

**ZONING HEARING BOARD OF DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP
BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

Docket No.: Z-6-26

Applicant: 1635 Easton Road Associates, LLC
636 Old York Road, Floor 2
Jenkintown, PA 19046

Owner: Same.

Subject Property: Tax Parcel No. 09-014-030-004, which is located at 1635 Easton Road, Doylestown, PA 18901.

Requested Relief: Applicant seeks to redevelop the 2.351 acre Subject Property as a Veterinary Hospital (or in the alternative, a retail use of the Subject Property). In order to support a 15,000 square foot building to support the use, Applicant seeks the following variances from the Doylestown Township Zoning Ordinance ("Ordinance"):

1. from §175-72.B.(3), to permit an impervious surface coverage of 71.6%, where a maximum of 50% is permitted;
2. from §175-72.B.(5)(b), to permit a side yard setback of 30 feet, where a minimum of 50 feet is required;
3. from §175-21.B, to permit parking and walkway improvements within the minimum 30 foot buffer requirement;
4. from §175-21.C(2), to permit walkways and parking within zero feet of the north and south property lines, where a minimum of 30 feet is required;
5. from §175-23.A.(1), to permit 10' wide x 18' long parking stalls, where a minimum of 10' wide x 20' long is required;
6. from §175-23.B.(2), to permit a planting strip width of 32 feet, where a minimum width of 37.5 feet is required;
7. from §175-73.C, to permit a front yard parking setback of 32 feet, where a minimum 37.5 feet is required; and,
8. from §175-23.C.(13), to permit a side yard parking setback of zero feet along the north lot line and 28 feet along the south lot line, where a minimum width of 30 feet is required.

Hearing History: The application was filed in Doylestown Township on July 24, 2026. The hearing was held on August 27, 2026 at the Doylestown Township Building, 425 Wells Road, Doylestown, PA 18901.

Mailing Date: October 9, 2026

Appearances: Applicant by: Christen G. Pionzio, Esq.
Hamburg, Rubin, Mullin, Maxwell & Lupin, PC
1684 S. Broad Street, Suite 230
P.O. Box 1479
Lansdale, PA 19446-5422

DECISION

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The Zoning Hearing Board of Doylestown Township met the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, the Municipalities Planning Code, and other relevant statutes as to legal notice of the hearing held.

2. During the hearing held, the following exhibits were offered and admitted.

For the Board:

- ZHB-1 Application (filed July 24, 2026) with attachments, including deed to the Subject Property; Zoning Plan dated July 15, 2026, and Existing Site Plan April 20, 2026, last revised July 15, 2026, prepared by Charles E. Shoemaker, Inc.; and, List of property owners to be notified by mail
- ZHB-2 Notice of Hearing (publication posting and mailing)
- ZHB-3 Doylestown Township Zoning Ordinance
- ZHB-4 Letter of support by the Doylestown Township Board of Supervisors, dated August 19, 2026

For the Applicant:

- A-1 Updated deed to the Subject Property in favor of 1635 Easton Road Associates LLC
- A-2 Renderings by DVC Design LLC (site and building design) dated August 25, 2026 consisting of six (6) pages)
- A-3 Letter from adjacent property owner at 1661 Easton Road regarding support for requested relief and mutual agreement to grant mutual easements
- A-4 Letter of support from Board of Supervisors dated August 19, 2026

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| A-5 | <i>Curriculum vitae</i> , Rachel L. Butch, PE, Charles E. Shoemaker Inc. |
| A-6 | Amended zoning exhibit plan dated July 15, 2026, last revised August 20, 2026 |
| A-7 | Zoning exhibit plan – easements highlighted |

3. The Applicant is the Owner of the Subject Property and therefore possessed of the requisite standing to make application to this Board.

4. Mr. Bruce Goodman spoke on behalf of the property owner and developer. Mr. Goodman is a Principal in 1635 Easton Road Associates, LLC. Mr. Goodman has been a commercial real estate developer for the past 48 years. He has developed or redeveloped over 300 properties in the region.

5. The Subject Property is located in the C-2, Commercial Zoning District of Doylestown Township. The lot area is 2.315 acres (gross). The property accommodates the previous AAA office building with associated “improvements”.

6. The existing building on the property has been vacant for close to 20 years. The property is irregular in shape and is encumbered by multiple utility easements. Access to the property is by way of an easement over the driveway of the Solana of Doylestown Atria Senior Living Facility located immediately to the south of the Subject Property with frontage on, and direct access to, Route 611/Easton Road.

7. Applicant seeks to redevelop the 2.351 acre subject property as a Veterinary Hospital (or in the alternative, a retail use of the Subject Property). In order to support a 15,000 square foot building to support the use, Applicant seeks the following variances from the Doylestown Township Zoning Ordinance: (1) from §175-72.B.(3), to permit an impervious surface coverage of 71.6%, where a maximum of 50% is permitted; (2) from §175-72.B.(5)(b), to permit a side yard setback of 30 feet, where a minimum of 50 feet is required; (3) from §175-21.B, to permit parking and walkway improvements within the minimum 30 foot buffer requirement; (4) from §175-21.C(2), to permit walkways and parking within zero feet of the north and south property lines, where a minimum of 30 feet is required; (5) from §175-23.A.(1), to permit 10' wide x 18' long parking stalls, where a minimum of 10' wide x 20' long is required; (6) from §175-23.B.(2), to permit a planting strip width of 32 feet, where a minimum width of 37.5 feet is required; (7) from §175-73.C, to permit a front yard parking setback of 32 feet, where a minimum 37.5 feet is required; and, (8) from §175-23.C.(13), to permit a side yard parking setback of zero feet along the north lot line and 28 feet along the south lot line, where a minimum width of 30 feet is required.

8. Applicant asserts that the redevelopment is consistent with surrounding and adjacent properties, including Doylestown Pointe Plaza, as well as the automotive dealerships and TJ Smith’s Restaurant just south of the Subject Property.

9. Applicant provided a brief discussion of the proposed re-use as a veterinary hospital. The proposed use is not for a general veterinarian. The business was described as 'the Vet's Vet'. Treatment of animals is on an emergent basis with availability 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. No kennel is proposed for the use. The building will be sound-proofed. Appropriate measure will be taken to reduce animal noise and waste, and further to dispose of waste responsibly.

10. Rachel L. Butch, PE testified regarding the site characteristics, existing conditions, proposed improvements, and site constraints.

11. Redevelopment is proposed consistent with the Shoemaker plans submitted with the Application. The redevelopment design places an emphasis on improving the aesthetics and functionality of the site.

12. The architectural renderings provide an illustration of the building and site layout proposed.

13. Parking required for a 15,000 square foot building necessitates 75 parking spaces. Ms. Butch underscored that the parking area onsite would be smaller following redevelopment than at present.

14. Ms. Butch discussed stormwater management for the property. She identified known problems affecting the residential area to the rear of the Subject Property and proposed stormwater management best management practices to mitigate the existing stormwater management issues. Other technical design considerations were deferred to a review of the plan sets submitted by Applicant. Ms. Butch emphasized that the impervious surface variance seemed extraordinary at 71.6% where up to 50% is permitted, but the calculations were skewed by the difference between the gross site area and the net buildable site area (a term defined within the Zoning Ordinance, requiring removal of easement areas for calculation of net buildable site area to arrive at impervious surface coverage for stormwater management calculations). Ms. Butch referred to the net buildable sited area calculation with regard the current property as an "artificial deduction".

15. Both pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow improves with the proposed design.

16. Applicant proposes maintaining an access easement from the adjacent Doylestown Pointe Plaza which is owned by an associated entity to the owner of the Subject Property. An access easement across the Doylestown Pointe Plaza property would provide ingress and egress for the subject site at a signalized intersection adjacent to the Doylestown Pointe Plaza Shopping Center.

17. Applicant does acknowledge that this commercial development will require proceeding through the formal land development review process. The Applicant proposes to manage the stormwater associated with the impervious coverage through stormwater management facilities which will be developed and reviewed during the land development process.

18. Multiple nearby property owners expressed considerable concerns regarding lack of adequate stormwater management downstream from the subject site. Comments were directed to the “open ditch” between Route 611 and the proposed parking lot on site, as well as to the rear of the subject site. The predominant complaints were focused on the lack of adequate stormwater management to the rear, including questions regarding the adequacy of the stormwater management facilities located on the Solana property. Comments also spoke in terms of sheer volume of stormwater during heavy rainstorms.

19. As indicated above, Applicant acknowledged need to comply with stormwater management requirements. Applicant did observe that the concerns raised by neighboring property owners may be impossible or impracticable to fully address through the single property redevelopment at issue. Nonetheless, as indicated below, the Applicant did offer to commit to greater than the required stormwater management responsibility for the redevelopment as specified at condition number two of the Order which follows.

20. Property owners were advised that the development of stormwater management facilities for the subject redevelopment of the property would be addressed during the land development process where the neighboring property owners would have an opportunity to provide input and hear proposed mitigation strategies.

21. Doylestown Township supported the application following a public meeting held by the Township Board of Supervisors. Through correspondence dated August 19, 2026, from the Township to the Zoning Hearing Board, the Township indicated, in pertinent part, that

... the Board agreed that the proposal will remove a severely blighted property from the township’s commercial corridor

The variances being requested are minimal in nature. Although the impervious surface relief request seems high it is because of our Zoning Ordinance requirements that existing easements cannot be included in the calculation of available land thereby artificially reducing the amount of land available and making the impervious surface appear higher.

... for the reasons mentioned above the Board of Supervisors agreed to support North Star Veterinary Emergency Trauma and Specialty Center application to the ZHB. I hope you will look favorably upon the Applicant and their request for variances.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

1. The Subject Property has been developed and lain vacant for in excess of 20 years.

2. The property has been described as “severely blighted” by the Township.

3. Applicant seeks to redevelop the 2.351 acre Subject Property as a Veterinary Hospital (or in the alternative, a retail use of the Subject Property). In order to support a 15,000 square foot building to support the use, Applicant seeks the following variances from the Doylestown Township Zoning Ordinance: (1) from §175-72.B.(3), to permit an impervious surface coverage of 71.6%, where a maximum of 50% is permitted; (2) from §175-72.B.(5)(b), to permit a side yard setback of 30 feet, where a minimum of 50 feet is required; (3) from §175-21.B, to permit parking and walkway improvements within the minimum 30 foot buffer requirement; (4) from §175-21.C(2), to permit walkways and parking within zero feet of the north and south property lines, where a minimum of 30 feet is required; (5) from §175-23.A.(1), to permit 10' wide x 18' long parking stalls, where a minimum of 10' wide x 20' long is required; (6) from §175-23.B.(2), to permit a planting strip width of 32 feet, where a minimum width of 37.5 feet is required; (7) from §175-73.C, to permit a front yard parking setback of 32 feet, where a minimum 37.5 feet is required; and, (8) from §175-23.C.(13), to permit a side yard parking setback of zero feet along the north lot line and 28 feet along the south lot line, where a minimum width of 30 feet is required.

4. The standard for a variance is contained at §370-1107 of the Ordinance and §910.2 of the Municipalities Planning Code as follows:

(1) That there are unique physical circumstances or conditions, including irregularity, narrowness or shallowness of lot size or shape, or exceptional topographical or other physical conditions peculiar to the particular property and that the unnecessary hardship is due to such conditions and not the circumstances or conditions generally created by the provisions of the zoning ordinance in the neighborhood or district in which the property is located.

(2) That because of such physical circumstances or conditions, there is no possibility that the property can be developed in strict conformity with the provisions of the zoning ordinance and that the authorization of a variance is therefore necessary to enable the reasonable use of the property.

(3) That such unnecessary hardship has not been created by the appellant.

(4) That the variance, if authorized, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or district in which the property is located, nor substantially or permanently impair the appropriate use of development of adjacent property, nor be detrimental to the public welfare.

- (5) That the variance, if authorized, will represent the minimum variance that will afford relief and will represent the least modification possible of the regulation in issue.

53.P.S. §10910.2(a)

5. The Board concludes that Applicant has presented evidence of sufficient factors to warrant the grant of the dimensional variance requested under the relaxed variance standard applicable to dimensional variance cases, as articulated by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, in Hertzberg v. Zoning Board of Adjustment of the City of Pittsburgh, 554 Pa. 249, 721 A.2d. 43 (1998).

6. The hardship driving the need for variance relief is the existing condition of this previously developed property. There is no direct access to Route 611/Easton Road. The property bears an unusual shape. The property is encumbered by existing utility easements. The existing site characteristics make redevelopment, in strict conformity with the Zoning Ordinance impractical if not impossible.

7. The evidence establishes that the relief sought by the Applicant is the minimum variance necessary. As previously indicated, while the number of variances appear substantial, the actual relief being requested for redevelopment is not. The comparison is further mitigated when comparing existing conditions to proposed. Applicant is reducing the need for relief where possible.

8. The competent evidence presented leads the Board to conclude that, if the variance relief is granted, there will be no negative impacts upon surrounding properties or uses. The Board reaches this conclusion while also appreciating that properties downstream from the subject site are periodically experiencing stormwater management issues. As a matter of law, the Applicant may not exacerbate those issues. At the same time, Applicant is not legally required to improve those offsite conditions. Nonetheless, this Applicant has committed to designing and maintaining stormwater facilities on site designed to address more stormwater than required by law. Applicant's voluntary commitment to attempt to mitigate an existing off site stormwater problem, in addition to other considerations developed during the course of the hearing, lead the Board to conclude that there will be no negative impacts on surrounding properties or uses.

9. The variance sought will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or district in which the Subject Property is located. In fact, the redevelopment, as described, will serve as an improvement, both aesthetically and functionally, from existing conditions.

10. Accordingly, the Doylestown Township Zoning Hearing Board determined, by a 2-0 vote, to GRANT the Applicant's request for relief, with conditions, as set forth hereafter.

ORDER

Upon consideration and after hearing, the Zoning Hearing Board of Doylestown Township hereby GRANTS the following variances from the Doylestown Township Zoning Ordinance to permit Applicant to redevelop the 2.351 acre Subject Property as a Veterinary Hospital:

1. from §175-72.B.(3), to permit an impervious surface coverage of 71.6%, where a maximum of 50% is permitted;
2. from §175-72.B.(5)(b), to permit a side yard setback of 30 feet, where a minimum of 50 feet is required;
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8. from §175-23.C.(13), to permit a side yard parking setback of zero feet along the north lot line and 28 feet along the south lot line, where a minimum width of 30 feet is required.

The relief granted is subject to the following conditions:

1. Applicant is to proceed through the land development process to address, among other things, concerns raised before the Zoning Hearing Board, including stormwater management, exterior lighting, landscaping and buffering, and an assessment whether additional easements are located on site which would require recalculation of net site area.
2. With regard to stormwater management, the Applicant shall, for predeveloped conditions, convert 50% of existing impervious to a meadow condition as the basis for which post development runoff (volume & rate) will be controlled. Compliance to be confirmed by the Township Engineer during his review of Land Development plans and again during his review of as-built plans as required for acceptance of site improvements.

3. With regard to easements, Applicant will obtain any and all easements necessary to effectuate the shared pedestrian and vehicular access as shown on the plan set submitted before the Zoning Hearing Board, as amended, among the three properties.
4. With regard to buffers, the parking areas shown on Exhibit A-2 (Aerial Rendering), along the shared property line between the shopping center and the subject site, shall be shifted to create a grass buffer between the parking area on the subject site and the sidewalk on the shopping center property, to mitigate the prospect of conflict between cars encroaching into the sidewalk area when parked.
5. All deliveries and trash pickup shall be limited to the hours of 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
6. The relief is granted for development in substantial conformity to the amended plans presented (Zoning Exhibit Plan of 1635 Easton Road, prepared by Charles E. Shoemaker, Inc., dated July 15, 2026, last revised August 20, 2026).
7. Applicant must obtain approvals from any other entities having jurisdiction.

**ZONING HEARING BOARD OF
DOYLESTOWN TOWNSHIP**

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By: /s/ William J. Lahr
William J. Lahr, Chairman

/s/ Samuel Costanzo
Samuel Costanzo