



Michael Simpson, Chairman
Jason Morris, V. Chairman
James Jordan
Meeghan Murray
Kate Rockett
Chase Stell
Melanie Williams

Board of Appeals Meeting

**700 Doug Davis Drive
Hapeville, Georgia 30354**

August 28, 2025 6:00 PM

MINUTES

1. Called to Order at 6:02 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Michael Simpson, Chairman
Jason Morris, Vice Chairman
James Jordan (absent)
Meeghan Murray
Kate Rockett
Chase Stell
Melanie Williams

3. Approval of Minutes

3.I. Minutes of July 24, 2025

MOTION ITEM: Chase Stell made a motion to approve the minutes of July 24, 2025, as submitted. The motion was seconded by Kate Rockett. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

4. Public Hearing

4.I. 651 North Avenue

Variance Request

Background:

Abdulsattar Khan requested a variance to reduce the required setback at 651 North Avenue, Hapeville, GA 30354, Parcel ID: 14 009900030729. The property is zoned R-1, One Family Residential and is subject to the zoning regulations under section 93-22.1-1 (Chart of dimensional requirements) of the City of Hapeville Zoning Ordinance.

Findings:

The request is for an expansion to a non-conforming single-family structure. The 1200 sf single-family dwelling currently, built in the 1940s, encroaches into the 15' side setback by approximately 7'. The proposed project is a complete renovation and expansion of the existing dwelling. The proposed expansion is along the same plane as the existing dwelling.

Recommendation:

The requested variance will allow for the renovation of a vacant single-family dwelling in disrepair, which will not impact the existing encroachment plane. There is no evidence of a detriment to the public good. The proposed variance is recommended for approval.

Public Comment:

Cheryl Christopherson, a resident of 3277 North Whitney Avenue, spoke in support of the request.

Katherine Beno Valencia, a resident of 3197 Oakdale Road, submitted a written letter in support of the request.

End of Public Comment.

MOTION ITEM: Melanie Williams made a motion to approve the variance requests to reduce the required setback at 651 North Avenue, as requested. The motion was seconded by Chase Stell. MOTION CARRIED: 4-0-1; Michael Simpson recused himself.

4.II. 3445 Dogwood Drive Variance Request

Background:

Maruf Ali requested an off-site parking arrangement at 3445 Dogwood Drive, Hapeville, GA 30354, Parcel ID: 14 009800170310. The property is zoned U-V, Urban Village and is subject to the zoning regulations under section 93-23-12 (Location) of the City of Hapeville Zoning Ordinance.

Findings:

CAFÉ BELLI 673 NORTH CENTRAL

3 spaces with severely restricted hours – likely not usable

Three spaces are available between 2 and 5pm and after 11pm Sunday, Tuesday through Thursday and after 12am Friday and Saturday nights. The two spaces shown along the eastern property line encroach in the driveway and cannot be used/counted.

METRO PCS 3451 DOGWOOD

9 spaces restricted hours (after 7pm)

The spaces located on Parcel ID: 14 009800170310 include eight (8) and one (1) ADA spaces in front of the Metro PCS business located at 3451 Dogwood Drive. This business closes at 7pm. The spaces utilized by this business are available only after 7pm.

675 North Central Ave

7 spaces – also used by Café Belli

There are seven spaces that are available for use. They currently serve as informal overflow for 673 North Central (Café Belli).

PUBLIC PARKING

8 spaces within 400 feet

The spaces located along North Central west of Dogwood Drive are shared spaces within other businesses in the downtown area.

20 spaces within 700 feet

The spaces along King Arnold and along North Central east of Dogwood Drive are shared spaces with the latter heavily used by North Central Avenue businesses.

The property, proposed as an event center and as currently developed, cannot accommodate the required parking spaces for an event center (29 required spaces). Seven shared parking spaces (west end of Parcel ID 14 009800170310) are currently unrestricted, however, they are also used by Café Belli.

The applicant should clarify operating hours to the Board of Appeals to determine the feasibility of shared parking.

Nine additional shared parking spaces are available after 7pm (note the shared parking agreement letter states this agreement can be revoked at any time). Shared parking with 673 North Central does not appear to be an option given Café Belli operating hours and required parking. This brings the off-street shared parking total to 16 parking spaces after 7pm.

The Board of Appeals may consider availability of shared public parking for all businesses and the impact of the event center. There are eight (8) public parking spaces within 400 feet available at North Central Avenue west of Dogwood but are not dedicated to this use. As well, another 20 public (non-dedicated) parking spaces are available along King Arnold and along North Central Avenue east of Dogwood.

Discussion Summary

Commissioner Williams inquired about parking availability for similar businesses in the downtown area.

Commissioner Rockett expressed concerns regarding parking and traffic flow in the neighboring area. She noted that vehicles dropping off or picking up attendees along Dogwood Drive could create congestion and pedestrian safety issues. She suggested implementing limited or staggered arrival times to reduce potential congestion along Dogwood Drive and North Central Avenue.

Chairman Simpson pointed out that Dogwood Drive is a State Highway and suggested that event times begin after 7:00 p.m. with valet services required to help mitigate traffic concerns.

Commissioner Morris asked whether existing shared parking areas could be counted toward the required number of parking spaces.

City Planner, Dr. Lynn Patterson, requested clarification from the applicant regarding the actual number of parking spaces shown on the submitted map and photographs.

The applicant responded that the hours of operation would be 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., noting that the existing business (Café Beli) closes at 11:00 p.m. The layout can accommodate a maximum of 50–60 people. In addition, the applicant stated that the rear lot is planned to be improved and utilized in the future to accommodate additional parking.

Commissioner Williams requested a staff recommendation.

Dr. Patterson noted that there is parking available on the west side of North Central Avenue, and, given the limited hours of operation and anticipated parking demand, staff believes the proposal is acceptable. She stated that while event centers are considered an intensive use, the scale of this operation should not pose a problem.

Commissioner Morris asked whether the Board could require valet services and restrict hours of operation.

Dr. Patterson responded that the location for valet operations would need to be determined.

Commissioner Rockett reiterated concerns about pedestrian and vehicular congestion at the intersection of Dogwood Drive and North Central Avenue.

Commissioner Stell asked about the anticipated timeline for paving the rear parking lot. The applicant stated that improvements would likely be completed by late 2025.

Commissioner Rockett inquired if the Board could impose a limit on the number of attendees.

Dr. Patterson clarified that the Board cannot restrict business occupancy but should instead consider the site's unique conditions, available on-street parking within 400 feet, and relevant public parking options.

Commissioner Stell noted his appreciation for the applicant's good-faith efforts as both a local business owner and resident.

Public Comment:

None.

End of Public Comment.

MOTION ITEM: Jason Morris made a motion to approve the off-site parking arrangement at 3445 Dogwood Drive, provided that the hours of operation for any events are limited to 7:00 p.m. through closing. The motion was seconded by Chase Stell. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0

5. Next Meeting Date – September 25, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

6. Adjourn

MOTION ITEM: Kate Rockett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. The motion was seconded by Melanie Williams. MOTION CARRIED: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted by,

Michael Simpson, Chairman

Adrienne Senter, Secretary