watershed drainage culvert further restricts the ability to provide added safe parking, proper drainage and risks of congestion near Goeller & 525. These combined site constraints make it impractical to use the property as intended without the requested variances.

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/>.

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

7.2 (Part4)(B)(1.)

Please provide the details of the variance request:*

To allow perimeter parking spaces to encroach into the required 55ft parking front set back.

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.*

Because the property has limited on-site parking capacity, the variance will help ensure safer access for emergency vehicles and reduce the likelihood of vehicles parking along Goeller Road and/or 525, both of which are high-traffic corridors. By allowing the requested setback variance and an improved parking layout, the site will be able to accommodate more vehicles on the property rather than spilling into the roadways.

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Application Fee Refund Information

Name*

Eric Neal

Address*

9378 West Mirror Road

City*

Columbus

State*

IN

Zip*

47201

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*



James Eric Neal

Feb 14, 2026

