

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
ZONING HEARING BOARD
MINUTES – JULY 7, 2026

The regular meeting of the Zoning Hearing Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on July 7, 2026. Mr. Schwartz called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

Zoning Hearing Board:	Christian Schwartz, Chair James McCartney, Vice Chair Mike McVan, Secretary Robert Heinz, Member Masood Sial, Alternate Member
Others:	Dan McLoone, Planner Adam Flager, Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor
Absent:	Larry Borda, Zoning Hearing Board Member

APPEAL #Z-25-48 – FELIZ/VON SPRECKELEN (Flagship PA Propco, LLC)
Tax Parcel #20-021-006
1675 YARDLEY-LANGHORNE ROAD, YARDLEY, PA 1907
(Continuance requested to September)

Mr. Heinz moved and Mr. McVan seconded to approve the requested Continuance to September 15, 2026.

Mr. Robert Harman, Lower Makefield, was sworn in.

Mr. Harman asked if all the issues that are pending are going to be pushed to September, and Mr. Heinz stated they will come back at the September 15 meeting with their Plan or present a new Plan. Mr. Flager stated it was previously Continued to July 21; however, that was a place-marker recognizing that it would probably not happen that day given that a lot of people could be away in the summer. He stated the Applicant's attorney, the attorney who represents some of the neighbors, and the Township's solicitor were coordinating to find a date that was convenient for everyone. He stated when they come back they will bring any Plans or revisions that they have; and since it has been a while, they may have to refresh the Board's recollection and present evidence again. Motion carried unanimously.

APPEAL #Z-26-7 – CRONIN/THORNE
Tax Parcel #20-003-034-002
1750 QUARRY ROAD, YARDLEY, PA 19067
(Continued from 6/16/26)

Mr. Justin Geonnotti and Mr. Steve Thorne were sworn in.

Mr. Flager marked the Exhibits as follows: The Application was marked as Exhibit A-1. The Site Plans were marked as Exhibit A-2. Construction Plans were marked as Exhibit A-3. The Proof of Publication was marked as Exhibit B-1. The Proof of Posting was marked as Exhibit B-2. The Notice to the neighbors was marked as Exhibit B-3.

Mr. Geonnotti stated this is the old Grey Nun property, which Mr. Thorne purchased three years ago, and is approximately 90 acres. Mr. Geonnotti stated Mr. Thorne has spent the last three years demolishing every “piece” that was on the property including the school, the three-story retirement building, a gymnasium, and barn. He removed acres of impervious surface on the property and has been bringing it back to its natural state.

Mr. Geonnotti stated Mr. Thorne is building a single-family house and some accessory buildings which have been the subject of previously-approved Building Permit Plans. He stated while it was not formally a Land Development Plan, with a property of this size, it was treated as if it was a Land Development.

Mr. Geonnotti stated on the Building Permit Plan there were a number of improvements planned for the entrance to the driveway, which was the driveway that was used for the School. He stated given the length of the driveway to this large property, they needed the ability for delivery vehicles to pull off of the road to make deliveries since there is no shoulder there. He stated there will be a gate with a call box for visitors to drive up to so visitors can pull up and have the gate opened so that they can enter the property. He showed a slide of the improvements that were on the approved Building Plan. He stated once inspections were done when construction was started, it was noted that no Zoning approval had been given for this given that it is in the front yard setback; and it was suggested that they file a Zoning Application, which is what is before the Board tonight.

Mr. Geonnotti stated three Variances are requested with the first being from Section 200-69A.14.a.1 which is to permit an accessory structure in the front yard. He showed the area involved which is a mailbox and package drop which is considered an accessory structure. He noted the dashed line which is the 80' front yard setback required off of the road. He stated the house is thousands of feet beyond that.

Mr. Geonnotti stated the second Variance is from Section 200-69A.14.c to permit a fence of a height greater than 3' in the front yard. He stated there is not really a fence, and it really just the structure of the gate which he showed on the slide. He stated the walls are going to be about 7'8" tall and will have a gate structure running between them to stop vehicles from entering the property. He stated the gate itself is 6'.

Mr. Geonnotti stated the third Variance is from Section 200-83.G.4 to permit a Residential identification sign greater than 2'. He stated given the size of the property and that the house is set back so far from the street, they would like a sign with the property address and the name of the property. He stated the sign is approximately 9' wide and 2' tall, is attractively done, and fits very well with the property. He stated the sign is located entirely within the property, and is not in the right-of-way.

Mr. Heinz asked how a 9' sign is something that is a hardship. Mr. Geonnotti stated it is a 100-acre property. He stated the sign is 9' in width and 2' high. He stated it is shown on Sheet A393 of the packet. He stated these are seen on other properties in the Township most of which do not have Variances for them. He stated they wanted to have an identification of where the driveway was on the property. He stated it fits the characteristics of the neighborhood. He stated with regard to the hardship, from engineering perspective if you are driving down this road at a certain rate of speed, there is a certain perception of reaction time that is required; and they need time to be able to slow down to an appropriate speed in order to make a safe traffic movement to get into that driveway. He stated drivers do not follow the speed limit on that road, and they need to be able to see the address and be able to make a safe maneuver so they do not cause an accident on the road. Mr. Geonnotti stated he feels the sign is appropriately sized adding that the driveway is slightly hidden from sight when coming around the road, and the sign is the minimum necessary for the size of the property and the constraints of the road.

Mr. Heinz asked the dimensions of the outbuilding they are identifying as a permanent parcel delivery structure. Mr. Geonnotti stated the pad itself is 5' by 3" square, and the structure is slightly smaller than that. He stated they worked with the Postmaster/UPS for typical packages. He stated the purpose is that delivery services will be able to pull up, deliver a package, close it, and lock it; but they will not be able to access the driveway so it is a safe harbor for package deliveries.

Mr. Thorne added that the entrance to the house is over a quarter mile back, and they did not want the trucks going up and down the driveway and not knowing where to go since there are a few entrances to get into the house. He stated they felt it would be better and safer to have it as shown and do a round-about so that they can turn and get out correctly.

Mr. Heinz asked if they will be advised as to how to take pictures of the delivery. Mr. Geonnotti stated there are instructions that you can provide delivery services. Mr. Thorne stated there are also cameras there facing different directions. Mr. Heinz asked the likelihood that the delivery drivers will actually put the delivery into the parcel box. Mr. Geonnotti stated while not a subject of the Variance, they deliver based on where they are delivering to, and drivers know what they are supposed to do at different locations. Mr. Heinz stated they are building this and saying there is a hardship; but if it is not going to be used then it is "defeating it." He asked if they will "put notification" to the delivery services that they need to utilize it, and Mr. Geonnotti stated they will. He added that they are not going to be able to access the property as they will not be able to get past the gate. He stated with regard to the hardship, if they were to install the mailbox within the setback, a vehicle would have to come in 80' off of the property, get into a smaller driveway, and have to make a U-turn before they exit out of the property. He stated they are trying to keep vehicles safely off the road where a mailbox would be.

Mr. Thorne stated there are also 100-year old pine trees that go down both sides of the driveway which was an attraction to him about this property. He stated the original placement of the gate was changed so that it would not impact the root system of the pine trees.

Mr. Heinz asked if there any other drawings that show more perspective of what the gate system will look like. Mr. Geonnotti stated the package presented to the Board shows all of that including renderings of what the structure will look like. He stated it shows a front entrance gate overview,

Plan sections, and elevations. He stated there is a view of what will be seen when entering the driveway with the two pier structures on either side with a retractable gate in the middle spanning the driveway. He added that since purchasing the property Mr. Thorne has been trying to restore the property maintaining the existing driveway, trees, and vegetation.

Mr. Thorne stated the existing driveway is 20' wide, and it is a "finger gate" that slides back and forth which is heavy duty, and has to open and close 20'. He stated the structure to support that is higher than 6'.

Mr. McCartney asked if this is across from the Toll development, and Mr. Geonnotti agreed. Mr. McCartney stated while the speed limit is 25 on that road, no one does that. Mr. McCartney stated those making deliveries will drop off packages on the right-hand side and then loop around, and they will not be backing out onto Quarry Road; and Mr. Thorne agreed they will not back out.

Mr. McVan stated there is no fence on the outside of the gate. Mr. Geonnotti stated there is no Fence Variance requested for what they are proposing to do, and what they are showing is the only structure requiring a Variance. Mr. Flager stated any fence would be 3' or less; and Mr. Thorne stated if it is front of the 80' line it is to be 3' or less, but if it is on the line, they can go higher than that. Mr. Geonnotti stated they are not present for a Variance for a fence; and if something is needed, they will have to come back for that. Mr. Thorne stated there is no fence being planned at this time.

Mr. Sial asked if the sign will be illuminated, and Mr. Geonnotti stated it will be. He stated it will have a light on it. Mr. Schwartz stated it appears that the light is behind the actual lettering, and Mr. Geonnotti stated it is backlit.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on this matter.

Mr. McCartney moved, Mr. McVan seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve as presented.

Mr. Schwartz stated he believes that the residents are very happy to not see a big development going up on that property. Mr. Thorne stated at one point he put up a temporary sign on the property with a website, and the website included a letter of what his mission was; and within the first month, the site had 8,000 hits. He stated he had hundreds of e-mails to the Website including

some from students and nuns and he talked to numerous of them and everyone was positive. He stated he met most of the neighbors on the perimeter of the property, and they were all positive.

APPEAL #Z-26-18 – KUEBLER

Tax Parcel #20-058-204

1398 WAYNE CIRCLE, YARDLEY, PA 19067

Mr. Michael Kuebler and Ms. Theresa Thome were sworn in.

Mr. Flager marked the Exhibits as follows: The Application was marked as Exhibit A-1. The Site Plan was marked as Exhibit A-2. The Proof of Publication was marked as Exhibit B-1. The Proof of Posting was marked as Exhibit B-2. The Notice to the neighbors was marked as Exhibit B-3.

Mr. Kuebler stated they want to put in a pool, and they were at the max for imperious surface before they started. He stated 18% is the max, and they are a little over 18. He stated the engineer decided that if they put in a dry well that may help their cause. Mr. Schwartz asked if the dry well take them down to the required 18%; and Mr. Kuebler stated the original Plan that he submitted had more decking, and he reduced the decking and put the dry well in which he told them would “be okay.” Mr. Schwartz stated they started at 18.8% and are going up to 22.9%. Mr. Schwartz asked if the dry well will take it down to 18% and not 18.8%, and Mr. Kuebler stated that is what the engineer who did the drawing told him. Mr. McLoone stated what is shown on the Plan brings it down to 18.8 so it may need to be a little bigger. Mr. Kuebler stated they could make it bigger. Mr. Schwartz stated they would like to see it get down to the required 18%. Mr. McLoone stated he can work with them on what the size needs to be.

Mr. Heinz asked how this is a hardship since part of the Variance process is a requirement that it is a hardship; and if it is not a hardship, the Board does not have to approve it. Mr. Heinz asked how not having this is a hardship. Mr. Kuebler stated they have four children, and they were looking forward to having a pool. He stated their house is one of the bigger lots in the neighborhood, and most of their neighbors do have a pool. He stated he did not feel there was going to be a problem until they submitted the Permit. He stated his lot compared to his neighbors is significantly larger than their lots, and he did not think there would be a huge issue. He stated he was told he would need to put in a dry well which is an extra expense, but he was willing to do it, to meet what is required.

Mr. Schwartz stated they do have an irregularly-shaped lot on a cul-de-sac.

Mr. Kuebler stated he does not know if it helps but they are putting in a number of trees in the rear, and Mr. Schwartz stated those are always welcome.

Mr. Schwartz asked if the neighbors know what they are doing, and Mr. Kuebler agreed.

There was no one from the public wishing to speak on this matter.

Mr. McCartney moved and Mr. McVan seconded to approve the Appeal as applied with the impervious surface going up to 22.9% but will go back to 18% subject to the approval of the Township engineer. Motion carried with Mr. Heinz opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. McLoone stated there is nothing scheduled for July 21, 2026

Mr. McVan moved, Mr. McCartney seconded and it was unanimously carried to cancel the meeting of July 21, 2026.

Mr. McLoone reviewed items to be heard on August 4, 2026.

There being no further business, Mr. Heinz moved, Mr. McVan seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike McVan, Secretary

