

TOWN OF PLAINFIELD

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS REPORT

DATE: May 18, 2026

CASE NO.: [BZA-26-018](#)

PETITIONER: Hiram Trisler

REQUESTED ACTION: Variance of Development Standards from Article 14.2 of the Plainfield Zoning Ordinance to allow a detached garage to encroach into the required setback.

SITE INFORMATION: **750 East Main Street**



EXISTING ZONING AND LAND USE:		COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:	
Site:	R-4: Medium Density Residential	Site:	TN: Traditional Neighborhood
North:	R-4: Medium Density Residential	North:	TN: Traditional Neighborhood
South:	R-3: Medium Density Residential	South:	SR: Suburban Residential
East:	R-4: Medium Density Residential	East:	TN: Traditional Neighborhood
West:	R-4: Medium Density Residential	West:	TN: Traditional Neighborhood

PARCEL SIZE: .19 acres

REQUEST & HISTORY

The petitioner is requesting a Variance of Development Standards from Article 14.2 of the [Plainfield Zoning Ordinance](#) to allow the construction of a detached garage within the required front, side, and rear setbacks. The proposed garage would replace an existing detached garage currently located on the property.

The existing garage (shown below) is considered legal nonconforming due to its encroachment into the required setbacks. The lot associated with the petition is roughly 8,276 square feet (0.19 acres). The existing garage is 440 square feet, or approximately 22'(W) x 20'(L) in dimensions. The single-family home is roughly 2,000 square feet.

The new garage being proposed is 22'(W) x 28'(L) and 616 square feet, which is approximately 30% larger than the existing structure.

This property was subject to a previous [Variance of Development Standards](#) request from September 21, 2020. This request was to increase the allowable height for a privacy fence from 4' to 6' located along the property line / public right-of-way of Raines St. The variance request was approved.



Existing Garage



Existing Garage Setbacks

SETBACK. That distance measured perpendicularly from the property line to the closest point of the building, structure, sign structure, parking area or any other permanent improvement.

PLANNING OVERVIEW

The subject property is zoned R-4: Medium Density Residential. Detached accessory structures, including garages, are permitted within the district but are subject to the setback standards established in Article 14.2 of the Plainfield Zoning Ordinance.

As shown in the table below, the zoning ordinance establishes minimum front (26.5' – Please see comments on the next page regarding Section 4.12.A.c.1 of the Plainfield Zoning Ordinance), side (6'), and rear (5') setback requirements for accessory structures within the R-4 zoning district. The existing detached garage currently located on the property does not comply with these standards (shown above) and is considered legal nonconforming due to its encroachment into the required setbacks.

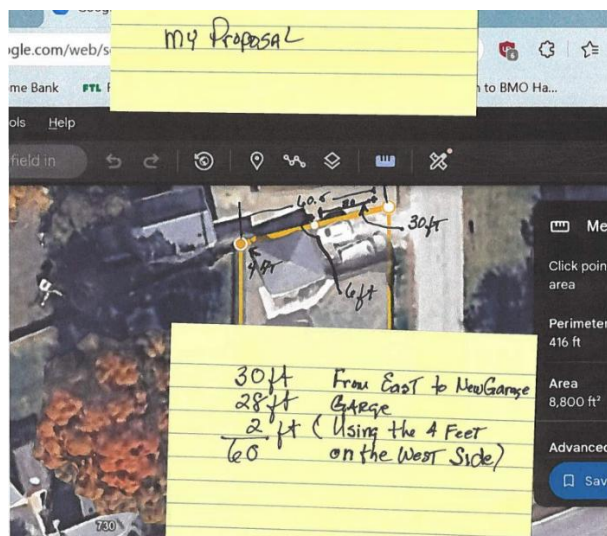
The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing garage and construct a larger replacement structure in a similar location on the property. As proposed, the new garage would continue encroachments into the required front, side, and rear setbacks identified below.

The request would therefore result in the construction of a new structure that intensifies the site's existing setback encroachments rather than maintaining or reducing the existing nonconforming conditions.

b.	Minimum Yards and Setbacks (front)	Unit	RR	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
	Primary Structure	Feet	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Unenclosed Porch	Feet	20	20	20	20	20	20
	Minimum Yards and Setbacks (side)	Unit	RR	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
	Minimum Yard	Feet	20	10	12 (1)	10 (1)	6	6
	Minimum Yards and Setbacks (rear)	Unit	RR	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
	Accessory Building	Feet	35	10	10	5	5	5
	Primary Building	Feet	25	25	25	20	20	20

During staff review, it was determined that the setback measurements provided within the application materials were not calculated in accordance with the measurement standards established by the Plainfield Zoning Ordinance. As a result, staff independently reviewed and calculated the setback measurements shown within this report.

Staff also notes that the application materials do not clearly establish the precise location of the proposed replacement garage on the property. While it can reasonably be assumed that the proposed structure would continue to encroach into the required setbacks due to its increased size, staff is unable to accurately determine the exact extent or location of the proposed encroachments based upon the materials submitted by the applicant (shown below).



Section 4.12.A.c.1:

The Plainfield Zoning Ordinance establishes potential relief for front setback requirements on blocks similar to the applicant's. The applicable language has been included below.

c. *Common setback provisions for Public and Private Streets.* Provided, however:

- 1) The setback provisions of this Article are subject to the following modification: In any block in any district contained in this ordinance in which an existing front yard setback is established by existing, legally established buildings or structures on more than 60% of the total number of lots within the same block face fronting on the same public street, the minimum required front yard setback for any new building, structure or addition along such block face shall be the average of such established front yards if such dimension is less than the minimum front yard setback established by this ordinance.

In this case, the applicable neighboring lots have setbacks smaller than prescribed by the Plainfield Zoning Ordinance. The neighboring setbacks have been included in the chart below. In this case, the applicant would receive a reduced front setback along Raines Street of 26.5'; however, the existing garage does not meet the reduced setback – it is unlikely that a larger structure would be accommodated by this reduction.

Existing Block Front Setbacks	
110 Raines Street	25'
118 Raines Street	28'
Average:	26.5'

STAFF COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

The property currently contains a detached garage that is considered legal nonconforming due to existing encroachments into the required front, side, and rear setbacks. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing structure and construct a new garage in roughly the same location on the property.

While the existing garage is permitted to remain due to its legal nonconforming status, the proposed replacement structure would increase the overall size of the garage while continuing encroachments into all required setbacks. The request would therefore result in the construction of a new structure that intensifies the site's existing setback encroachments rather than maintaining or reducing the existing nonconforming conditions.

Staff also notes that the Petitioner has not provided a survey identifying the exact location of the existing structure or the precise setback distances from adjoining property lines. As a result, Staff is unable to verify the extent of the existing encroachment or determine whether the proposed replacement structure will be in the same position as represented by the application materials. If approved, staff recommends that the approval be conditioned upon the Petitioner providing a survey prior to the issuance of a building permit. Proposed language has been added in the Motion section of this report for the Board's consideration.

MOTION

I move that the Board of Zoning Appeals **approve / deny / continue** BZA-26-018 requesting approval for Variance of Development Standards from Article 14.2 of the Plainfield Zoning Ordinance to allow for a newly constructed detached garage to encroach into required setbacks. Finding that:

1. The approval (**will not / will**) be injurious to the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of the community;
2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance (**will not / will**) be affected in a substantially adverse manner; and
3. The strict application of the terms of this ordinance (**will / will not**) result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.

And that such approval shall be subject to the following condition(s):

1. Prior to the installation of the foundation for the proposed detached garage, the Petitioner shall provide a staked survey prepared by a licensed land surveyor identifying the proposed location of the structure and all setback distances from property lines. The survey shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to release of a building permit or commencement of foundation work.