



**BOARD OF APPEALS**

747 Northern Avenue | Hagerstown, MD 21742 | P: 240.313.2430 | F: 240.313.2461 | Hearing Impaired: 7-1-1  
WWW.WASHCO-MD.NET

**Variance Filing Procedures**

**Variance Request** – If requesting a variance, be prepared to tell the Board why the property is unique or why you cannot comply with the strict terms of the Ordinance; in so doing, you should discuss the following criteria, as applicable, excerpted from Section 25.56 of the Washington County Zoning Ordinance:

A variance may be granted by the Board upon a showing of criteria of practical difficulty or undue hardship described below respectively:

- A. Practical Difficulty
  - 1. Strict compliance would unreasonably prevent the use of the property for a permitted purpose or render conformance unnecessarily burdensome; and
  - 2. Denying the variances would do substantial injustice to the applicant and a lesser relaxation than that applied for would not give substantial relief; and
  - 3. Granting the variance would observe the spirit of the Ordinance and secure public safety and welfare.
  
- B. Undue Hardship
  - 1. Strict compliance with the Ordinance would prevent the applicant from securing a reasonable return from or to make reasonable use of the property; and
  - 2. The difficulties or hardships are peculiar to the property and contrast with those of other property owners in the same district; and
  - 3. The hardship is not the result of the applicant’s own actions.

**Application Process:**

***Incomplete applications will not be accepted.***

- Applications are filed by appointment only. Appointments are accepted Monday-Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. **except** on a specified filing cut-off day which is 12:00 p.m. To schedule an appointment call 240-313-2430.
- Applications must be filed in person with the Department of Planning and Zoning.
- Nine (9) complete sets of the Variance Appeal information are required at the time of filing.
- Pay the appropriate filing fee by cash, Visa/MasterCard, or check made payable to the Washington County Treasurer:
  - Residential Variance ..... \$150.00
  - Commercial Variance. .... \$300.00
  - Request for Hearing Postponement..... \$150.00

**Filing fees are non-refundable.**

**Note:** A plan review fee of \$150.00 and/or a floodplain review fee of \$150.00 may be charged by Plan Review

### **Before Hearing:**

- The applicant will be responsible for conspicuously posting the property with a placard 14 days before the date of the hearing as required in Section 25.51(c) of the Washington County Zoning Ordinance. The applicant is responsible for maintaining the placard as posted for the full 14 days. The Department of Planning & Zoning Department will provide the placard to the applicant at the time of filing.
- The clerk to the Board of Appeals will be placing a public notice in the local newspaper, on the Washington County Planning and Zoning webpage under Board of Zoning Hearing Agenda, and courtesy letters will be mailed to neighboring property owners notifying them of the hearing.
- The clerk to the Board of Appeals will provide the applicant with any letters of support or opposition and or agency review comments received for review. This same information will be provided to the Board of Appeals members for consideration and may be discussed during the hearing.

### **Public Hearing**

- Appellant or appellant's representative is to attend the hearing and will go before the Board to state their case and answer questions from the board members. Appellants are generally granted 10 minutes to present their case but the appellant can request an additional 20 minutes for a total of 30 minutes.
- Anyone attending the hearing is permitted to speak in support or opposition to the appeal. The appellant will be given a chance to address the oppositions concerns.
- The Board will then go into deliberations and there will be no further comment taken at that time. The board members will make their informal decision during the hearing. The formal and official written opinion will be issued within 30 days and a copy of the decision will be served to the parties via US postal service.

### **Opinion:**

- If the appeal is granted, the appellant may apply for or continue with the permit process at their own risk after the hearing. The formal opinion can be challenged up to 30 days after the formal opinion has been issued to the Circuit Court. Any fees paid during this time will not be refunded if the Circuit Court overturns the Board of Appeals opinion.
- If the appeal is denied, the appellant may challenge the formal opinion in Circuit Court within 30 days of the formal opinion filing. The appellant can also file for a new appeal either 12 months after the original appeal or a new request can be submitted but must be deemed substantially different from the original proposal.
- Any person or persons, jointly or severally, aggrieved by any decision of the Board of Appeals, or any taxpayer, or any officer, department, or board, bureau of the jurisdiction, may appeal the same to the Circuit Court of Washington County in a manner set forth in Section 4.08 of Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The Court may affirm, reverse, vacate or modify the decision complained of in the appeal.
- Appeals granted by the Board of Appeals do not have a time requirement of when the project must start. If the project is delayed and there is a change to the property, zoning, or project; a new approval may be required.



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### Variance Request

Property Location \_\_\_\_\_

Appellant's present legal interest in above property: (Check One)

\_\_\_\_\_ Owner (Including Joint Ownership)

\_\_\_\_\_ Lessee

\_\_\_\_\_ Contract to rent/lease

\_\_\_\_\_ Contract to Purchase

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the Ordinance section and subsection from which the variance is desired:

*Example: Article 5A, Section 5A.5-Requires 15 ft. side yard setback.*

Describe the nature and extent of the desired variance from Ordinance requirements listed above:

*Example: Requesting adjustment from 15 ft. to 12 ft. for new detached garage.*

**Applicants must make application in person and shall submit *nine (9)* complete sets of the items listed below. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.**

- A written statement demonstrating the specific reason(s) for the adjustment request including which standard the appeal is for practical difficulty or undue hardship. The standards for a variance are outlined in the Variance Filing Procedures.
- A plot plan (concept plan), drawn to a scale indicating the following information:
  - Outline of the entire property;
  - Location of all existing and/or proposed structures with measurements from structures to property lines;
  - Location of existing and/or future septic and wells;
  - Any street rights-of-way or other easements (i.e. utility, storm water management, etc.);
  - Existing/proposed entrance/exit to property, driveways, etc.
  - Existing/proposed parking areas
- If Request is for commercial use, in addition to above, the following additional information will be required:
  - Location of any freestanding signage
  - Number of employees (existing/proposed)
  - Hours of operation
  - Proposed landscaping and lighting

- Other information that applicants feel will be useful to justify their request, this could include pictures, letters of support from impacted neighbors, concept draws of the structure.
- If you are not the property owner, a notarized affidavit from the property owner authorizing the appeal shall be submitted. This includes applicants filing as an agent on behalf of the property owner.
- Pay the filing fee by cash, Visa/MasterCard, or check made payable to the Washington County Treasurer:
  - Residential Variance.....\$150.00
  - Commercial Variance..... \$300.00

ALL FILING FEES ARE NON-REFUNABLE

Note: A plan review fee of \$150 and/or floodplain review of \$150.00 may be charged by the Engineering Department.

I hereby certify that I have, to the best of my knowledge, accurately supplied the information required for the above referenced appeal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Appellant/Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address and of Appellant/Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email of Appellant/Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number of Appellant/Agent



**BOARD OF APPEALS**

**OWNER REPRESENTATIVE AFFIDAVIT**

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_  
is authorized to file an appeal with the Washington County Board of Appeals for \_\_\_\_\_ on property  
located \_\_\_\_\_.

The said work is authorized by \_\_\_\_\_  
the property owner in fee.

PROPERTY OWNER

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner's Signature

Sworn and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

My Commission Expires:

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Representative's Signature

Sworn and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

My Commission Expires:

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