

**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2025**

I. CALL TO ORDER

By: Gerrity Time: 7:00 p.m. Place: Annex and Zoom

II. ROLL CALL:

		PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Thomas Delucco		X	
	Caroline Dowd	X		
	Scott Francis		X	
	Michael Gerrity (Chair)	X		
	William Zenko	X		
ALTERNATE MEMBERS:	Peter DePaola (Sat for Delucco)	X		
	Patricia Hodge (Sat for Francis)	X		
	Cheryl Ann Resha			X
STAFF:	Heidi Leech, Planning Technician/Zoning Enforcement Officer	X		
	Natalia Yeschick, Recording Secretary		X	

III. READING OF LEGAL NOTICE

DePaola read the public hearing notice into the record.

IV. EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES

Gerrity explained the public hearing procedures.

V. PUBLIC HEARING

a. ZBA-25-9 – Request for variance from Table 4.04A.b of the Zoning Regulations to allow up to a 20-foot reduction of the front yard setback from Mill Race Drive from 50-feet to 30-feet from the property line at 9 Wolf Hill Road in the GR-80 Zone; Applicant/Owner: Jason Gagnon.

Applicant Jason Gagnon was present to discuss the application. Gagnon explained he is asking to put the shed near his driveway turnaround which is closer than 50-feet to the front property line along Millrace Drive so requires a variance. Gagnon said he spoke with Wetlands Agent Lindsay Beutler regarding other possible locations in the backyard but that falls within the wetlands buffer. He said she was concerned about disturbance to the wetlands behind the property line. The only other place to put it is at the proposed location.

Zenko asked if this proposed location would impact the septic. Gagnon responded that when the permit was submitted the sanitation approved it. Leech mentioned the wetlands staff is in support of the variance because this location would be less impactful to the wetlands. Leech also noted that the sanitarian cautioned in his approval that they would be placing the shed on top of their leaching trenches but because it is considered a movable structure it was approved.

DePaola asked which orientation of the shed they plan to follow. Gagnon responded it will be lengthwise at the driveway turnaround.

The size of the shed was clarified by Gagnon. The original dimensions included on the application were listed as 12 x 20 but it should be 14 X 24.

Roy Platt from 50 Carnic Alps Road who is a neighbor around the corner, stated his concerns. He built some of the new homes in the neighborhood and people building houses in the area were told they could not put any shed in front of the house. Platt stated it was in the deed restrictions. Gagnon clarified the front of the home faces Wolf Hill Road not Millrace Drive. He said the shed would go lengthwise with the driveway and not be in front of the house but behind the back corner. Platt argued that Gagnon has two fronts and believes there is a town ordinance that states the shed cannot be forward of the house. Platt believes Gagnon should put the shed behind the house and landscape it as there is plenty of room. Leech noted that deed restrictions are not enforceable by Town staff. They are a private, civil matter. Neighbors can sue one

another personally for violating deed restrictions that they have as a development, but they are not enforceable by the Town. Leech clarified there are setbacks for accessory structures but there is no rule prohibiting them from being in front of the house. There was further discussion. DePaola asked for clarification on which is the front of the property. Leech explained that Gagnon has two frontages as defined by the Zoning Regulations and two side yards due to being on a corner lot. Gagnon pointed out there is a heavy slope towards the wetlands so putting a shed there is not advisable.

Candace DeAngelis lives at 119 Wolf Hill Road and is a neighbor. DeAngelis is opposed to the placement and variance for the shed. She mentioned that Zoning Regulation Article II, Section 2 defines the front lot line as any line separating the lot from the street. It outlines specifically that corner lots shall be deemed to have a front lot along each adjacent street. With this being a corner lot DeAngelis believes they should not be able to put a shed in their front yard. In the same regulations Article IV, Section 4.06.01.G it outlines that accessory buildings should only be located in the rear of any lot and not nearer than 75 feet to any street. Because this property is on a corner lot they proposed putting a shed on the front lot. Additionally, the fact this proposed shed violates the zoning regulations placing the shed in the proposed location would obstruct critical site lines approaching the intersection of Millrace, Wolf Hill, and Appian Way. It would limit visibility to drivers approaching the intersection and adding a structure would impair the view of oncoming vehicles and pedestrians.

Hodge asked if Gagnon had done any research into whether a retaining wall could be placed where the woods are so the shed can be placed on a retaining wall. Gagnon responded that it is expensive to do and explained it is also inside of the buffer for the wetlands. He said they also want to keep a reserve area for the septic. He said they have worked with Beutler, and she does not want them to put it in the backyard. They are trying to find a place that is practical for them and the town.

Paul Steesman at 136 Appian Way is curious about the details of the wetland variances. Was it applied for and declined or did Beutler say it was not a good idea? Also, if it is a temporary structure does that carry the same weight against the wetlands? Leech responded that Beutler's exact comment on this application for the variance was "from a wetlands perspective the proposed location for the shed is much more ideal than a location near the wetlands that would be conforming to the zoning regulations."

Peter Sienna of 15 Wolf Hill Road said he went through the same challenges Gagnon did but did not apply for a wetlands variance to put his shed where he wanted more in the corner of the lot. He moved his shed. He said it was presented to them that the neighborhood was not going to allow sheds in the front, and they would have to be in the back. Sienna said the view from his living room window if the shed goes up in this location would be that shed. Some of the setback rules are in place to keep the aesthetics of the neighborhood a certain way.

Jerry Dallas of 1820 South Street said he has been a resident of the Town of Coventry for 49 years. He is surprised at the informality of the discussion. Dallas did not see anything in the ZBA 25-9 indicating this was about a shed. He recommends this issue be clarified by using the aerial map and to scale construct something the exact size of the shed and put it on the aerial map so people can see it visually. Leech responded that exactly that was done on the NearMap aerial, and she pulled it up on the screen. She said at the time it was prepared with the dimensions we were originally given; it just needs to be updated with the 14 X 24 dimensions we received tonight. Dallas does not think anything should be approved until it shows the exact location and dimensions of where it is going to be.

Rachel Roberts of 74 Wolf Hill asked if they can clear more trees and bring fill in. Gagnon responded they have the wetlands restriction, and they will not do work that is not needed. Roberts thought the wetlands restriction was more of a recommendation. Gerrity responded it would have to be investigated more. Leech explained that any work within the 75-foot upland review area would require a permit from wetlands staff or the Inland Wetlands Agency.

Gagnon mentioned the neighbors can attest to what the property looks like and what they've done. They have followed the town's procedures and applied for the permits. Beutler came out and reviewed everything. Gagnon is concerned about the steep slope in the back yard and having only a short corner of where it is flat. There is a huge boulder in the backyard too. The only other place it can be put is next to the turnaround at the driveway, which is the proposed location. Gagnon appreciates hearing from everyone but does not feel anyone will be hurt by the shed being put up.

Gerrity asked Gagnon to speak to why it cannot be put anywhere else on the property. Gagnon pointed out on the map the locations that have been suggested and why the shed cannot go into those locations. Gagnon pointed out that for Sienna to view the shed from his house he would have to look through Gagnon's house. Gagnon also planted arborvitaes that will block any view from Sienna's house in just a few years. He said that if he put the shed in a conforming location in the backyard as others have suggested, Sienna would see the whole shed.

Platt argued Gagnon has plenty of space to move the shed. He suggests the backyard near Sienna's property line. Gerrity asked Platt, since he is a builder, his opinion on how difficult it would be for Gagnon to move the shed to that area Platt is pointing out without it costing him \$10,000. Platt responded it is costing him money to bring fill in for the area now. He also mentioned Gagnon must be burying part of the septic system. Platt said he tried to do an addition for the original owners of that house in that area but they could not do it because the septic system was there so they decided to sell the house and move.

DeAngelis believes the drawing is not to scale with the 10-foot variances and the pitch of the land because that land has been regraded.

Sienna stated he will take a picture from his window and send it to the agency to show the pile of dirt where the shed is going to show he can see it from his house. It was asked if the location Platt is suggesting would be more intrusive to Sienna's view. Sienna responded no that he would prefer it to go in the back corner where Platt is suggesting. Gagnon responded to Sienna that he is not sure why it is a big deal if he might be able to see a corner of the shed until the trees grow in. Gagnon said he can see Sienna's entire shed all the time.

Gerrity said to Gagnon that if there were no opposition to his application it would likely have been granted but given the opposition it requires further scrutiny. Gerrity proposes the agency plan a site walk to go see the property. Leech mentioned to keep in mind that if a quorum of members goes together it needs to be noticed as a meeting.

Gerrity would like to table this application and as soon as possible plan a site visit. It was decided that a Special Meeting will be held for the site walk so all can attend together.

Leech read the definition of Lot Frontage from the Coventry Zoning Regulations for clarification.

This application is continued to the site walk and the August 19, 2025 meeting.

b. ZBA-25-11 – Request for a variance from Sec. 4.06.01.g.4.v) and Table 4.04A of the Zoning Regulations to erect a 10' x 10' x 9' wooden shed in the rear setback and install an 800 s.f. impervious driveway for a 26.5% lot coverage when 15% is the maximum at 207 Lakeview Drive in the LR Zone; Applicant/Owner: Robert Jenkins.

Owners Robert Jenkins and Dawn Muller were present to discuss the application. Jenkins explained they are going to withdraw the request for the asphalt driveway. They will use a permeable surface that is compliant with the regulations. Jenkins is only looking for a variance to build a 10' x 10' shed. Leech noted that Jenkins spoke with the Town Engineer earlier today and he did a quick calculation that the additional lot coverage from the shed could be captured by a rain barrel at the downspout of the shed. He noted there was no information submitted on the application about stormwater mitigation for the additional coverage. Jenkins explained the plan is to put the shed on a 12' x 12' x 6" deep gravel base which perhaps would be enough to absorb any kind of runoff. If there is additional mitigation that is needed, they will do it.

Gerrity said that they had already received a previous variance for increased lot coverage to construct the house and now they are coming back to the well so to speak. Jenkins responded they should have put the shed on the original plans. Gerrity asked if the shed was being built over anything they are aware of. Jenkins responded no. Gerrity asked if this is their primary home. Jenkins responded yes, they will be moving there when it is done.

Michael Noonan of 187 Lakeview Drive commented that he had concerns about the 26.5% lot coverage with the paved driveway. He said there are several options available for pervious driveway material. He was glad the paved driveway was removed from the application.

MOTION: Move to approve the request for variance for Sec. 4.06.01.g.4.v) and Table 4.04A of the Zoning Regulations to erect a 10' x 10' x 9' wooden shed in the rear setback for an 18.45% lot coverage when 15% is the maximum existing nonconformity of 17.5%. At 207 Lakeview Drive to find that it is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning regulations and is not contrary to public interest. It is an existing non-conforming lot due to the zoning regulations and stormwater mitigation for the additional 100 square feet will be handled.

By: Zenko

Seconded By: DePaola

Voting:

For: Gerrity, Zenko, DePaola, Hodge, Dowd

Against: None

Abstain: None

Motion unanimously approved.

VI. NEW BUSINESS/DISCUSSION:

a. Approval of June 17, 2025, Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Move to approve the June 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes

By: Dowd

Seconded By: DePaola

Voting:

For: Gerrity, DePaola, Hodge, Dowd

Against: None

Abstain: Zenko

Motion approved.

b. Member Updates

Leech provided members with a slide/graphic showing the Coventry Lake Watershed Impervious Coverage is 12%, 181 acres of 1,517 acres as of 2021 when this data was compiled. This is important information to keep in mind when considering lot coverage variance applications. This slide was part of a presentation given at the Land Use Forum in June. The data comes from the UCONN Zoning for Municipal Resilience, Zoning Fact Sheet Series, 2024.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned by Gerrity at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Natalia Yeschick

Natalia Yeschick, Recording Secretary

PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals at the next meeting. Please see the next meeting minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.