

CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE

*803 Joliet Road
Countryside, IL 60525
www.countryside-il.org*



Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Plan Commission

Zoning Board of Appeals

Tuesday, January 6, 2026

7:00 P.M.

City Hall

Board Members

**Chairman Robert Schwarz, Secretary Tina Grotzke,
Marco Gutierrez, Ronald Ward, Steve Kehr, Jack Benton,
Tom Geraghty, Danielle Edenfield, Jonathan Gertsmeier**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Schwarz.

Roll Call: Secretary Grotzke called the roll of members physically present:
Present: Robert Schwarz, Tom Geraghty, Marco Gutierrez, Tina Grotzke, Jon Gertsmeier, Ronald Ward, Steve Kehr, Jack Benton
Also Present: City Attorney Erik Peck, Planning Manager Richard Trent
Absent: Danielle Edenfield

Approval of Minutes – The regular meeting minutes of December 2, 2025, were previously distributed to Board members.

A motion was made by Ms. Grotzke, seconded by Mr. Geraghty, that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Gertsmeier, Grotzke, Gutierrez, Ward, Kehr, Benton
Nay: 0

Chairman's Comments – Chairman Schwarz reminded participants to identify themselves when speaking.

Action Items:

1. CASE #PZV26-0001: Consideration of a Variance

- a. To consider and recommend a variance to permit the obstruction of an accessory building/structure from the rear yard to the interior side yard of a property in the R-1 Zoning District; and
- b. To consider and recommend a variance to reduce the side yard setback from five feet (5') to one foot - six inches (1'-6") in distance for the location of an accessory building/structure (shed) in the R-1 Zoning District at the subject property of 5603 South Peck Avenue.

Mr. Gutierrez moved to open the public hearing on this matter, seconded by Ms. Grotzke, and carried by unanimous voice vote. Planning Manager Trent confirmed that the required notices were sent.

Mr. Trent noted that the Petitioner, Peter Blazenko, was seeking permission to maintain a shed in the side yard of the subject property, which is approximately 18,900 square feet, or 0.43 acres in size. He shared the Plat of Survey and each of the elevations of the property.

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan, updated as of March 2024, identifies the subject property as "Single-Family Detached". Although not identified in any of the three (3) Subarea Plans, the subject property is referenced under Chapter 6, which outlines one (1) goal and four (4) recommendations for "Residential Areas and Neighborhoods", as noted in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated January 6, 2026.

Mr. Trent shared the Site Plan, showing the location of the shed, which is approximately eight feet (8') by fifteen feet (15'), or 120 sq. ft. in size. It is approximately 44.53' from the front property line, approximately 14.5' from the house, and approximately 1'-6" from the side property line.

The purpose of the shed is to store garden equipment and household items. Accessory buildings are only permitted in rear yards, and no part of an accessory building or structure shall be located closer than five feet (5') to the side lot line along such side yard in the R-1 Zoning District. A portion of the rear yard is located within a floodplain. Staff had recommended an alternative location for the shed, outside the floodplain, where the location and required setbacks could be met. The Petitioner did not accept this location because the shed would block the view from their rear patio. There is another existing shed on site, which is in disrepair. The Petitioner has indicated that it would be removed in order to replace it with the proposed shed.

Staff recommended that the Board of Appeals use its discretion in this matter. If the Board considers recommending approval of the Variances, then staff has recommended four (4) conditions for consideration in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated January 6, 2026.

Board Member Grotzke asked whether it was possible to move the concrete pad under the shed. Mr. Trent responded that he was unsure whether it was possible for Mr. Blazenko to relocate the pad.

Board Member Gutierrez asked whether the shed in question was prefabricated, comprised of metal or vinyl, and whether it was level. Mr. Trent responded that the accessory building is a vinyl prefabricated shed. The shed, as illustrated in the photograph, appears tilted but it is level. Board Member Gutierrez noted that it should not be difficult to relocate a prefabricated structure unless it has electrical connections. Mr. Trent responded that it does not appear to have electrical connections.

Board Member Gertsmeier asked whether the variance hearing was necessary because the shed was built without a permit. Mr. Trent responded that the location and proximity to the side yard is the reason for the variance request. Staff encouraged Mr. Blazenko to obtain a permit, but location and setbacks from the side property line became an issue. Board Member Gertsmeier inquired about the floodplain's location and whether or not the old shed was being demolished. Mr. Trent noted the floodplain location (from one of the images submitted) and responded that the demolition of the old shed was one of the recommended conditions of approval for the new shed.

Mr. Blazenko was sworn in by Chairman Schwarz. The Petitioner noted that when he received the floodplain map, he realized there were limited options for the location of the shed. The location suggested by staff would block the view from the backyard. Another possible location would require the removal of mature trees. While he did not have a permit to place the shed, he was presented with an opportunity to lay the concrete pad and he decided to move forward without it. Mr. Blazenko is willing to move the shed five feet (5') from the property line, if necessary.

Chairman Schwarz noted that the petition is for two (2) Variances: permission to locate the shed in the side yard as opposed to the rear yard and for the shed to remain 1'-6" from the side yard (south property line). He requested confirmation that the Petitioner was willing to move the shed five feet (5') from the side yard. Mr. Blazenko responded that he would like the shed to remain in its current location but is willing to move it, if necessary.

Board Member Geraghty inquired whether the Petitioner was aware that the location was not compliant with standards at the time the concrete pad was laid and whether or not neighbors had complained about the shed. Mr. Blazenko responded that he was not aware at the time. In addition, he has not received complaints from his neighbors noting that only the top of the shed is visible from the street (Peck Avenue). He is willing to install additional shrubbery to obstruct the shed from his neighbors. Board Member Geraghty asked whether he was aware of the floodplain on site when he installed the pool. Mr. Blazenko responded that he did not because his contractor obtained a building permit for the pool.

Board Member Gutierrez noted that it would be possible to move the prefabricated shed five feet (5') from the side yard so the only necessary variation would be for its location in the side yard. Mr. Blazenko responded that he would need time to detach the shed from the concrete. Board Member Gutierrez asked what would be stored in the shed and whether the existing shed in the floodplain could be raised. Mr. Blazenko responded that he would store yard equipment in the shed. Mr. Trent noted that no structure should be built within a floodplain per the Federal Emergency Management Agency's guidelines. Board Member Gutierrez asked whether the City has setback requirements for fire protection. Mr. Trent responded that it does, which is the reason accessory buildings/structures must be located a minimum of ten feet (10') from the principal dwelling or any other structure.

Chairman Schwarz inquired why the required setback from the side yard was five feet (5') in the R-1 Zoning District and only three feet (3') in the R-3 District. Mr. Trent responded that lots in the R-7 and R-1 Zoning Districts tend to be larger and have the space for accessory buildings/structures than those in the R-3 District. Chairman Schwarz asked whether the shed had electrical connections. Mr. Blazenko responded that it did not, and he does not plan to add them.

Board Member Grotzke asked when the shed was built and whether or not the Petitioner owns the fence. Mr. Blazenko responded that it was built in the summer of 2024, when his brother-in-law, who knows how to lay concrete, was visiting. Mr. Blazenko owns the fence.

Chairman Schwarz noted that there were no members of the public present to comment on the case.

Chairman Schwarz asked whether the Petitioner had any objection to the petition being "Exhibit 1" of the hearing, or to Mr. Trent's presentation being "Exhibit 2." Mr. Blazenko responded that he did not.

Chairman Schwarz noted that he does not advocate for building a structure without a permit but acknowledged that the floodplain presented significant limitations regarding the location of the shed, and that the privacy fence served to screen it. While the distance from the side yard (south property line) was a more significant issue, no neighbors have complained, and the shed is nice looking and well camouflaged.

Board Member Kehr expressed opposition to building a shed without a building permit, but noted that he lives near the subject property, no neighbors have complained, and the shed looks nice. Mr. Blazenko apologized noting that when his pool and deck were installed, the person performing the work obtained

the building permit so he was unfamiliar with the process. He has agreed to seek permits for all future home improvement projects.

Board Member Grotzke agreed that the Petitioner should have obtained a building permit but acknowledged that there were limited options for locating the shed.

Chairman Schwarz inquired whether the other shed, which is in disrepair, already existed when the Petitioner purchased the property and whether or not it should be removed. Mr. Blazenko responded that it was. Mr. Trent confirmed that the shed is in severe disrepair and was likely built without a building permit so it should be removed.

Chairman Schwarz noted that one of the recommended conditions was that the Petitioner would have six (6) months to establish the variations, but the shed had already been built. Mr. Trent clarified that the Petitioner would have six (6) months to obtain the building permit for the shed. In addition, after the permit to demolish the old shed is reviewed and approved, he would have six (6) months to remove it. Chairman Schwarz asked the Petitioner whether he was aware of the recommended conditions and the timeline. Mr. Blazenko responded that he was.

Mr. Gutierrez moved to close the evidentiary portion of the public hearing, seconded by Ms. Grotzke, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

A motion was made by Ms. Grotzke, seconded by Mr. Gutierrez, that this matter be APPROVED subject to the four (4) conditions for each variance as stated in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated January 6, 2026. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Gertsmeier, Grotzke, Gutierrez, Ward, Kehr, Benton
Nay: 0

Chairman Schwarz stated that this recommendation will be presented to the City Council at its regular meeting on January 28, 2026, at 7:30 p.m.

Public Comments – No members of the public were present.

Other Business

Ticket Statistics (for December 2025) – In December, 9 tickets were issued in total, compared to 11 in December 2024. Four (4) tickets were issued for parking and storing tractors and trailers, and four (4) tickets were issued for trucks parked on property not registered to the business. The 2025 total was 128 tickets issued, compared to 180 in 2024.

2018-26 Zoning Cases – The list of past cases was updated.

Next Meeting – The next meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2026. The agenda may include a text amendment. If not, the meeting will be canceled.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mr. Geraghty that this meeting be ADJOURNED; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Chairman Schwarz declared the meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

APPROVED:

Respectfully Submitted,



ROBERT SCHWARZ, CHAIRMAN

/ms