



City of Johnstown

Meeting: Zoning Board of Appeals
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2026
Time: 3:45 p.m.
Location: Conference Room, City Hall

Meetings are broadcast using Facebook Live. The public is able to view the meeting from the official City of Johnstown Facebook page: [City of Johnstown, New York](#)

The proceedings of meetings are taped for the benefit of the City Clerk; the minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceedings; therefore, the minutes are not a word-for-word transcript.

Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting Minutes

- **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**
- **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

		PRESENT	ABSENT / EXCUSED	LATE
Robert Gallt	Board Member	X		
Judy Swatt	Board Member	X		
Rocco Semprivio	Board Member	X		
Robert Salamack	Board Member	X		
Michael M. Albanese	City Attorney	X		
Larry O'Regan	Fire Chief / Code Enforcement Office	X		
Carrie M. Allen	City Clerk	X		

- **APPROVE MINUTES**

Meeting – [November 20, 2025](#)

Action Taken

Motion:	Board Member	Gallt	Ayes:	4	Absent:	0
Seconded:	Board Member	Salamack	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0

- **ITEMS FOR REVIEW**

ITEM #1: 2 Mason Street - Fence

Applicant is requesting variances for fence height and setback requirements on a corner lot which had recently been purchased by the applicant to be combined with an existing residential parcel. The additional parcel would function as a side yard rather than a front yard.

The request involved the installation of fencing along both Mason Street and Perry Street, including:

- A request for six-foot-tall fence sections along Mason Street, which is considered the front yard frontage due to the corner lot designation.
- Consideration of fencing height along Perry Street.
- The need to address fence placement and setbacks due to road frontage on both sides of the corner lot.

It was noted that the rear portion of the property would not present an issue, as six-foot fencing is permitted in rear yard areas. The primary concern involved the installation of six-foot fencing along both Perry Street and Mason Street, particularly because Mason Street is considered the front yard for zoning purposes.

The Code Enforcement Officer advised that both Perry Street and Mason Street have established right-of-way widths of approximately sixty feet, requiring setbacks measured from the centerline of the roadway. It was further noted that strict application of these setbacks could significantly reduce the usable area of the parcel, making standard fencing placement impractical.

Board members discussed the possibility of allowing six-foot fencing along Perry Street, provided that reasonable setbacks were maintained. It was suggested that final setback distances could be determined administratively through the Code Enforcement Office.

Additional discussion occurred regarding the visual appearance of the fencing, including recommendations that landscaping or shrubbery be incorporated to improve aesthetics and reduce the appearance of a solid barrier along the street frontage.

The applicant explained that the fencing was intended primarily to provide:

- Privacy
- Noise reduction
- Visual buffering due to the high traffic volume in the area
- Screening from activity near the fire department and surrounding roadway traffic

Board members acknowledged that the property occupies a large corner lot, and that visibility from the roadway and sidewalks would remain adequate due to the width of sidewalks and terrace areas.

Further discussion included whether fencing sections needed to remain connected continuously or whether breaks in fencing with landscaping buffers could be utilized. While this option was discussed, continuous fencing along designated sides of the property was ultimately considered more practical.

The Board discussed standard municipal regulations, noting that:

- Six-foot fencing is typically permitted in side and rear yards.
- Four-foot fencing is the maximum height typically permitted in front yards.
- Mason Street is considered the front yard frontage due to the property's address orientation.

Concerns were raised regarding setting precedent by allowing six-foot fencing within a front yard area, as similar requests could be made by other property owners throughout the City.

To address this concern, a compromise solution was discussed, including:

- Allowing six-foot fencing along the Perry Street side yard.
- Requiring a reduced fence height of four feet along Mason Street, allowing one six-foot section near the corner, followed by a stepped reduction in height to maintain visibility and line-of-sight safety.
- Ensuring proper setback distances would be established prior to permit issuance.

Board members further discussed that because Mason Street is a one-way street, corner visibility would not be significantly impacted. The possibility of incorporating stepped fence height reductions beginning at the corner, transitioning from six feet to four feet over a short distance to preserve sightlines. The applicant was also advised that natural vegetation of greater height could be installed behind permitted fencing without requiring additional variances.

Action Taken

- Six-foot fencing shall be permitted along the rear and Perry Street sides of the property, subject to approved setbacks. Along Mason Street (front yard frontage), one or two six-foot fence panels shall be permitted near the corner. Fence height shall be reduced to four feet for the remainder of the Mason Street frontage.
- All required setbacks shall be determined and approved by the Code Enforcement Office prior to permit issuance.
- Per Code Enforcement, this variance shall incorporate both height and setback relief as discussed

Motion:	Board Member	Swatt	Ayes:	4	Absent:	0
Seconded:	Board Member	Salamack	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0

- **DISCUSSION**

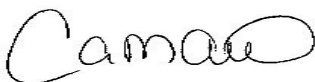
Minor discussion occurred regarding parking concerns on the surrounding street, including vehicles parking on sidewalks and terrace areas. Board members acknowledged awareness of the concern.

- **ADJOURN**

Time: 4:04 pm

Motion:	Board Member	Salamack	Ayes:	4	Absent:	0
Seconded:	Board Member	Swatt	Noes:	0	Abstain:	0

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie M. Allen, City Clerk