



ZONING COMMISSION AGENDA

July 21, 2026 5:00 PM

Mayor Marc Thompson
Susan Assi, Chad Carter, Heather Phillips, Merideth Wagoner

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes from:
 - June 16, 2026
 - June 24, 2026
- III. Administration of Oath
- IV. Requests/Action items

ADDRESS:	2500 Hasty Rd.
APPLICANT:	Michelle Kassem
ZONING DISTRICT:	A-12
REQUEST:	1. Accessory Structure Location 2. Vegetative Screening
NOTICES:	9 (July 7, 2026)

ADDRESS:	3574 Ridgewood
APPLICANT:	Laura & James Moran
ZONING DISTRICT:	A-3
REQUEST:	Preliminary Discussion

- V. Next meeting date
- VI. Adjournment

NOTE TO VISITORS

Anyone who provides testimony before the Zoning Commission will be required to take an oath which confirms that they will swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The typical sequence of hearing each variance request is as follows:

- 1) Staff report
- 2) Presentation by applicant
- 3) Visitor comments/questions
- 4) Consideration by Zoning Commission

OTTAWA HILLS ZONING COMMISSION
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Call to Order – Mayor Thompson

5:00 PM

Village & Zoning Representatives in Attendance

Mayor Marc Thompson
Zoning Member Merideth Wagoner
Zoning Member Chad Carter
Zoning Member Susan Assi
Village Administrator April McDonald

Councilwoman Heather Phillips
Solicitor Kati Tharp

Citizen Attendees

Nasrin Afjeh
Craig Lay

Rich Effler

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Phillips to approve the minutes, from the May 19, 2026 meeting and Mr. Carter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Administration of Oath – Mayor Thompson

Mayor Thompson administered the oath to the citizen attendees, Mrs. Tharp and Ms. McDonald.

3805 Brookside

Ms. McDonald stated Mr. Deiger is requesting a Zoning variance for his home at 3805 Brookside Road. The applicant is requesting approval to install a 5-foot IPE Privacy Screening along the waste/storage pad.

As it relates to fences, the Zoning Code states:

Privacy Screens shall comply with all requirements of Section 8.7, except b)2) and b)7) and are encouraged to include an architectural element.

- a) Location Screens for privacy purposes shall not be erected in the area between the house and the side or front lot line. The location of a privacy screen is further restricted to areas adjacent to patios, porches, or decks and one end of each screen must be immediately adjacent to the primary structure on the lot.
- b) Height: Privacy screens shall not exceed a height of six feet (6') above the existing grade where such screen is erected.
- c) Length: The cumulative length of all privacy screens on a lot shall be limited to 12 linear feet, measured along the center line of the screen.

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As Mr. Effler noted, this would be more appropriately classified as a utility screen rather than a privacy screen. However, the Zoning Code does not clearly define or distinguish utility screening from privacy screening, which creates some ambiguity in the application of the regulations.

To date, the Village has not received feedback related to this request.

Mr. Effler stated he was present on behalf of the homeowners, Mr. and Mrs. Deiger, and has assisted them with several small projects over the years. He explained that the request involves a waste/storage pad adjacent to their detached garage. A dilapidated fence and structure previously occupied the area. The homeowners currently store their refuse containers outside the garage and wish to recreate that function in a manner they believe is architecturally appropriate.

Mr. Effler stated the proposal falls into a gray area within the current code. While it could be considered utility screening, it is not intended to function as a property line fence. The proposed structure would be five feet in height and approximately eighteen feet in length along the neighboring property side. It would not return to or connect with the garage. The homeowners considered installing gates but instead chose a three-foot opening to allow easy access to the refuse containers. At a height of five feet, the containers would not be visible from the opposite side.

The structure would consist of 4x4 posts set in concrete, with facing material constructed of IPE, a durable Brazilian walnut commonly used for decking and exterior cladding. Mr. Effler described it as a high-quality natural wood product. He further explained that the asphalt driveway improvements would replace existing pavement and include a small extension connecting to the waste/storage pad. The additional impervious surface area totals 1,434 square feet, representing approximately 7% of the allowable lot coverage and therefore does not require a variance.

Mayor Thompson asked whether the variance request related to the structure's height and openness. Mr. Effler stated that he viewed the application as a fence variance because the proposed screening would be approximately 5% open rather than meeting the 50% openness requirement. He noted that the Village currently lacks a definition for utility screening. Mayor Thompson asked Solicitor Tharp to explain the status of the proposed utility screening language in the zoning code update. Mrs. Tharp stated that the draft code requires utility screening to be located on the same lot as the equipment being screened, not extend into the public right-of-way, and comply with applicable property line requirements. Screening must fully obscure the equipment, generally may not exceed six feet in height, and should not exceed the height of the equipment by more than two feet unless otherwise approved by the Zoning Administrator. Proposed materials include fencing, masonry walls, wood panels, or dense landscaping, and openings may be permitted for ventilation and access.

Mr. Effler stated that, based on the proposed language, the application appears to meet all requirements and likely could have been approved administratively by the Zoning Administrator.

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if the definition already existed. However, he submitted the application as a fence variance because the current code does not contain a utility screening provision.

Mayor Thompson noted that utility screening discussions had primarily focused on equipment such as air conditioning units and pool equipment, which differs somewhat from the current request. He suggested that the definition may need to be revised.

Mrs. Tharp read the draft definitions for utility equipment and utility screens. She noted that while refuse containers are included among the items that may be screened, the code does not explicitly classify refuse container screening as utility screening.

Mr. Effler stated that screening refuse containers is preferable to leaving them visible and benefits neighboring properties. Ms. McDonald asked whether the proposed code established a maximum length for utility screening. Mrs. Tharp stated it only requires sufficient screening to conceal the equipment. Mr. Effler noted the draft language limits screening height relative to the equipment being screened. Mrs. Tharp clarified that screening generally may not exceed six feet in height and is intended to conceal equipment rather than function as a large fence.

Mr. Carter observed that refuse containers occupy a relatively small area, while the proposed screened area extends approximately twenty feet. Mayor Thompson questioned whether the homeowners could instead construct a garage addition in that location, which would effectively create a larger wall. Mr. Effler responded that such an addition would likely exceed the allowable accessory structure size. Mayor Thompson stated the Commission should consider whether a garage wall would be preferable to the proposed screening structure.

Mr. Effler reiterated that constructing a small enclosure solely around the refuse containers would not be aesthetically appropriate and that the proposed design would better complement the garage while providing a benefit to neighboring properties.

Mr. Carter asked whether any landscaping was planned. Mr. Effler stated he would need to consult the homeowners. Mayor Thompson stated he believed vegetative screening along the street-facing side would be appropriate. Mr. Carter commented that the request did not appear to fit a traditional fence variance. Mrs. Tharp noted that a fence variance is the closest available mechanism under the current code. Mayor Thompson concluded that, while not a traditional fence, the request could be considered under the variance process.

A motion was made by Ms. Phillips to approve the variance at 3805 Brookside to allow for a Utility Screen, because our current code does not specifically define a utility screen, this is limited to the area next to the garage, five-foot 5% open, with the required vegetative screening in the front facing the street, Mr. Carter seconded the motion.

Motion – Ms. Phillips
Second – Mr. Carter
Yeas (5) – Mayor Thompson

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Ms. Phillips
Mr. Carter
Mrs. Wagoner
Mrs. Assi

Nays (0) –

2748 Talmadge

Ms. McDonald stated Mr. Lay is requesting variance consideration for his property at 2748 Talmadge Rd. The applicant is seeking approval to construct a detached accessory structure to be used as a garage, in lieu of an existing shed.

Ottawa Hills Zoning Code

The Zoning Code limits accessory structures to a maximum area of 576 sq ft. The proposed detached garage would measure approximately 864 sq ft, requiring a variance of 288 square feet from the maximum permitted size. The garage portion would measure 576 square feet but with the proposed patio/roof overhang, the total would be 864 sq ft. From the Indian Rd viewpoint, additional screening would be necessary. The height would measure 14 feet high, at the peak. Contractor is aware that materials must be primarily clad in wood, masonry, or stucco, or materials which closely simulate wood, masonry or stucco.

To date, the Village has not received feedback related to this request.

Mayor Thompson asked if the shed at the rear of the property belonged to the owner and would be replaced by the proposed structure. Mr. Lay confirmed that it would and explained that the new garage would be constructed in the location of the existing shed. He noted that a pre-line had already been installed along Indian Road. Ms. McDonald stated she had observed the beginning of the line and noted that the rear of the structure would abut St. Ursula's property, which Mr. Lay confirmed.

Mayor Thompson noted that while the proposal was being referred to as a garage, Mr. Lay did not intend to provide a driveway to the structure. Mr. Lay explained that there would be no practical way to do so and that the building would primarily be used for storage, with the covered patio serving as a shaded outdoor space.

Ms. McDonald stated that the structure would be located five feet from the side lot line and ten feet from the rear property line, which complies with accessory structure setback requirements. Mr. Lay added that screening would be provided along the northern fence line, where approximately eight-foot arborvitae currently exist. Mayor Thompson observed that if the patio overhang were eliminated, the variance request likely would not be necessary. Ms. McDonald agreed, noting that the covered patio portion was the primary variance need.

Mayor Thompson asked about screening on the south side of the property. Mr. Lay stated there is currently no screening there other than several mature trees on the neighboring property. Mayor Thompson noted that the Village Code requires accessory structures to be screened from

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neighboring properties and the street. He expressed concern that replacing the existing 8-by-10-foot shed with a significantly larger structure could have a greater visual impact on adjacent properties and suggested that additional screening on the south side may be appropriate. He stated that this would be a matter for zoning review.

Ms. Phillips asked whether a sidewalk was proposed in the area between the structure and the property line. Mr. Lay responded that a sidewalk would be located on the north side. Ms. Phillips noted that vegetation would not need to occupy that area, and Mr. Lay added that landscaping was also planned along the eastern side of the structure. Mayor Thompson stated that he was less concerned about the rear of the property because a fence already exists there. When asked how construction access would be achieved, Mr. Lay explained that access would likely be obtained from the rear of the property, as it would be difficult from the front.

Mayor Thompson commented that the south side of the property appeared to contain substantial vegetation. Mr. Lay explained that three large trees had recently been removed and noted that contractors had previously accessed the area by removing a section of fence. He anticipated a similar approach for this project.

Ms. Phillips asked whether a drainage plan would be required. Ms. McDonald confirmed that one would be necessary. She also noted that the contractor had been advised that the exterior materials must be primarily clad in wood, stucco, masonry, or materials that closely simulate wood. Mr. Carter pointed out that the submitted plans referenced vinyl siding with tieback, stating that while the tieback material was acceptable, vinyl siding would not comply with the code. Mayor Thompson suggested that the contractor provide material samples to Ms. McDonald for approval. Ms. McDonald stated that she could provide examples of previously approved materials.

Mr. Carter noted that the Village Code contains some ambiguity regarding what constitutes enclosed versus open space when calculating square footage, and that clarification may require future code amendments. He added that the open porch area could potentially fall outside the square footage calculation. Ms. Phillips observed that the percentage of paved area would not be affected because the structure would not be used for vehicle parking.

Mr. Carter asked whether additional vegetative screening would be required. Mayor Thompson stated that Ms. McDonald could review and approve the proposed screening plan. Mr. Carter then asked where the new building would begin relative to the existing shed. Mr. Lay responded that it would be located approximately two feet farther east. Mayor Thompson asked whether the rear of the new structure would be closer to the property line than the existing shed, and Mr. Lay confirmed that it would be approximately two feet closer. Mayor Thompson concluded by stating that he would expect vegetative screening to be provided in a manner consistent with Village Code requirements.

A motion was made by Mr. Carter to approve the variance at 2748 Talmadge to allow for the new construction of an accessory structure, with 864 square footage which deviates from the

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requirement of 576 square feet, the approval is contingent upon the vinyl siding meeting standards, and with vegetative screening being required on the south side, the project will also require a drainage plan, Ms. Phillips seconded the motion.

Motion – Mr. Carter
Second – Ms. Phillips
Yeas (5) – Mayor Thompson
 Ms. Phillips
 Mr. Carter
 Mrs. Wagoner
 Mrs. Assi
Nays (0) –

Discussion

Mayor Thompson raised the prior discussion on short-term rentals, noting that additional refinement had been made and a follow-up meeting is scheduled for next week. He expressed hope that the item could be placed on the July 6th Council agenda, acknowledging that the legislation would likely require multiple readings to allow for public input. He also noted that any zoning code change would need Council action following a recommendation from the Commission.

Mrs. Tharp reported that the Commission had reviewed examples from other municipalities and had most recently discussed moving toward an outright ban on short-term rentals, defined as any rental period of less than one year. She noted that the proposed enforcement structure included a \$250 fine for a first violation and a \$1,000 fine for a second violation. She indicated she would prepare the proposal in a formal draft for review.

Mayor Thompson confirmed that earlier discussions had included registration requirements, but stated that under the current direction, a 365-day minimum rental period would eliminate the need for those provisions. Ms. Phillips requested a cost comparison for the zoning code work, including what it might cost if handled by an outside consultant, to better understand potential savings. Mayor Thompson responded that while outside consulting could be considered, legal costs would not necessarily be eliminated as in-house counsel would still be involved. Ms. McDonald indicated she would have Mrs. Holdren review the matter further. Mrs. Tharp added that she was preparing an updated draft for distribution, anticipated later in the week, and that she had documented all prior changes. She noted that some of Ms. Phillips' suggested edits were substantial enough to warrant further discussion rather than direct incorporation. Ms. Phillips agreed that an initial version should be circulated first, with additional updates considered afterward.

Next Meeting Date

July 21, 2026

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Adjournment
5:45 PM

Mayor Marc Thompson

DRAFT

**OTTAWA HILLS ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
June 24, 2026 1:00 PM**

Call to Order – Mayor Thompson

1:00 PM

Village & Zoning Representatives in Attendance

Mayor Marc Thompson

Councilwoman Heather Phillips

Zoning Member Chad Carter

Solicitor Kati Tharp

Village Administrator April McDonald

Citizen Attendees

Nasrin Afjeh

Rich Effler

Todd Kime

Citizen Comments

No Comments

Zoning Code Discussion

Mayor Thompson opened discussion regarding proposed amendments to the Zoning Code addressing short-term and mid-term residential rentals. He explained that any recommendation from the Zoning Commission would be forwarded to Council for consideration through the ordinance process, allowing multiple readings and opportunities for public input.

Village Solicitor Tharp reviewed the draft ordinance, noting that the original intent was to prohibit short-term rentals rather than establish a regulatory program. She explained that a provision addressing mid-term rentals had been included to accommodate circumstances such as temporary housing for visiting professionals or residents displaced during home repairs.

Commission members discussed whether mid-term rentals should be permitted through a special use permit process and debated the appropriate duration separating short-term and mid-term rentals. While the draft ordinance identified rentals of less than six months as short-term rentals, several members expressed support for reducing the threshold to three months. Members agreed that the primary objective was to prohibit traditional short-term vacation rentals, such as Airbnb-style weekend rentals, while allowing reasonable flexibility for legitimate temporary housing needs.

The Commission discussed the administration of any mid-term rental approval process. Concerns were raised regarding the time required for Zoning Commission and Council approval when temporary housing may be needed immediately. Members considered allowing administrative approval by the Village Administrator rather than requiring formal Commission review for each application.

Additional discussion focused on the possibility of establishing a rental registration program. Members considered whether registration would improve communication with rental property owners and tenants, assist with enforcement, and provide better recordkeeping. Concerns were

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also expressed regarding the administrative burden of maintaining a registry and the challenges of enforcing registration requirements.

The Commission also discussed enforcement provisions, including prohibiting the advertising of unlawful short-term rentals, establishing civil penalties for violations, and encouraging long-term residential occupancy while discouraging frequent turnover of short-term tenants.

Following discussion, the Zoning Commission reached consensus to amend the proposed ordinance to prohibit short-term rentals of less than three months, allow longer temporary rentals through an administrative approval process, and continue evaluating whether a rental registration program is necessary. The recommendation will be forwarded to Village Council for first reading and further consideration.

Mrs. Tharp noted that the proposed ordinance would need to include an appeals process. Mayor Thompson stated that the existing appeals provisions in the Zoning Code may be sufficient for this purpose, and Ms. McDonald referenced Section 14.4 of the Zoning Code as the applicable appeals process.

The Commission also discussed the administrative process for mid-term rental applications. Ms. Phillips asked whether the existing special use permit application would accommodate the required information or if a separate application or checklist should be developed. Mr. Effler expressed support for creating a simple checklist to ensure applicants provide all necessary information and to promote consistency in the review process.

Mrs. Tharp reviewed the proposed zoning code revisions, including adding definitions for pool fences and utility equipment, updating references from "Manager" to "Administrator," incorporating architectural elements into Section 8.8(I), clarifying height measurements in Section 11.1(C), and correcting typographical errors.

Ms. Phillips questioned whether brick walls should continue to qualify as pool fencing under the code. Mr. Kime suggested property owners seeking to use a brick wall instead of a fence could apply for a variance.

Mayor Thompson noted that, if adopted, the short-term rental regulations would need to be incorporated into the zoning code. Mrs. Tharp stated staff is considering whether those regulations should be included within the zoning districts or as a separate section.

Ms. Phillips recommended using the term "Administrator" consistently throughout the code and reorganizing the definitions section by grouping similar structure definitions alphabetically. The Commission discussed keeping fence and screen definitions separate but located near one another and adding cross-references where appropriate.

Ms. Phillips also recommended removing "playground equipment" from the accessory structure definition in favor of the existing "playground structure" definition, while noting that applicable placement requirements would remain in the body of the code. The Commission briefly

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discussed whether sculptures should remain listed as accessory structures, with Mr. Kime recommending they remain in the code.

Ms. Phillips also suggested revising the gazebo definition to reference structures that are "open to the sky," allowing pergolas to be addressed without a separate definition.

Citizen Comments

No Comments

Next Meeting Date

TBD

Adjournment

2:04 pm

Mayor Marc Thompson



2125 Richards Road
Ottawa Hills, Ohio 43606

Phone: 419.536.1111

Fax: 419.535.3550

ottawahills.org

TO: Zoning Commission
FROM: April McDonald
DATE: July 17, 2026
RE: July 21, 2026 Meeting

ADDRESS: **2500 Hasty Rd**
APPLICANT: Michelle Kassem
ZONING DISTRICT: A-12
REQUEST(S): 1) Accessory Structure Location
2) Vegetative Screening
NOTICES SENT: 9 (July 7, 2026)

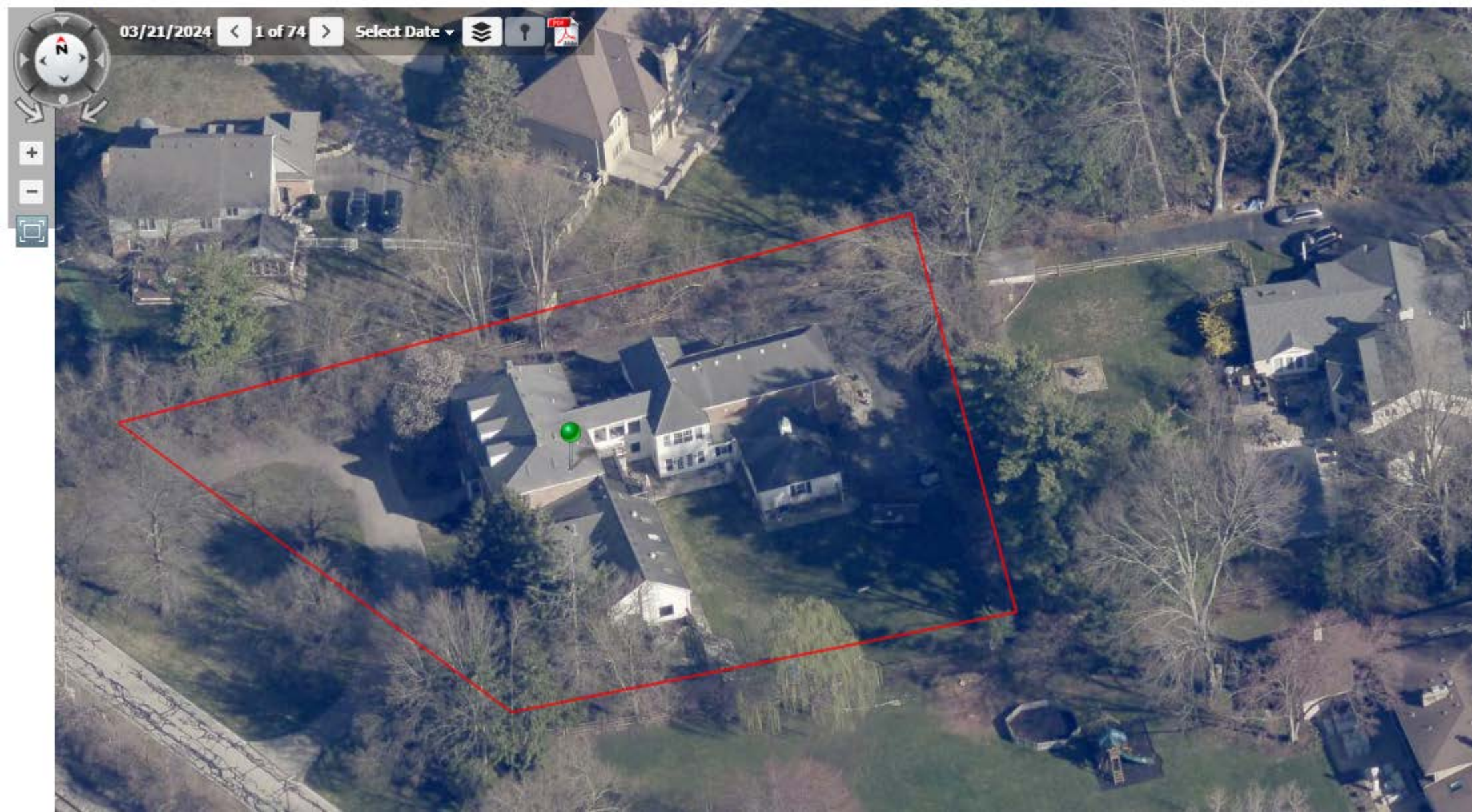
Ms. Kassem is requesting variance consideration for the property at 2500 Hasty Road. An unpermitted play structure is currently installed within a tree located less than five (5) feet from the property line. Approval of the requested variances would allow the play structure to remain in its current location at the rear of the property without the installation of additional vegetative screening. The play structure measures approximately 15 feet in height, with the base of the structure situated approximately 8 feet above the ground at the trunk of the tree.

Ottawa Hills Zoning Code

- Such accessory structures shall be located not less than 5 feet from any lot line unless the visibility of the structure from nearby properties would be diminished by locating the structures less than 5 feet from any lot line.
- ...accessory structures shall be screened from nearby properties and streets, as deemed necessary and appropriate, by evergreen vegetation of a type, quality, and size acceptable to the Village. [Ordinance 2002-08; §8.5(d)]

To date, the Village has received one email in opposition of the variance requests.





03/21/2024

< 1 of 74 >

Select Date ▾



Aaron Shetterly

9:33 AM (7
minutes ago)

to me

Good morning April,

Thank you for the update.

Please consider this my formal written opposition to the variance request for the treehouse at 2500 Hasty. The structure sits on my fence line and is a potential hindrance to selling my house when that day comes.

I was not notified through the Village's standard notice procedures, and as an adjoining property owner, I should have been. I want to be clear that I don't fault the Village for this - the responsibility lies with the homeowner.

I respectfully request that the Zoning Board deny the variance and require the structure to meet the standard setback from the property line.

I will do my best to attend the meeting on July 21st. I appreciate you keeping me informed.

Have a great day.

Aaron D. Shetterly



2125 Richards Road
Ottawa Hills, Ohio 43606

Phone: 419.536.1111

Fax: 419.535.3550

ottawahills.org

TO: Zoning Commission
FROM: April McDonald
DATE: July 17, 2026
RE: July 21, 2026 Meeting

ADDRESS: 3574 Ridgewood
APPLICANT: JP & Laura Moran
ZONING DISTRICT: A-3
REQUEST(S): N/A – Discussion of Conceptual Design

Mr. & Mrs. Moran approached the Village to discuss a conceptual design for a possible garage concept. They would like to meet with the Zoning Commission to discuss a *preliminary conceptual design* seeking to redevelop the existing detached garage area.

Notes from architect:

JP and Laura are seeking to redevelop the existing detached garage area to better support the long-term needs of their family while improving the overall functionality of the property. The proposed concept replaces the existing detached two-car garage with a larger accessory structure providing enclosed garage parking, expanded storage, flexible accessory space, and a covered connection to the existing residence. The project also improves site circulation while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Through earlier feasibility studies, the garage location emerged as the most practical area for expansion, minimizing impacts to the steep rear yard and making efficient use of an existing developed portion of the site. The purpose of this submission is to obtain preliminary feedback from the Zoning Commission before advancing into detailed design and a formal zoning application.



JP & Laura Moran Residence

Preliminary Review

Conceptual Garage Redevelopment

Ottawa Hills, OH
July 17, 2026

Prepared for
Village of Ottawa Hills, Zoning Commission

Prepared by
O|X Studio, Inc.

PROJECT SUMMARY



Owners:	JP & Laura Moran
Address:	3574 Ridgewood Road
Parcel ID:	44-010-008
Zoning:	A-3 Single Family Residential
Lot Size:	53,988 sf
Existing Residence:	Single-family detached residence
Existing Garage:	Detached 2-car garage <i>(Existing detached garage encroaches into the required setback)</i>

JP and Laura are seeking to redevelop the existing detached garage area to better support the long-term needs of their family while improving the overall functionality of the property.

The proposed concept replaces the existing detached two-car garage with a larger accessory structure providing enclosed garage parking, expanded storage, flexible accessory space, and a covered connection to the existing residence. The project also improves site circulation while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

Through earlier feasibility studies, the garage location emerged as the most practical area for expansion, minimizing impacts to the steep rear yard and making efficient use of an existing developed portion of the site. The purpose of this submission is to obtain preliminary feedback from the Zoning Commission before advancing into detailed design and a formal zoning application.

3574 Ridgewood Road



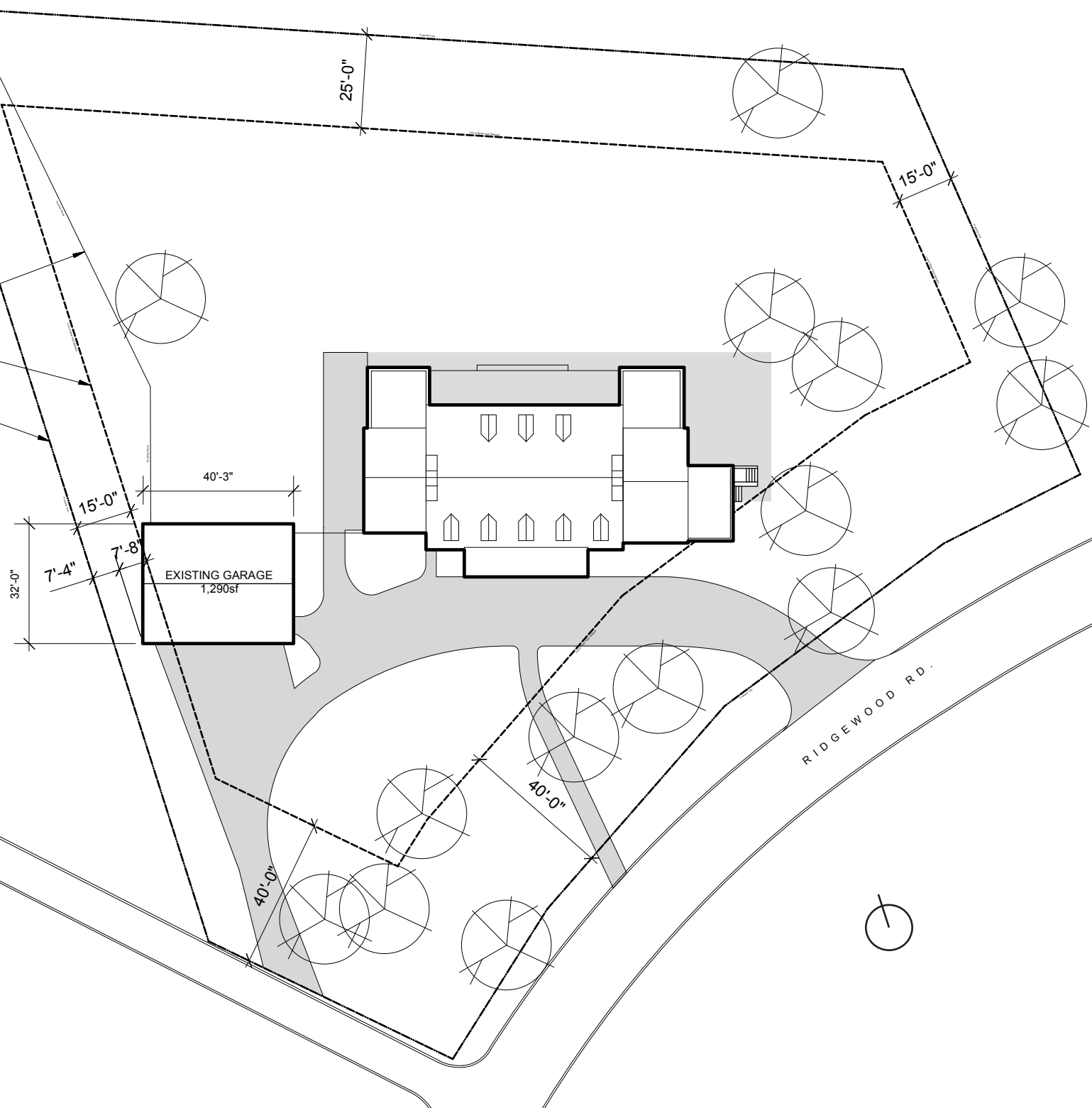




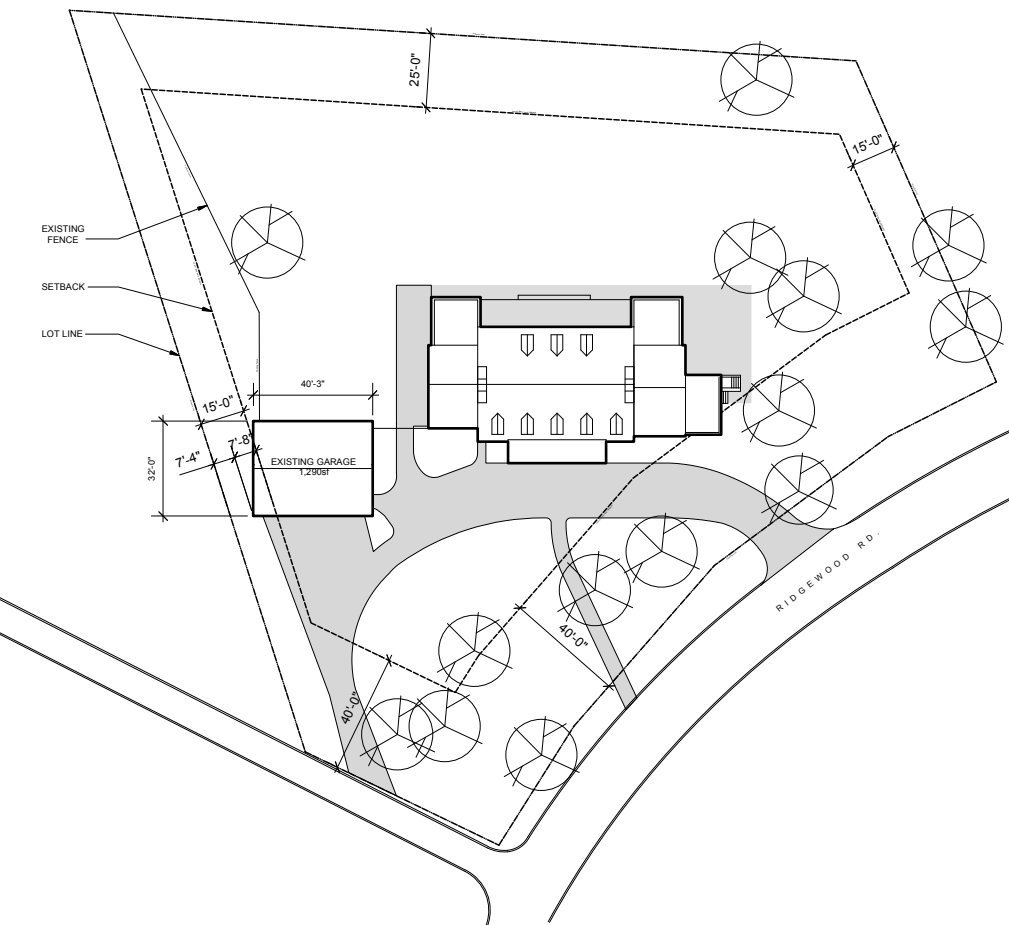
EXISTING
FENCE

SETBACK

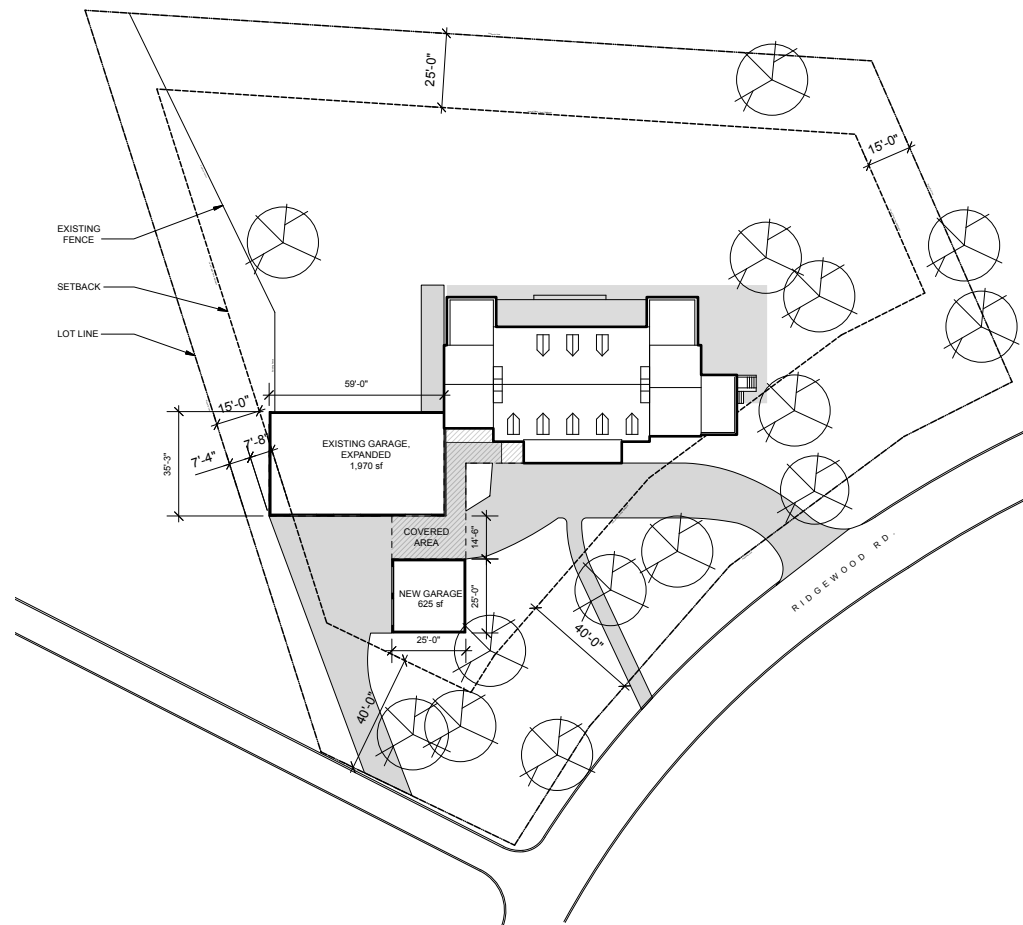
LOT LINE



EXISTING



EXISTING



PROPOSED







