



**CITY OF COLUMBUS  
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS  
(April 28, 2026 Meeting)**

**STAFF REPORT**

**Docket No. / Project Title:** BZA-26-20 / Andrew Wilson (Development Standards Variance)  
**Staff:** Desiree Aldrich  
**Applicant:** Andrew Wilson  
**Property Size:** 36,590 square feet  
**Current Zoning:** I2 (Industrial: General)  
**Location:** 3640 Commerce Drive, in the City of Columbus

**Background Summary:**

The applicant has indicated that the proposed variance is for the purpose of allowing an accessory structure (a storage container) to be 7 feet from the side property line, 13 feet less than the minimum required 20-foot side setback. The applicant proposes to operate his contractor’s business from two container structures on the property, one of which is proposed to encroach.

**Preliminary Staff Recommendation:**

Denial, Criteria #3 has not been met.

**Zoning Ordinance Considerations:**

**District Intent:** The intent of the I2 (Industrial: General) zoning district is as follows: To provide locations for general production, assembly, warehousing, research & development facilities, and similar land uses. This district is intended to accommodate most modern industrial production facilities and should be considered as appropriate for most general industrial developments and uses.

**Development Standards: Section 3.24 (C) Lot Standards** states the minimum side setback in the I2 (Industrial: General) zoning district is 20 feet for an accessory structure.

<b>Current Property Information:</b>	
<b>Land Use:</b>	State Farm Insurance Company
<b>Site Features:</b>	Commercial building, parking lot, storage building
<b>Flood Hazards:</b>	This property is located within the 100-year and 500-year floodway fringe.
<b>Street/Road Frontage:</b>	Commerce Drive (Local, Suburban, Industrial) National Road / US 31 (Principal Arterial, Commercial, Suburban)

<b>Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:</b>		
	<b>Zoning:</b>	<b>Land Use:</b>
<b>North:</b>	CC (Commercial: Community)	Commercial strip center
<b>South:</b>	I2 (Industrial: General)	CMR Electric
<b>East:</b>	CC (Commercial: Community)	Nissan of Columbus
<b>West:</b>	I2 (Industrial: General)	Bartholomew County Beverage Company

<b>Interdepartmental Review:</b>	
<b>City Engineering:</b>	No Comments
<b>City Utilities:</b>	No Comments
<b>INDOT – District Engineer:</b>	No objections
<b>City Fire Department:</b>	No Comments
<b>Bartholomew County Code Enforcement:</b>	No Comments

**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 for an accessory structure (a storage container) to be located 7 feet from the property line, 13 feet less than the required 20-foot minimum side setback.
2. The business on the subject site is State Farm Insurance company. The proposed storage containers will not be used in association with storage related to State Farm but rather storage for another business managed by the property owner. The on-site storage containers would be classified as a contractor’s office / workshop for this use.
3. The subject site has an expanded gravel parking area. This is a zoning violation that will need to be resolved prior to placement of any storage containers etc. Resolving the violation will include obtaining a ZCC for the site plan review, paving, and possibly landscaping.
4. Per Section 6.1(C)(5) Incidental Structures that exceed 120 square feet individually or are on a permanent foundation shall be subject to the accessory structure provisions of this Ordinance, specifically including the location provisions of Section 6.1(E). Further, any single type of these incidentals, where 2 or more are present, that total more than 120 square feet on a property shall also be subject to the accessory structure provisions of this Ordinance.
5. The applicant has indicated the purpose of locating the proposed accessory structure in the side setback is to keep it in line with another accessory structure on the property that is legal non-

conforming in the side setback. They would like to keep it as far away from US Highway 31 as well so it is less visible from the road.

6. The proposed storage structure dimensions are approximately 8 foot by 40 foot (320 square feet) and 9 feet tall.
7. The nearest property to the southwest of the proposed storage structure is CMR Electric. CMR Electric has 2 existing accessory structures / storage containers on their property line that are identical to what is being proposed by the applicant. CMR has not obtained approval for these structures and their location on the property may violate the zoning ordinance.
8. The subject site is located within the 100-year and 500-year floodway fringe. The accessory structures are required to be anchored but not elevated due to the size of the structure being under 400 square feet.

**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:* Neither the Fire Department nor Engineering Department expressed any concern regarding allowing for the accessory structure encroaching into the required 20-foot side setback. The Indiana Department of Transportation's District Engineer has no objections to the request as well. The structure would not interfere with intersection sight visibility along the adjacent streets. *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 a storage container to encroach 13 feet into the 20-foot side setback would not negatively impact the neighbor's ability to use their property. The proposed structure does not introduce any visual, noise, or access-related concerns to the neighboring properties. *This criterion has been met.*

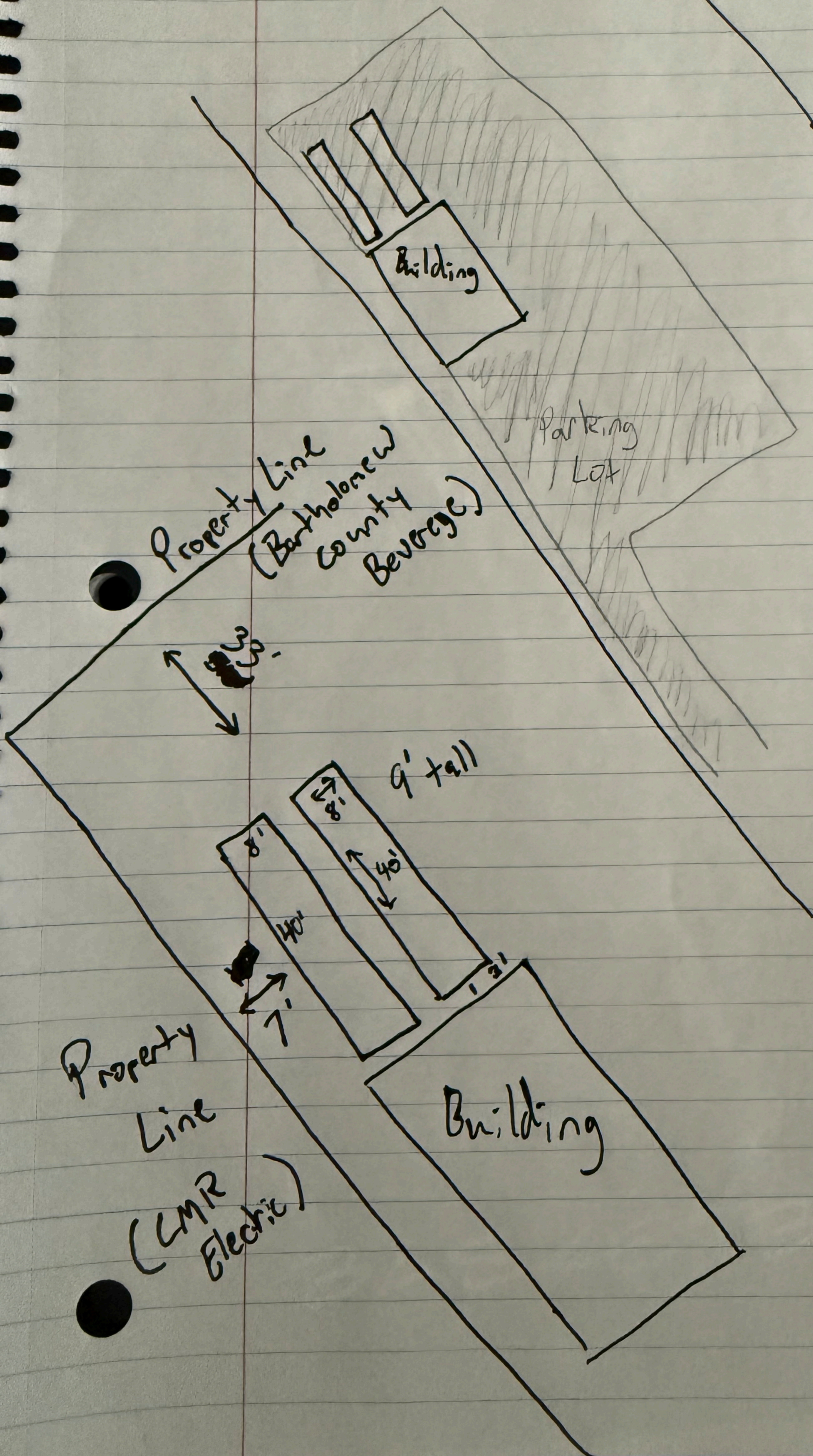
- 3. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property. This situation shall not be self-imposed, nor be based on a perceived reduction of, or restriction on, economic gain.**

*Provisional Findings:* The applicant hasn't demonstrated the practical difficulty in placing the storage containers outside of the 20-foot side setback. The subject property appears to have adequate space behind the business to have a storage container that doesn't encroach into the setback. The proposed storage container is also not being used for the existing on-site insurance business. *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.

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