

**MINUTES
BUILDING BOARD OF APPEALS
February 20, 2025
City Commission Chambers**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Van Lente called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS

Members Present: Andy Van Lente, Chair; Ben Bierlein, Vice Chair; Jillian Hocking; Matt Maycroft; Khari Worthly

Members Absent: Jay Sherston & Ryan Long - excused

City Staff: Roger Iveson, Building Official; Karleen Steppenwolf, Recording Secretary; Scott Brooks, Fire Marshall; Sarah Van Hyfte, City Attorney; Luis Pena, Historic Preservation Coordinator

COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Mr. Maycroft, seconded by Mr. Van Lente moved to approve the minutes of November 21, 2025 as submitted, approved by voice call vote.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

INITIAL HEARINGS

The following property was presented to the board for a public hearing:

234 – 238 E MICHIGAN AVE

This property was presented to the board for a variance for emergency escapes and rescue openings for all bedrooms. The bedrooms have no windows or emergency escapes installed. The apartments are like row houses, no lot line.

Attendees: Brian & Carmen Harris – Owner
Richard Cherry – Attorney at Law
Driven Design Studio PLLC – Architect

Mr. Cherry presented a power point presentation. The presentation included background information on the purchase of 234-238 E Michigan Ave, building permit application process with code information, alternative designs, Building Officials letter to the Harris, statement of jurisdiction, standard of review, argument and conclusion and request for relief along with exhibits from the Architect.

Mr. Cherry stated that he disagrees with the Building Officials interpretation of the code. Mr. Cherry stated that you must read the language only and stay in the Michigan code.

The application stated that a proposed alternative would be to utilize exception 1 of section 1030.1 and fully equip the building with an automatic sprinkler system.

Mr. Bierlein asked if the buildings common walls are masonry, and it is along with 1 hour fire rated walls & floors.

Mr. Iveson stated his main priority was the safety of the tenants.

Mr. Harris stated that he wants the property to be safe also and he did research on code before purchasing the building.

Mr. Maycroft asked if construction has started yet, and the answer is it has not.

Mr. Brooks stated that you must drill down through the footnotes in the code.

Currently there is 1 exit out of bedroom, 1 exit out of unit to main area and out.

There were no comments from the public.
Chair Van Lente closed the public hearing.

MOTION

Mr. Maycroft moved that the board grant the appeal application for the variance on requiring emergency escapes and rescue openings in all bedrooms be waived for this property, to accept the Staff Recommendations as stated, seconded by Mr. Beirlein.

Motion approved by roll call vote, with Mr. Van Lente abstaining.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Van Lente moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:04pm.

Submitted by: Karleen Steppenwolf Date 4/17/25
BBA Recording Secretary
Karleen Steppenwolf

Reviewed by: Rm Iveson Date 4-17-25
Building Official
Roger Iveson

Approved by: Andy Van Lente Date 4/17/25
BBA Chair
Andy Van Lente