



TOWN OF
BEEKMAN
New York

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**Town of Beekman Zoning Board of Appeals
Minutes of January 6, 2026**

The following members were present:

Chairman: Cristian Hanganu
Stella Slattery
Linda Porter

Town Attorney – Joe Eriole
Secretary – Sheryl Discher

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order. Exits were identified for attendees. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The Board acknowledged receipt of the October 2025 and November 2025 meeting minutes.

- **Motion:** To approve October and November 2025 minutes
- **Second:** Received
- **Vote:** Passed (Roll Call – All in Favor)

Reopening of Public Hearing

Applicant: Standke Pole Barn – Area and Height Variance - Continuance

Property Address: 15 Walker Road

Grid Number: 6759-00-100442

Zoning District: R-90

- **Motion:** To reopen the public hearing
- **Second:** Received
- **Vote:** Approved

Application Summary

The applicant is requesting:

- **Area Variance:**
 - Proposed accessory structure: 60 ft x 88 ft (approximately 5,200 sq. ft., later discussed at 4,800 sq. ft.)
 - Code permits accessory structures up to 25% of the principal structure (478 sq. ft. allowed)
 - Relief requested for approximately 4,800+ sq. ft.
- **Height Variance:**
 - Proposed height: 24–26 ft

- Principal structure height: approximately 14 ft
- Maximum height permitted under code: 35 ft
- Variance required because accessory structure exceeds height of principal structure due to elevations.

Board discussed the need to verify the exact height of the principal structure prior to final approval.

Site Visit Discussion

Board members conducted a site visit prior to the meeting.

Observations included:

- Structure would be located behind the primary residence.
- Due to elevation, the accessory structure would appear larger and may tower over the home.
- Natural vegetation and topography will provide some screening.
- Applicant proposed additional arborvitae planting for further screening.

Review of Statutory Criteria for Area Variance

Undesirable Change to Neighborhood Character

- Applicant stated the structure would not be visible from Walker Road or Route 55.
- Natural elevation and vegetation would limit visibility.
- Board members discussed visual impact due to size and elevation.
- Concern raised regarding fire safety (wood-burning stove and fuel storage).

Whether the Benefit Can Be Achieved by Other Means

- Applicant stated alternative off-site storage would be financially burdensome.
- Board discussed possibility of smaller structures or alternative configurations.
- Applicant referenced comparable large barns in the area and provided supporting documentation.

Whether the Variance is Substantial

- Board noted requested structure is approximately 11 times larger than permitted by code.
- Applicant argued comparable structures exist in the neighborhood.

Discussion – Self-Created Hardship

The Board questioned whether the alleged hardship was self-created.

The applicant stated that the hardship could be viewed as self-created because he is choosing to construct a building that exceeds the allowable size under Town Code. However, he noted that the hardship only exists due to the dimensional limits established by the Town.

The Board inquired whether a smaller structure (e.g., 400 sq. ft., 1,000 sq. ft., or 2,000 sq. ft.) or multiple smaller buildings could achieve the same purpose.

The applicant responded:

- A 400 sq. ft. structure would not accommodate required equipment.
- A 2,000–3,000 sq. ft. structure would be insufficient.

- Two 2,500 sq. ft. structures would significantly increase cost (approximately 50% more).
- Two structures would require additional land disturbance, utilities, heating, and operational expenses.
- The intent is to consolidate all equipment and storage into one enclosed structure rather than leave items outdoors.

The Board discussed:

- The substantial nature of the requested variance (approximately 11 times the allowable size).
- Concerns regarding precedent for future applicants.
- Whether granting such a large variance would make it difficult to deny similar future requests.

The applicant reiterated:

- The structure would not be visible from the roadway.
- The property consists of approximately 17 acres with significant natural screening.
- No commercial activity will occur on the property.
- A deed restriction was offered prohibiting commercial use.
- Public notice was provided to 33 neighboring property owners; two attended the initial meeting.
- Neighbor concerns previously raised (driveway access, drainage, debris) have been addressed.
- Allegations regarding debris were resolved; the applicant removed materials voluntarily.
- The structure is intended for personal use, including hobby woodworking, equipment maintenance, and storage.

The applicant emphasized that items stored outdoors would negatively impact both his property and neighboring views.

Board and Counsel Discussion

Counsel advised:

- The Board has sufficient record evidence to make a reasoned determination.
- The variance is substantial.
- Prior approvals do not bind the Board.
- The five statutory criteria for area variances require a balancing test; no single factor is dispositive.

Board members expressed:

- Continued concern regarding the substantial size of the requested variance.
- Desire to verify the exact height of the principal structure for record accuracy.
- Interest in conducting additional legal and zoning research before rendering a final decision.

Motion

- **Motion:** To adjourn the public hearing to the next meeting and keep the public hearing open.
- **Second:** Received
- **Vote:** Approved (Roll Call – All in Favor)

The applicant will:

- Provide documentation verifying the height of the principal structure.
- Submit additional requested materials prior to the next meeting.

New Application

Applicant: Selca Greenhouse – Area Variance

Property Address: 39 Indian Pass

Grid Number: 6757-03-059064

Zoning District: R-135

Application Summary

The applicant seeks to legalize an existing greenhouse constructed prior to the current owners' purchase. Greenhouse is located in front of principle structure and is larger than 25% of principle structure.

Requested Variances:

- **Size Variance:**
 - Greenhouse: 800 sq. ft.
 - Principle Structure: 1560 sq. ft.
 - Maximum permitted: 390 sq. ft.
 - Variance requested: 410 sq. ft.
- **Side Yard Setback Variance:**
 - Existing setback: 10.6 ft.
 - Required setback: 40 ft.
 - Variance requested: 29 ft. 4 in.

Applicant Presentation

The greenhouse:

- Was existing at time of purchase (October 2023).
- Has no record of prior permit approval.
- Is actively used for growing produce.
- Sits on a foundation.
- Is irrigated and functional.
- Cannot feasibly be relocated due to:
 - Structural limitations (likely to be destroyed during relocation)
 - Septic system location in rear yard

Two neighboring property owners submitted letters of support.

The Board confirmed:

- The structure is entirely on the applicant's property.
- Only adjacent neighbors can see the greenhouse.
- One adjacent neighbor expressed strong support.
- Elevation differences minimize visual impact.

Review of Statutory Criteria

Undesirable Change to Neighborhood Character

- Determined minimal; structure is screened and supported by neighbors.

Feasible Alternatives

- Relocation not practical due to septic system and structural limitations.

Substantiality

- Variance is approximately two times the permitted size, considered modest relative to other applications.

Environmental Impact

- No adverse environmental impact anticipated.

Self-Created Hardship

- Not self-created; greenhouse existed prior to current ownership.

Motion

- **Motion:** To grant:
 - A 410 sq. ft. area variance for accessory structure size.
 - A 29 ft. 4 in. side yard setback variance.
- **Second:** Received
- **Vote:** Approved (Roll Call – All in Favor)

Motion carried.

Administrative Matters

- Motion to adopt 2026 ZBA meeting schedule – Approved.
- Motion to adjourn – Approved.

Meeting adjourned.