

CALLED MEETING MINUTES

Athens Board of Zoning Appeals

May 6, 2026

1:00 PM

City Council Chambers

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

John Proffitt
Chairperson Wesley Kite
Vice-Chair Sam Stephens

MEMBERS ABSENT

Perry McCowan
Kenny Charles

OTHERS ATTENDING

Anthony Casteel
Nora Cardin
Caitlyn Schuft
Brandon Ainsworth
Paul Kleim
Derek Payton

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the August 27, 2025, regular meeting was approved on motion by Vice-Chair Stephens; seconded by John Proffitt;

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

1. **Variance** request by Best & Associates Architects, Gary Best for a reduction of the drive isle requirement in Section 5.03.4 Exceptions to Height Requirements from 26 feet to 22 and 24 feet in specific areas around the proposed structure, on property shown as Tax Map 046 Parcel 211.05 located on Burkett Witt Blvd and Denso Drive zoned B-3 Intensive Business District.

Chairperson Kite swore in Mr. Payton.

Mr. Payton said because of the site constrictions, the way the project is situated on the property, there are two areas, one on the right-hand side and one on the left-hand side of

the project, which is the front of the hotel. There is a main drive aisle there and they are requesting it be accepted at 24-foot width. He said it to his understanding, the fire requirement is at a 26-foot width, but because of the site constraints, that's the request. On the right-hand side there is a drive aisle that is down to 22 feet in width, but that is limited to just that 50-foot section of driveway. There is full access all around the other sides of the property at 26-foot width.

Chairperson Kite said to his understanding, this is because of the blue line stream on the back of the property.

Mr. Casteel said there is a required stream buffer off that blue line stream, which requires a buffer of a an average distance when developing the site. They cannot encroach on it with any development and that is what is driving this. The reason you must have a 26-foot drive aisle is because they want to exceed the allowed four stories, or the 40-foot in height under the B-3 District by implementing Section 5.04.03 requirements for height exceptions. He and the fire chief have worked together on this and instead of trying to reduce the parking space sizes, it would be easier to reduce the driving aisles. He still has enough access to the building. The fire chief said he feels like he could fight a fire in the building being full sprinkled, if the variance is granted.

Chief Ainsworth said he did look at this and echoed what Mr. Casteel said. They have good access on three sides.

MOTION: To grant the requested variance per Staff's recommendation.

MADE: John Proffitt

SECOND: Vice-Chairperson Stephens

VOTE: Unanimous – None Opposed
MOTION PASSED

2. **Use on Review** request by Best & Associates Architects, Gary Best for an addition story (Increase to 5 stories not to exceed 75 feet) per Section 5.03 Exceptions to Height Requirements on property shown as Tax Map 046 Parcel 211.05 located on Burkett Witt Blvd and Denso Drive zoned B-3 Intensive Business District.

Chairperson Kite read the city code. He asked Chief Ainsworth if reducing the driveway impedes the code in any way.

Chief Ainsworth said not on height; they are required to put stand pipes in the building. From that standpoint, he is not concerned with that.

There was a brief discussion about what was listed in the fire design of the hotel and motion was made.

MOTION: To approve the Use on Review per Staff's recommendation.

MADE: John Proffitt

SECOND: Vice-Chairperson Stephens

VOTE: Unanimous – None Opposed
MOTION PASSED

The meeting was adjourned 1:35 P.M.



John Proffitt, Secretary