

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
GREAT FALLS BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT/APPEALS**
November 13, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pete Fontana called the meeting of the Great Falls Board of Adjustment/Appeals to order at 3:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE

Great Falls Board of Adjustment/Appeals members present:

Pete Fontana, Chair
Christian Stone, Vice Chair
Antoinette Collins
Joe McMillen
Aspen Northerner

Great Falls Board of Adjustment/Appeals members absent:

None

Planning Staff members present:

Lonnie Hill, Deputy Director of Planning & Community Development
Amber Johannbeck, Residential Plans Examiner
Kristie Nelson, Permit Technician
Jamie Nygard, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Others present:

Rachel Taylor, Deputy City Attorney

Mr. Hill affirmed a quorum of the Board was present.

MINUTES

Chair Fontana asked if there was a motion to approve the meeting minutes as stated for April 10, 2025. Ms. Stone moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Collins. All in favor, the minutes were approved 5-0.

CONFLICT DISCLOSURE/EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. McMillen stated that he did know the applicant, as their businesses had worked together, but he said it would have no influence on his decision.

Mr. Fontana stated that he also knew the applicant, but it had no impact on the case's outcome.

Ms. Stone stated that both the applicant and she were professionals in Great Falls but that should not have any bearing.

BOARD ACTIONS REQUIRING PUBLIC HEARING

Variance request to allow a reduced side yard setback for the construction of a single-family residence located at 2716 Park Garden Lane.

Lonnie Hill, Deputy Director, presented to the Board. He said that the applicants, Zach and Jaime Gregoire, own 2716 Park Garden Lane in a Planned Unit Development (PUD) in Foxwood Estates Addition on a 37,126-square-foot parcel. There is a PUD to the north and south, county residences to the west, and Park Garden Lane right-of-way to the east.

Mr. Hill presented a location and zoning map, a site photo, and a proposed site plan.

Mr. Hill explained that the request is for a variance to the minimum side yard setbacks along the north property line, changing from fifteen (15) feet to six (6) feet. These setbacks are specific to the Foxwood Estates PUD as approved by the City Commission in Ordinance 3164. He mentioned that the applicants prefer a single-level home design due to medical needs. The applicant states the lot configuration and setbacks restrict the buildable width of the lot. The variance will enable proper driveway and garage functionality and safety for a single-level home design.

Mr. Hill presented the Basis of Decision:

1. Granting the variance would not be contrary to the public interest.
 - The variance will not adversely affect the character of the neighborhood as it will remain residential.
 - The variance will not compromise public health, safety, or welfare. The construction will adhere to all other relevant building codes and regulations.
 - The variance will not negatively impact neighboring properties. The applicant has provided a letter from the affected neighbor to the north.
2. A literal enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship owing to conditions unique to the property.
 - Enforcing a literal interpretation of the zoning code would prevent the applicant from building the single-story residence as proposed to address their practical needs for accessibility and long-term use due to medical concerns.
 - Staff determined that the medical needs of the owner present an unnecessary hardship.
3. The spirit of the Title would be observed, and substantial justice would be done by granting the variance.
 - The PUD is intended to promote development on large lots and to allow large accessory structures.

- Allowing the variance will address the practical needs due to medical concerns of the owners without disrupting the overall character of the neighborhood or PUD.

Mr. Hill stated that the neighbor to the North, Joshua Henzel, submitted a letter in support of the request, and Mr. Hill quoted from the letter.

Mr. Hill stated that based on the basis of decision findings, Staff recommended approval of the variance request.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

Zach Gregoire appeared before the Board, stating that he is the broker and owner of Dahlquist Realty, and emphasizing that many of his opinions are professional, not personal. He expressed that he does not believe the variance request will harm the neighborhood. He mentioned that his wife has medical issues, and if they had to alter the design, they would lose value and be forced to add a second story. He also noted that the shops in the neighborhood are only required to be two feet away, and many are larger than the houses, making the requested six-foot distance reasonable. He thanked the Board for their time.

PROPONENTS

None.

OPPONENTS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION

MOTION: That the Board of Adjustment, based on the Findings for the Basis of Decision, approve the variance request for a minimum side yard setback of six (6) feet along the north property line for the property addressed as 2716 Park Garden Lane.

MADE BY: Mr. McMillen
SECOND BY: Ms. Stone

VOTE: Motion Passed 5-0

Mr. Hill stated that the next steps are to review and approve a building permit. Once a permit is issued the applicant can then proceed with building the home in accordance with the approved variance request.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Hill thanked the Board Members for their attendance, especially Mr. McMillen, as he is doing double duty on the Board of Adjustment/Appeals and the Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission. He stated that there is legislation at the state level that will eventually be adopted, which will dissolve the Board of Adjustment. Future requests like the one presented at the meeting will first go to the Director of Planning and Community Development. If approved, that will suffice, but if denied, the applicant could appeal a decision to the City Commission for the final decision.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Fontana adjourned the meeting at 3:16 p.m.