

Town of Ghent Zoning Board of Appeals

Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2026

Present were ZBA Chairman Lyle Trued, ZBA members Jack Fenn, Lew Streeter, Beth Lenahan, and Jim Andrews, Town Attorney Matthew Cabral and Town Board Member Marie Meltz.

Motion made by Chairman Trued to call the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and seconded by Jack Fenn. All in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried.

Minutes

Minutes from the May 8 meeting had not been distributed and will be reviewed at the July 8, 2026 meeting.

Public Hearings

Application for Area Variance, 38 Water St, Ghent; §190-58 G2(a), Expansion of nonconforming use; Tax Map/Block/Lot # 75.4-1-89; Ref ZBA 2026-070

Applicant Ashley Butta appeared before the Zoning Board seeking an area variance for the expansion of a non-conforming use or building on her lot at 38 Water St. The applicant stated she wanted to replace a single-wide trailer built in 1971 with a new double-wide trailer. She is seeking the maximum 50% increase from the current 1,128 square foot home to up to a 1,692 square foot home. She also provided 2 letters from neighbors supporting this application, one from Dan Knapp and one from Roger Maehdel.

Members of the Board had no additional questions for the applicant. A motion was made by Chairman Trued to open a public hearing and seconded by Jack Fenn. All in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried. There were no comments or questions from members of the public in attendance. A motion was made by Jim Andrews to close the public hearing and seconded by Jack Fenn. All voted in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried.

A motion was made by Chairman Trued to classify the application as a Type 2 Action and seconded by Lew Streeter. All in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried. Chairman Trued reviewed his findings of fact when reviewing the application against the ZBA's 5 criteria. He found there to be no concerns or negative impact caused by this application and stated his intent to vote for approval of the application. All members of the Board expressed their agreement with Lyle's findings.

A motion was made by Chairman Trued to approve a 50% variance for the non-conforming use allowing a new double-wide with up to 1,692 square feet to replace the existing 1,128 square foot trailer, seconded by Jack Fenn. All voted in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried.

Application for Area Variance, 137 George Rd, Ghent; Acres per dwelling; Tax Map/Block/Lot # 92-1-62; Ref ZBA 2026-057

Frank Stancari appeared before the Zoning Board seeking a variance for lot size to place an RV as a second dwelling unit on his 1.13 acre parcel in RRA-1. The code requires 1 acre per dwelling unit therefore the request is for a 0.45 acre variance from the 1 acre minimum per unit. The applicant reviewed his plans and there were no follow up questions from the board.

Chairman Trued informed the applicant that the Register Star failed to publish the public notice for the hearing even though the Town had provided it to the local news paper as required. He also stated that the two other notices for public hearing were published and the newspaper made the error. As a result, the board would open a public hearing and take comments from the public, publish a notice for the July 8 meeting, keep the hearing open until that meeting and take any additional comments from the public at the July 8 meeting. The applicant stated he was available to attend that meeting.

A motion was made by Chairman Trued to open a public hearing and seconded by Jack Fenn. All voted in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried. Member of the public Richard Sardo, 135 George Rd., stated he had no objections to the board granting a variance and stated that the applicant currently uses part of his property, with his permission. He stated that his neighbor is currently allowed to mow a small portion and use that portion as a typical mowed lawn would be used. Mr. Sardo further stated that if the applicant's intensity of use increased, he would no longer allow the applicant to use that portion of his property. Attorney Cabral stated granting of a variance would not impact the agreement between them.

A motion was made by Jack Fenn to continue this hearing to the July 8 meeting and seconded by Beth Lenahan. All voted in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried.

Application for interpretation, 333 County Rt. 9, Ghent; Clarification of Home Occupation (HO-1); Tax Map/Block/Lot # 102-1-14.2; Ref ZBA 2026-085

Applicant Erin Sheedy is seeking a determination from the Board that the definition of HO-1 in chapter 190-2 allows her to operate a business as a renter of the property at 333 County Route 9. Specifically, the Board has been asked to determine the meaning of the term "owner/operator" in the context of the proposed HO use.

A motion was made by Chairman Trued to open a public hearing and seconded by Jack Fenn. All voted in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried. No members of the public were present, and a motion was made by Jim Andrews to close the public hearing and seconded by Jack Fenn. All in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried.

Chairman Trued directed the Board members to his summary of the discussion and definitions of owner/operator within other sections of the code and stated his opinion is that an occupant of a house can be an owner/operator of an HO-1 business conducted within that house without being the owner of the house. Jack Fenn also offered his opinion of the other uses of owner/occupied with in the code and he agreed with the chairman's summary. All members agreed.

Chairman Trued made a motion stating that the owner/operator applied to the owner/operator of the business conducted under HO-1 and not the owner/operator of both the real property and the business, seconded by Jack Fenn. All voted in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried. Attorney Cabral stated he would draft a resolution summarizing the Boards decision.

New Business

Application for Area Variance, 9 Railroad Ave., Ghent; Maximum fence height; Tax Map/Block/Lot # 75.4-1-57; Ref ZBA 2026-116

The applicant appeared before the Zoning Board seeking a variance to install an 8-foot-high fence however the code allows 6 feet thus needing a 2 foot variance. Eric Valdina would like to install an 8-foot high trellis to allow flowering vines to attach to it, thus creating a visual block between a residence and his business.

Jim Andrews asked why it needed to be 8 feet high instead of 6 feet as allowed by code. The applicant stated that it would provide a more complete visual barrier, and reiterated that this was a trellis to support flowering vines, which would be much more visually pleasing than an actual fence. He stated that Chris Keefe told him a trellis is defined as a fence in the code.

Chairman Trued made a motion to accept the application as complete and set a public hearing for July 8, seconded by Beth Lenahan. All voted in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried.

Motion made by Jack Fenn to adjourn at 8:00pm and seconded by Jim Andrews. All voted in favor 5, opposed 0, motion carried.