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TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director
Legislative Policy Division Staff



DATE: October 10, 2025

RE: **BZA QUESTIONS**

Council President Mary Sheffield has requested that LPD provide answers to the following questions regarding the fee schedule for the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA):

- 1. When did City Council approve a service fee for the public to receive copies of BZA Hearing Transcripts at the rate of “Court Reporter Cost Per Page?”**
- 2. Where can versions of the BZA Fee Schedule prior to 2013 be found?**

Our office requested that the Detroit City Clerk’s Office provide a copy of the historical BZA fee schedules in their records. The Clerk’s Office provided copies of prior fee schedules from 1981, 1983, 1988, 2002, and 2006.¹ The charge for transcript pages first appeared on the 2002 fee schedule at a cost of \$0.50 per page. This charge remained at \$0.50 per page until 2013.

The City Council first adopted a fee schedule which included a fee for transcripts at the “Court Reporter Cost Per Page” on November 7, 2013.² No prior fee schedule we reviewed include this language. Council’s resolution references a 20% increase in the Appeal Fee Schedule and does not specifically refer to the change in fees of transcripts to “Court Reporter Cost Per Page.” However, City

¹ See Attachment 1.

² See Attachment 2.

Council approved the fee schedule which included the change. The fact that the accompanying resolution does not reference the change in the fees for transcripts has no bearing on the validity of the fee, as the Council adopted the entire fee schedule including the change to transcript fees.

On February 13, 2024, City Council approved a resolution to adjust the BZA fee schedule to include a \$1,500 fee to cover the cost of administering hardship relief petitions.³ There was an additional proposed resolution to amend the BZA fee schedule to add a \$30 fee to cover the cost of mailing and printing for community appeals.⁴ On February 28, 2024, Council approved a motion to bring the item back after budget, however this item never returned to the agenda and no action has been taken on it.

Please contact our office if we can be of any further assistance.

³ See Attachment 3.

⁴ See Attachment 4.

ATTACHMENT 1

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

AMENDED APPEAL FEE SCHEDULE

NEW BUILDINGS, ADDITIONS & ALTERATIONS	\$250.00
CHANGE OF USE OF ANY BUILDING OR STRUCTURE	\$250.00
DIMENSIONAL VARIANCES	\$250.00
USE VARIANCES	\$250.00
SIGNS	\$250.00
PARKING LOTS	\$250.00
Appeals from Buildings & Safety Engineering Department's Hearing Officer's Decision <u>by petitioner</u>	\$250.00
TIME EXTENSION REQUEST TO PICK UP REQUIRED BUILDING PERMIT . .	\$ 75.00
DISMISSAL OF PETITION REQUEST BY PETITIONER WITH RETURN OF FEE	\$ 50.00
<u>ALL OTHER APPEALS:</u>	
REQUESTED CORRECTION AND/OR CHANGES ON THE DECISION AND ORDER FROM THE PETITIONER	\$100.00
MODIFICATIONS OF EXISTING BZA GRANTS	\$125.00
Appeals from Buildings & Safety Engineering Department's Hearing Officer's Decision <u>by resident</u>	\$ 00.00

EFFECTIVE DATE JULY 22, 1988

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL AMENDED APPEAL FEE SCHEDULE
 5/8/81, PER LEGAL NEWS

NEW BUILDINGS AND ADDITIONS:

All new buildings or additions based on cost of construction:

\$10,000, or less	\$ 50.00
Over \$10,000, but not over \$25,000	60.00
Over \$25,000, but not over \$50,000	125.00
Over \$50,000, but not over \$100,000	200.00
Over \$100,000	250.00

ALTERATIONS:

All alterations to existing buildings, exterior and/or interior,
 based on cost of alterations:

\$10,000, or less	\$ 60.00
Over \$10,000, but not over \$25,000	75.00
Over \$25,000, but not over \$50,000	260.00
Over \$50,000, but not over \$100,000	325.00
Over \$100,000	360.00

CHANGE OF USE:

Change of use of any building or structure	\$ 55.00
Change of use on vacant land, except parking lots	55.00

SIGNS:

Ground signs, roof signs or wall signs, not to exceed 120 square feet in area	\$ 50.00
Ground signs, roof signs or wall signs exceeding 120 square feet in area	150.00
Projecting signs over 96 square feet in area	75.00
Projecting signs under 96 square feet in area	55.00

PARKING LOTS:

Up to 10 cars	\$ 50.00
Up to 25 cars	75.00
26 to 50 cars	125.00
Over 50 cars	175.00

NOTE: A car space for fee purposes is 200
 square feet of usable vacant lot area.

TIME EXTENSION REQUEST TO PICK UP REQUIRED BUILDING PERMIT:

Overdue up to one year	\$ 25.00
Overdue one year, or more	A new case must be filed.

ALL OTHER APPEALS:

other appeals not previously mentioned	\$ 50.00
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EFFECTIVE DATE 30, 1981

B O A R D O F Z O N I N G A P P E A L S

AMENDED APPEAL FEE SCHEDULE

NEW BUILDINGS, ADDITIONS & ALTERATIONS	\$200.00
CHANGE OF USE OF ANY BUILDING OR STRUCTURE	\$200.00
DIMENSIONAL VARIANCES	\$200.00
USE VARIANCES	\$200.00
SIGNS	\$200.00
PARKING LOTS	\$200.00
TIME EXTENSION REQUEST TO PICK UP REQUIRED BUILDING PERMIT	\$ 50.00

ALL OTHER APPEALS:

MODIFICATIONS OF EXISTING BZA GRANTS	\$100.00
(I.E. Appeals of Conditions, Rehearings, etc.)	

Appeals from Buildings & Safety Engineering Department's Hearing Officer's Decision <u>by petitioner</u>	\$100.00
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Appeals from Buildings & Safety Engineering Department's Hearing Officer's Decision <u>by resident</u>	\$ 00.00
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EFFECTIVE DATE APRIL 15, 1983

EFFECTIVE DATE JULY 1, 2002

NEW APPEAL FEE SCHEDULE

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

NEW BUILDINGS, ADDITIONS & ALTERATIONS.....	\$500.00
CHANGE OF USE OF ANY BUILDING OR STRUCTURE.....	\$500.00
DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE.....	\$500.00
USE VARIANCE.....	\$500.00
SIGNS.....	\$500.00
PARKING LOTS.....	\$500.00
APPEALS FROM BUILDINGS AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT'S HEARING OFFICER'S DECISION BY PETITIONER.....	\$500.00
REHEARING.....	\$500.00
TIME EXTENSION REQUEST TO PICK-UP REQUIRED BUILDING PERMIT Over-due up to Six (6) Months.....	\$250.00
Over due on one (1) year or more- A new case MUST be filed	
DISMISSAL OF PETITION REQUEST BY PETITIONER WITH RETURN OF FEE.....	\$60.00
ADJOURNMENT BY PETITIONER AFTER PUBLIC NOTIFICATION.....	\$150.00
REQUESTED CORRECTIONS AND/OR CHANGES ON THE DECISION AND ORDER FROM PETITIONER.....	\$250.00
MODIFICATIONS OF EXISTING BZA GRANTS.....	\$500.00
(i.e. Appeals of conditions, etc)	
APPEALS FROM BUILDINGS AND SAFETY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT'S HEARING OFFICER, DECISION BY RESIDENT AREA COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND RESIDENTS ONLY WITHIN 300 FEET.....	\$00.00
TRANSCRIPTS (Per Page).....	50 cents

***ALL FEES ARE PAID at the Treasury's Cashier/Teller Sections, Room 154 on the First Floor of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center.**

***The Board of Zoning Appeals meets every Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. on the 13th Floor in the Auditorium, Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, 2 Woodward Avenue.**

EFFECTIVE DATE JULY 1, 2006
NEW APPEAL FEE SCHEDULE
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

NEW BUILDINGS, ADDITIONS & ALTERATIONS (PER STRUCTURE).....	\$1000.00
CHANGE OF USE OF ANY BUILDING OR STRUCTURE...(NON-CONFORMING USE).....	\$1000.00
DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE.....(OVER TEN (10) PERCENT).....	\$1000.00
USE VARIANCE.....	\$1000.00
REGULATED USES (ADULT, PAWN SHOPS, BARS, ETC).....	\$1000.00
CONTROLLED USES(SDM, SDD, ETC)	\$1000.00
SIGNS.....	\$1000.00
PARKING LOTS.....	\$1000.00
APPEALS FROM BUILDINGS AND SAFETY DEPARTMENTS HEARING OFFICER DECISION BY PETITIONER.....	\$1,250.00
* HEARING.....	\$1000.00
*TIME EXTENSION REQUEST TO PICK UP REQUIRED BUILDING PERMIT	
Over-due up to Six (6) Months.....	\$500.00
Over due on one (1) year or more. A new case MUST be filed.....	
DISMISSAL OF PETITION REQUEST BY PETITIONER WITH RETURN OF FEE.....	\$100.00
*ADJOURNMENT BY PETITIONER AFTER PUBLIC NOTIFICATION.....	\$250.00
*REQUESTED CORRECTIONS AND/OR CHANGES ON THE DECISION AND ORDER FROM PETITIONER.....	\$375.00
*MODIFICATIONS OF EXISTING BZA GRANTS.....	\$1,000.00
(i.e. Appeals of conditions, etc)	
APPEALS FROM BUILDINGS AND SAFETY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT'S HEARING OFFICER, DECISION BY RESIDENT AREA COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND RESIDENTS ONLY WITHIN 300 FEET.....	\$00.00
*TRANSCRIPT (Per Page).....	50 cents per page

*** ALL FEES ARE PAID at the Treasury's Cashier/Teller Sections, Room 154 on the First Floor of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center.**

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CITY OF DETROIT
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

ATTACHMENT 2

COLEMAN A. YOUNG MUNICIPAL CENTER
2 WOODWARD AVENUE, SUITE 212
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226
PHONE 313•224•3595 TTY:311
FAX 313•224•4597
WWW.DETROITMI.GOV

Approved by City Council November 14, 2013 (corrected October 31, 2019)

APPEAL FEE SCHEDULE

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

NEW BUILDINGS, ADDITIONS & ALTERATIONS (PER STRUCTURE).....	\$1,200.00
CHANGE OF USE OF ANY BUILDING OR STRUCTURE...(NON-CONFORMING USE).....	\$1,200.00
DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE.....(OVER TEN (10) PERCENT).....	\$1,200.00
USE VARIANCE.....	\$1,200.00
REGULATED USES (PAWNSHOPS, BARS, ETC).....	\$1,200.00
CONTROLLED USES(SDM, SDD, ETC)	\$1,200.00
SIGNS.....	\$1,200.00
PARKING LOTS.....	\$1,200.00
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT (Site Plan Denial).....	\$1,200.00
APPEALS FROM BUILDINGS AND SAFETY DEPARTMENTS HEARING OFFICER DECISION BY (BSEED Denial) Hearing.....	\$1,500.00
REHEARING.....	\$1,200.00
TIME EXTENSION REQUEST TO PICK UP REQUIRED BUILDING PERMIT Over-due up to Six (6) Months.....	\$600.00
Over due on one (1) year or more. A new case MUST be filed.....	\$1,200.00
DISMISSAL OF PETITION REQUEST BY PETITIONER WITH RETURN OF FEE.....	\$120.00
ADJOURNMENT BY PETITIONER AFTER PUBLIC NOTIFICATION.....	\$300.00
REQUESTED CORRECTIONS AND/OR CHANGES ON THE DECISION AND ORDER FROM PETITIONER.....	\$450.00
MODIFICATIONS OF EXISTING BZA GRANTS..... (i.e. Appeals of conditions, etc)	\$1,200.00
APPEALS FROM BUILDINGS AND SAFETY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT'S HEARING OFFICER, DECISION BY RESIDENT AREA COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND RESIDENTS ONLY WITHIN 300 FEET.....	\$0.00
TRANSCRIPT (Per Page).....	Court Reporter Rate Per Page
UNCERTIFIED HEARING RECORDINGS	\$5.00 per disk

The Board of Zoning Appeals meets Tuesday's at 9:00 a.m. on the 13th Floor in the Erma L. Henderson Auditorium, Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, 2 Woodward Avenue.