

Town of Freedom Appeals Board Minutes

Meeting Date: 8/19/2025

Board Member Attendance: Mike Smith, Ben Feeny, Alex Green, Dylan Turner, Samantha Turner

Citizen Attendance: Cindy Abbott, Lissa Widoff, Raine Oullette

Expert Attendance: Bill Kelly

Meeting called to order at 6:05 pm

Old Business:

- Minute review from 5/29/25
 - Ben makes a ***motion*** to accept notes following some grammatical edits.
Seconded by Alex.
 - ***No further discussion. All those in favor:*** Full board
- Confirm or deny if there is access to attorney for appeals as needed
 - **Outcome:** There is not access to legal council without permission from the selectboard - can follow up on whether chair approval is okay or if there is a required vote. *This is critical due to past conflict of interest appeals cases*
- Executive session with town attorney pertaining to appeals case at 22 N Palermo Rd Freedom, ME
 - **Called into order at: 6:35pm**
 - **Ended at: 7:22 pm**
- Finalize outcome of 22 N Palermo Rd Freedom, ME
 - This board references numerous town and state variations and explored which could and could not be used in this case
 - Dimensional Variance - cannot be explored due to the town not yet adopting this
 - Commercial Ordinance - cannot be explored as the variances do not pertain to this unique circumstance (commercial turning into residential)
 - Title 30-A Municipalities and Counties 4353: Zoning Adjustments Subsection 4 can be appropriately utilized and is the governing document regarding this case
 - Section 4A: Land in Question can not yield reasonable return unless variance is granted
 - Ben makes ***motion*** to vote on Line Item A. ***Dylan Seconds***
 - ***Results of vote:*** All members agree this property does not meet this criteria
 - ***Discussion:*** The property and its buildings were profitable and therefore would yield a return. "Resonable return" per state definition is little to zero value.
 - Ben makes a ***motion*** that we accept the vote. ***Alex seconds.***
 - ***All those in favor:*** full board

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- Section 4B: The need for a variance is due to the unique circumstance of the property and not to the general conditions in the neighborhood
 - Ben makes ***motion*** to vote on Line Item B. ***Dylan Seconds.***
 - ***Results of vote:*** All members agree this property does not meet this criteria
 - ***Discussion:*** No discussion
 - Ben makes a ***motion*** that we accept the vote. ***Alex seconds.***
 - ***All those in favor:*** full board
- Section 4C: The granting of a variance will not alter the essential character of the locality
 - Ben makes a motion to vote on Line Item C pertains. ***Samantha Seconds.***
 - ***Results of vote:*** 4 VS 1 in favor that this property does not meet the above criteria
 - ***Discussion:*** The number of buildings and placement of the buildings does not fit with the general character of the town. The lot once was a profitable business and could have continued to fit the character of the location. There is also discussion from the early phases of the town's comprehensive planning in which many citizens have voiced concerns around the upcoming state bill LD2003 and the potential for the town to “protect” itself by adopting ordinances that would prevent this.
 - Ben makes a motion to accept the vote. ***Dylan Seconds.***
 - ***All those in favor:*** full board
- Section 4D: The hardship is not the result of action taken applicant or prior owner
 - Ben makes ***motion*** to vote on Line Item D. ***Alex Seconds.***
 - ***Results of vote:*** All members agree this property does not meet this criteria
 - ***Discussion:*** All actions were taken by the current owner
 - Ben makes a motion to accept the vote. ***Alex seconds.***
 - ***All those in favor:*** full board
- Ben makes ***motion*** to accept the “Permission and authorization agreement” provided on May 29th 2025 ***Mike Smith Seconds.***
 - ***Discussion:*** None
 - ***All those in favor:*** full board
- Ben makes a ***motion*** to not grant a variance to 22 N Palermo Rd. following the above findings. ***Dylan Seconds.***
 - ***Discussion:*** None
 - ***All those in favor:*** full board

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New Business:

- Complete letter of decision regarding above case
 - Ben makes a motion to accept the letter as written. ***Samantha seconds.***
 - ***Discussion:*** None
 - ***All those in favor:*** full board

Citizen's Request: None

Agenda Items for Future Meetings:

- Review previous minutes

Ben makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. ***Seconded:*** Mike. ***All those in favor:*** full board.
Meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm