

**CITY OF TROTWOOD
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 12TH, 2026**

The Trotwood Board of Zoning Appeals met on Thursday March 12th, 2026 at 5:30 pm at the Trotwood Community & Cultural Arts Center in the Cultural Arts Suite, 4000 Lake Center Drive, Trotwood, OH 45426.

BZA MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jameelah Ricks, Steve Johnson, Richard Eldridge

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Valerie Hamilton

GUESTS:

Andrew Balalovski, Agent for case CU-2026-01 (501 E Trotwood Blvd)

James Cannon, Realtor for case CU-2026-01 (501 E Trotwood Blvd)

STAFF:

Chris Conard, Attorney

Tyler Hauck, Planning and Development Director

Amy Dolph, Zoning Technician

Chantel Argabright, Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion to approve the agenda by S. Johnson, 2nd by R. Eldridge. Vote, YES. ALL in favor. (3-0)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve 2/12/2026 Meeting Minutes by S. Johnson, 2nd by R Eldridge. Vote, YES. All in favor. (3-0)

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA:

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

CU-2026-01 (501 E Trotwood Blvd):

T. Hauck gave the staff report.

R. Eldridge asked in the questionnaire regarding the disposal of automotive waste, do you have an answer or would the applicant.

T. Hauck stated the applicant would have that answer.

S. Johnson asked Tyler about the condition of the building, painting, a broken window in the garage door.

T. Hauck stated we didn't have any conditions regarding the building so they will have to meet property maintenance standards. We kind of leave the building to more of the building department but if there is a specific desire from the Board to see exterior conditions on the building, I mean, you could place a condition that it'd be brought up to the current property maintenance code standards or something like that.

A. Balalovski (agent for the applicant Mr. Idrees), stated to answer your question about the containers, I'm not sure exactly how he disposes of the fluids inside of the oil containers. I assume that he takes them to a different location offsite, but I would have to ask that question specifically to be able to better answer that question for you.

R. Eldridge asked is there anything else you want to tell us about the project.

A. Balalovski stated as far as the project, I do believe that we could come to some sort of agreement on the improvement plans and everything that you guys are proposing. I don't see anything to be an issue. It's just developing a timeline on when you'd like to see all that completed and done and just establishing that with the client as well.

S. Johnson asked A. Balalovski, I had a question on the hours. Typically, most automotive businesses open seven or before, so people can drop off their cars before they go to work but this looks like 11 AM to 4 PM, it doesn't seem like much time to do the repairs.

A. Balalovski stated I'm not sure what the rationale behind that is in speaking with my client. He is from Hilliard, Ohio, so I would, from what he told me was like on his off days from his other business location when he's slow he'll schedule appointments and probably drive up. That's why he wasn't sure how many employees would be at this location and that's the way I think he wants to approach it I can get some more specific information on that as well.

J. Ricks asked would your client be willing to include a disposal plan for the collected oils and coolants.

A. Balalovski stated I don't foresee that to be any kind of issue.

R. Eldridge stated I believe our approval of this would be contingent on these things being taken care of prior to opening the business.

A. Balalovski stated that is fine. Well, I can discuss that with him and see what his thoughts are on that and provide the feedback. I don't foresee it to be any kind of issue.

S. Johnson stated I told the person that you're representing last month we've lost two mechanics here just recently in the town which I used. One passed away and the other retired, so we would really like to have a close by mechanic that we can depend on.

A. Balalovski stated Mr. Idrees would love to be able to service you.

R. Eldridge stated there's quite a bit of land behind the building, that is not parking is that. Is there any proposed, any type of uses that you guys are thinking of using that for. We're not wanting storage of vehicles; we're suggesting that you only have five at a time out there being in the parking lot type of thing. We're not wanting to see as he said, cars and tires and other things. Are there any thoughts or plans that you guys currently have for that.

A. Balalovski stated possibly in the future, he might have some kind of plan, but nothing's been discussed. He hasn't mentioned anything to me. To address also your concern about the five cars outside, I have been to his Hilliard location multiple times, and I've seen less cars outside than the five cars that has been proposed. So, we want to thank you for giving him that opportunity to at least have that many cars outside. He does have a clean operation, very professional. He has an office in his Hilliard location, keeps it very well, nice and neat. So, I'm sure that, given the opportunity, this is only going to be a duplicate operation of like the one that he has in Hillard.

James Cannon (Realtor) stated I'm the listing agent for the seller of the property. I'm with Coldwell Banker Heritage Realtors. Just to give you a little bit of background. The sellers are very anxious to get this sold. It has been in their family quite a few years, and of course it's been vacant in recent times, years and we're very much looking forward to having a new occupant and to get to the conclusion with the sale. I had it on the market listed, advertised for now approximately 9 months. We had about 14 showings, one other offer and this seems to be a, very, very good, buyer we've got right now under contract. Sellers would like to get it to closing and we appreciate all your work to make that happen.

T. Hauck read the public input letter from William Greenway who resides at 2834 North Union Road provided for this case.

Motion to close the public hearing by S. Johnson, 2nd by R. Eldridge. Vote, YES. ALL in favor. (3-0)

Motion to approve case CU-2026-01 with 5 recommended staff conditions and an addition for disposal plans for waste and building be brought up to building and property maintenance codes by S. Johnson, 2nd by R. Eldridge. Vote, YES. ALL in favor. (3-0)

ZV-2025-43 (Discount Auto Repair dba MotorCity):

T. Hauck gave the staff report.

S. Johnson asked Tyler are you suggesting then a sign off the ground, kind of like a ground sign like some of the other big businesses have, or are you suggesting something just smaller that could be on the building.

T. Hauck stated really, that's up to the applicant. They could do either one of those. They could have a ground sign. Again, as long as they get a permit from us and it meets code, they can have a ground sign or a wall sign that is projected lower.

L. Reyes asked Tyler you didn't receive the second variance that I applied for.

T. Hauck stated that we do not.

L. Reyes stated same day that I talked to you on the phone and you explained to me. You explained everything that needed to be done and I paid for it.

T. Hauck stated I think what you paid for was something different, which I believe we might have refunded is that correct Amy.

A. Dolph stated that Staff received

T. Hauck stated so we didn't actually receive that 2nd variance and I think we tried to reach out multiple times to tell you that and we didn't get a response.

L. Reyes stated nobody reached out to me. Yesterday I called into the office because I left an email. I was on vacation last week, so I left an email before I left for vacation and nobody reached out to me. When I came back from vacation I checked my email, no emails, no phone calls, no notification of when the meeting was going to happen. Then I called your office yesterday, and the secretary told me that the meeting was happening yesterday, and since I just came back, I saw this in my mailbox yesterday that it was sent out to my house, but we didn't receive anything. At the Motor City address, we didn't receive any email, we didn't receive any phone call. I did send that variance, the second one for the size of the sign, which I can send that again. I can also give you a payment receipt for it. Because the same day that you explained, was the same day that I filled it out and sent it in.

T. Hauck referenced a document that staff has of documented dates of communication. I have a communication log here that we put together dating back from November 5th of 25 to March 11 of 26 noting 16 times that we either we communicate with the applicant they communicate with us or something happened revolving this case. We're happy to work with you to you figure out why that other permit or why that application wasn't received and work with you on filing the proper variance. Staff has attempted to reach out.

J. Ricks stated now what we can do is as the Board, tell me if I'm wrong Tyler, can we table this and get this whole situation squared away and then have you come back to next month's meeting with both of the variances so that you can present your case clear for your client for both issues. Instead of doing one tonight because it seems like it's a lot of confusion and I want to make sure that you're comfortable and we're positioned where we need to be also.

L. Reyes asked okay, so that will mean that I will have to reapply and repay for the sign, the variances.

T. Hauck stated there would be no repaying. There were three applications we received in our office. One was a variance for the sign projecting above the wall. One was a business registration for your business to be allowed to be in that space and one was a sign permit I assume for the sign to remain for us to review it because we never received a sign permit for that sign. It was installed without a permit, which we talked about.

L. Reyes asked did you receive the 3 that I sent.

T. Hauck stated the one that's missing is that variance piece that we discussed.

J. Ricks asked Tyler to tell her what it is so she could be clear. What exactly are you missing from her.

T. Hauck stated I am missing a variance application to allow the current sign to be larger than what is permitted out there.

L. Reyes stated in the previous pictures that is out there from this building, and those metal poles, it's like four or five metal poles in the front of the building, it was not there. Where the sign is hanging from, those are metal poles that are going to the ground and it's attached to the roof of the building. Way before we were there this was already here. The business before us, they installed it and the sign was hanging on the same spot that is right now. It was just like a dark color vinyl that was hanging there, and it was ripped off. It was in bad condition. Maybe that's why nobody remembers what the size of it was. We tried to make it look nice, look clear. Everybody has this mentality that, because it's not a high-income City, then I'm not going to put the business as pretty, right. As if I will put it in Centerville. The owner, he doesn't believe in that. When he invests, he invests in everything. Those are TVs. He went crazy with TVs. He has 6 TVs inside. The things that it displays at night is just the business card and what services we offer. It's the same thing that we display in the daytime inside. People can sit down and see the services if we have any month specials going on. They can watch the news or play some music. We have it for the customers when they sit in there. The sign it is lighted and it was the light was in there before because they had a little tiny light bulb for the sign. I really would love if the Board will consider to grant us the authorization to keep the sign, because the sign, it is 100% secure. The sign was installed by a professional team that that's all they do. They are located down in Centerville. It was very expensive. It was \$8,000. It was not something cheap. He left the place really nice. I make sure that the place stayed really nice, even that the boys tell me, this is not your house, lady. I paint it every six months. We make sure that everything around it, it is clean. We also clean the sidewalk because people walk by and they throw papers. Even when we receive vehicles that they have been crashed, I'm always in a hurry to get them out of there, because it doesn't look good, right. When the tow truck drivers come and leave something on the grass, I'm like, no, the grass is part of the property, but I don't want cars on the grass. I don't want cars in the middle. I want the lot looking nice and organized, because it looks, it's in the middle of Main Street. If you need an inspection, any kind of inspection to make sure that the sign is secure, that is properly installed, we will be gladly happy to do that for you as well. I'm going to get with Amy and Tyler to make sure that I have everything that they require tomorrow, probably tomorrow morning, and I'll see you guys' next month.

J. Ricks asked applicant we're going to proceed with this application just with a sign, and then you'll get with our staff and proceed for the other applications with those requested variances, right

R. Eldridge asked the applicant, are you wanting to do them both next month.

J. Ricks asked applicant do you want a decision on this tonight.

L. Reyes stated whatever you guys consider, if you say that I'm missing one variance to have everything up to code, I'll be gladly to do whatever you want me to do.

S. Johnson stated I think it'd be best to do both of them.

T. Hauck stated here's the only thing I'll say, is that it's at the discretion of the Board and the applicant if they want to continue the case or if you all want to continue the case. Really if you're feeling one way or the other, that could give us some direction if there's a vote tonight. If you need more information, by all means go ahead and continue it, but hypothetically if the case was denied tonight, there might not necessarily be a reason to even file the other variance and spend the money, if that makes sense.

L. Reyes stated if the Board wants to consider it costs \$8 ,000 already, so I'm not mad about spending another \$100 or \$300 if I have to do all the variances again, honestly.

J. Ricks stated so how do you want to proceed.

L. Reyes stated I would like to continue with the case.

J. Ricks asked the applicant now, based on the size, you notice the existing sign is double the size that is allowed for the City of Trotwood. Is your client willing to reduce the size of the sign.

L. Reyes stated honestly, we came here to win. We didn't come here to change the sign. If the City says you have to, we will, we only will ask you for maybe two months for us to prepare to do that change because we don't want to downsize and lose the quality of the sign because everybody that comes in, they celebrate us about how good it looks, right. How great we did with the place remodeling and then keeping it clean for the customers. We will do whatever you guys need us to do in order for us to stay in business, of course. I'm here to ask for mercy, to apologize, of course, for proceeding without the permit. Honestly, we were not guided. I think that the people that gave us the sign, they should, right, as a business starting in the area, they should let us know. Actually, we are opening a coffee shop down in New Lebanon. It's called Havana Cafe. I did all my due diligences after I learned the process through this mistake. I went and I sat down with the Zoning Department. I had a meeting with Shannon who is the City Manager and I asked them everything that they need me to do and I followed the book and I did everything as they requested for me to do because that's what we're here for right. We are young and we are learning as we go and it's a lot of things in the process, honestly the permits with the City, with the County. The coffee shop is another whole level of mess but we are trying to the correct thing.

J. Ricks asked now here's my next question, is your client aware that he has to get an approval from the Board or an approved variance to even change the sign altogether.

L. Reyes stated we are now. Yes.

J. Ricks asked okay and is there anything that your client is not aware of when proceeding in doing business with the City of Trotwood because we will make sure that our staff provides everything that your client needs in order to sustain his business here in our great City.

R. Eldridge asked the way that how big the sign is and where it's located at, is there any way that you guys are able to bring it down. I know it blocks quite a bit of the frontage of your business where you have windows people look out and that is there any way that you can do that, that still doesn't alleviate the size of it.

T. Hauck stated well, and again, let's go ahead and leave the size off of this discussion at this point because that is a separate issue. Tonight, we're specifically talking about the placement of the sign in it being above the wall. Until it is at the level of the wall, if there's anything that's projecting above the wall, it does not meet the current code.

S. Johnson stated it is a pretty sign, However, it really doesn't fit with the rest of the signs, as Tyler showed some of the other pictures of signs in the community.

R. Eldridge stated I have the information I need.

T. Hauck read the public input letter from Mr. Lewis Robinson at 651 East Main Street.

Motion to close the public hearing by R. Eldridge, 2nd by S. Johnson. Vote, YES. ALL in favor. (3-0)

Motion to approve case ZV-2025-43 by R. Eldridge, 2nd by S. Johnson. Vote, YES. ALL in favor. R. Eldridge, No. S. Johnson, No. J. Ricks, No. Motion Failed (0-3)

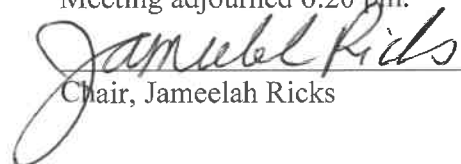
OTHER BUSINESS:

T. Hauck stated Bianca Harvey withdrew from the Board and a new member will hopefully be appointed by next month's meeting. Next Thursday a public meeting regarding the Zoning Code Re-Write and anyone that is attending can discuss Zoning Issues.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn by: S. Johnson, 2nd by R. Eldridge. Vote, YES. ALL in favor. (3-0)

Meeting adjourned 6:20 pm.


Chair, Jameelah Ricks


Admin Assistant, Chantel Argabright

