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**SUFFIELD ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
Tuesday, March 31, 2026, 7pm**

- Present:** Mark Blackaby  
Susan Hastings  
Despina Tartsinis  
Gerard Chase  
Victor Roy, Alternate
- Absent:** John Schwemmer  
Tim Casey, Alternate
- Also Present:** Eric Vincent, Zoning Enforcement Officer  
Bill Hawkins, Director of Planning and Development  
Ellie Binns, Recording Secretary

*The proceedings of this meeting were recorded and made available on the Town website, along with all of the application materials.*

Chairman Blackaby called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and took a roll call. All members were present with the exception of John Schwemmer and Tim Casey.

Ms. Binns read the legal notice into the record and noted the abutters had been notified of the hearing and there was no correspondence received in regard to the application.

2026-ZBA1 George Austin, property 187 Griffin Road, West Suffield, Map 11H, Block 3, Lot 267, requesting a front yard setback variance of 12 feet and a side yard setback variance of 14 feet for the construction of a single family home. Sections IV.D.4, IV.M and XIII apply.

The applicant, George Austin, explained that he purchased the property under the name of JL Enterprises, LLC., of which he is the sole member. There was an existing non-conforming house on the property which was condemned due to a fire and the house has now been demolished. He intends to build a new four-bedroom house where the existing foundation was with the exception of an additional area for one garage bay with a room above it which measures 12.2 feet by 11.7 feet which is the reason for the variance request to bring the setback for the front to 27.4 feet from the zone standard of 40 feet the side yard setback of 10 feet will be adhered to. He explained that this is similar to the other homes in the neighborhood and increases the property value while creating much needed housing for home buyers. He also presented the approval letter from the North Central District Health Department dated 3/26/26, for the placement of the well and septic on the lot for a four-bedroom residence.

Mr. Roy referenced Section XI.D. of the regulations limiting the time that the applicant had to rebuild on the existing foundation and questioned if the time had expired. Mr. Hawkins clarified that current State Statutes have superseded that Town regulation so that the time frame has not expired for the application.

Mr. Blackaby opened the hearing to anyone from the public who wished to speak. Richard Mills, 205 Griffin Rd. spoke in favor of the application.

Mr. Blackaby then designated as voting members for this hearing, Blackaby, Tartsinis, Chase, Roy and Hastings.

With no further requests from others to speak, Mr. Blackaby asked for a motion to close the public hearing and enter deliberations. The motion was made by Ms. Hastings and seconded by Mr. Chase with all voting in favor 5-0-0.

Commission members noted that the small size of the lot and the pre-existing non-conforming structure with the hardship of the fire which destroyed it, constituted a hardship for the applicant. There was also discussion about the wording of the approval to accurately reflect the nature of the requested set back.

With no further discussion, Ms. Tartsinis moved to close the hearing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hastings and approved 5-0-0.

Ms. Tartsinis moved to approve file # 2026-ZBA1 requesting a front yard variance of the property from the required 40 feet to 27.4 feet to allow for the construction of a new single-family residence based on the configuration of the lot and a pre-existing structure. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hastings and approved unanimously 5-0-0.

It was explained to the applicant that he had 15 days after the decision is published in the newspaper before acting on the variance.

The applicant will be receiving an approval letter explaining the details of filing the variance.

Chairman Blackaby called for a vote on the minutes from the October 28, 2025 meeting. Mr. Chase moved approval and the motion was seconded by Ms. Hastings and approved unanimously.

With nothing further to come before the Commission, Ms. Tartsinis moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hastings and with a unanimous vote the ZBA meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Recording Secretary, Ellie Binns