

DeKalb County Zoning Board of Appeals

Department of Planning & Sustainability 178 Sams Street, Decatur, GA 30030

Wednesday June 11, 2025



Cedric Hudson

Interim Director

Lorraine Cochran-Johnson

Planning Department Staff Analysis

Chief Executive Officer

N4. Case No: A-25-1247507 Parcel ID(s): 18 009 17 007

Commission District 04 Super District 06

Applicant: Maksim Saitgazin c/o Battle Law PC

328 Walnut Street Avondale Estates, GA

Owner: Maksim Saitgazin c/o Battle Law PC

328 Walnut Street Avondale Estates, GA

Project Name: 328 Walnut – Side/rear yard setbacks

Location: 328 Walnut Street, Avondale Estates, GA

Requests: Application by Maksim Saitgazin c/o Battle Law PC to request variance from Section 27-3.36.10 of the DeKalb County

Zoning Ordinance to reduce side yard setback from 15 feet to 5.7 feet and rear yard setback 30 feet to 5.9 feet in the

R-75 (Residential Medium Lot-75) zoning district and Scottdale Tier 2 Overlay.

Staff Recommendation: Denial/Board's Discretion

Staff Note (Procedural Clarification)

This case was previously denied by the Zoning Board of Appeals at its February 2025 hearing. Under Section 27-7.1 of the Zoning Ordinance, an application that is substantially the same may not be reheard for a period of two (2) years unless the Board finds that it differs materially and votes to rehear it. Additionally, a minimum of six (6) months must pass before the Board can consider such a vote.

The six-month threshold will not be reached until the August 13, 2025 hearing. Therefore, if the Board wishes to proceed with this case, a first vote is required to determine whether the application is eligible for rehearing under Section 27-7.1. If the Board does not vote to hear it early, the request must be denied procedurally or deferred until eligible.

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STAFF FINDINGS:

The applicant requests a variance from Section 27-3.36.10 of the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance to reduce the side yard setback from 15 feet to 5.7 feet and the rear yard setback from 30 feet to 5.9 feet at 328 Walnut Street.

The subject property is located within the R-75 zoning district and the Scottdale Tier 2 Overlay. The variance request stems from the recent unpermitted enclosure of a porch, which did not expand the building footprint but resulted in new noncompliance with current setback standards.

This case was previously heard and denied by the Zoning Board of Appeals at its February 2025 meeting. The applicant is now represented by Battle Law, who contends that the property's adjacency to the Stone Mountain Trail qualifies it as a corner lot—thereby altering the nature of the original request. Staff maintains its position from the February staff report and notes that this may constitute a resubmittal under Section 27-7.1, which prohibits the rehearing of substantially similar applications within two (2) years unless the request is materially different with the option by the board to vote on rehearing the case, but not within a six (6) month period.

The six-month mark for a potential rehearing would not be reached until the August 13, 2025 ZBA hearing. Deferral of the case may be justified based on this code section. It is at the Board's discretion whether to proceed with the current application.

1. There is an extraordinary or exceptional physical condition(s) pertaining to the particular piece of property (such as, but not limited to, lot size, lot shape, specimen tree(s), steep slope(s), or preservation of historic characteristics of the property), which was not created by the current owner, previous owner, or applicant; by reason of a clearly demonstrable condition(s), the strict application of the requirements of this chapter would deprive the property owner of rights and privileges enjoyed by other property owners in the same zoning district, as distinguished from a special privilege or convenience sought by the property owner.

The subject property measures just 4,021 square feet, which is well below both the 5,000-square-foot minimum lot size required in the Scottdale Tier 2 Overlay and the 10,000-square-foot minimum for the R-75 zoning district. Additionally, it is a corner lot, which increases required setback distances and significantly reduces buildable area. These factors create a physical limitation that is not self-created and is unique compared to neighboring parcels, which are generally larger and more regularly shaped.

2. The requested variance does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief, and does not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the zoning district in which the subject property is located:

The variance request is limited in scope and seeks to legalize an enclosed porch that although constructed without a permit or variance, did not expand the home's footprint. The proposed setbacks reflect existing conditions and do not involve new construction or further encroachment into the yard. In this context, the applicant is not requesting a variance to build more, but rather to bring the current structure into legal conformity with zoning standards.

3. The grant of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zoning district in which the subject property is located:

The subject parcel is already developed with a single-family residence. A letter of support from the owner of 327 North Clarendon Avenue was submitted. There is no indication of negative effects related to stormwater, privacy, noise, or traffic.

4. The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable provisions or requirements of this chapter would cause undue and unnecessary hardship:

Strict application of the zoning ordinance would require the removal or redesign of a porch enclosure. This creates an unnecessary burden, especially considering the smaller than required lot size and its location on a corner, which further constrains buildable space.

The home itself predates the adoption of the overlay and may predate the DeKalb County Zoning code The setback conflict is a result of regulatory change rather than owner misconduct.

5. The requested variance would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of this Chapter and the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan Text:

The subject property lies within the Traditional Neighborhood (TN) character area, where the Comprehensive Plan encourages reinvestment, preservation of neighborhood character, and modest infill that enhances livability without increasing density or impervious surface. Enclosing the porch to improve functionality, while maintaining the existing footprint and architectural style, supports these goals. The project contributes to neighborhood stability and aligns with the Comprehensive Plan's housing objectives by providing additional livable space in a manner consistent with the existing built environment.

The Tier 2 Overlay and zoning ordinance similarly promote housing rehabilitation and sensitive retrofits in legacy neighborhoods such as Scottdale. Legalizing modest improvements that reinforce walkability and scale without altering use or intensity reflects the intent of these policies.

FINAL STAFF ANALYSIS:

Staff recommends denial of the variance request and **board's discretion on the ability to hear it early**. On its merits, the request meets hardship criteria and reflects minimal impact. However, staff is concerned that this application may violate the 12-month rehearing rule under Section 27-7.1. If confirmed, the Board may be unable to act on the request unless a formal motion is made to permit early reconsideration. A deferral would allow time for procedural clarification; otherwise, a denial may be necessary on technical grounds.

Staff Recommendation: Denial/Board's Discretion



Development Services Center 178 Sams Street Decatur, GA 30030 www.dekalbcountyga.gov/planning 404-371-2155 (o); 404-371-4556 (f)

Chief Executive Officer
Michael Thurmond

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

Interim Director Cedric Hudson

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION FOR PUBLIC HEARING (VARIANCES, SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS, APPEALS OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS)

Applicant and/or Authorized Representative:				
Mailing Address:				
City/State/Zip Code:				
Email:				
Telephone Home:	Business:			
OWNER (OF RECORD OF SUBJECT PROPERT	Υ		
Owner:	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			
Address (Mailing):	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
Email:	Telephone Home:	Business:		
ADDRESS	S/LOCATION OF SUBJECT PROPERT	Υ		
Address:	City:	State: Zip:		
District(s): Land Lot	t(s): Block:	Parcel: <u>18 009 17 0</u> 07		
Zoning Classification: Commission District & Super District:				
CHECK TYPE OF HEARING REQUESTED) :			
VARIANCE (From Development Standards causing undue hardship upon owners of property.)				
SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS (To reduce or waive off-street parking or loading space requirements.)				
OFFICIAL APPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS.				

PLEASE REVIEW THE FILING GUIDELINES ON PAGE 4. FAILURE TO FOLLOW GUIDELINES MAY RESULT IN SCHEDULING DELAYS.

Email plansustain@dekalbcountyga.gov with any questions.



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION

AUTHORIZATION TO REPRESENT THE PROPERTY OWNER

I hereby authorize the staff and members of the Zoning Board of Appeals to inspect the premises of the Subject Property.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

I hereby certify that I am the owner of the property and that I authorize the applicant/agent to apply for a hearing to the ZoningBoard of Appeals for the requests as shown in this application.

nearing to the ZoningBoa	ard of Appeals for the requests	as snown in this application.
DATE:	Applicant/Agent Signature:	ID mJMghefEW7ieiph7EDW9VqNi
TO WHOM IT MAY CON	CERN:	
(I)/ (WE): (Name of Owners)		
being (owner/owners) of signed agent/applicant.	the property described below	or attached hereby delegate authority to the above
Notary Public		Owner Signature
Notary Public		Owner Signature
Notary Public		Owner Signature



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION

AUTHORIZATION OF THE PROPERTY OWNER

I hereby authorize the staff and members of the Zoning Board of Appeals to inspect the premises of the Subject Property.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

I hereby certify that I am the owner of the property subject to the application.

DATE:	Applicant Signature:	ID mJMqhefEW7ieiph7EDW9VqNi
DATE:	ApplicantSignature:	



STATEMENT OF INTENT

and

Other Material Required by
DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance
For
A Variance for/to
Reduce the Side Yard Setback from 15' to 5.7' and the Rear Yard Setback from 30' to 5.9'

of

Maksim Saitgazin c/o Battle Law, P.C.

for

+/-0.08 Acres of Land
Being 328 Walnut Street
DeKalb County, Georgia and
Parcel Nos. 18 009 17 007

Submitted for Applicant by:

Michèle L. Battle, Esq.
Battle Law, P.C.
Habersham at Northlake, Building J, Suite 100
Tucker, Georgia 300384
(404) 601-7616 Phone
(404) 745-0045 Facsimile
mlb@battlelawpc.com



I. LETTER OF INTENT

Maksim Saitgazin (the "Applicant") is owns a home on +/- 0.08 acres of land being Tax Parcel No. 18 009 17 007 having frontage on 328 Walnut Street (the "Subject Property") with a single-family detached home. The Applicant is seeking a variance of the Subject Property to reduce the side yard setback from 15' to 5.7' and the rear yard setback from 30' to 5.9'.

This document serves as a statement of intent, analysis of the criteria under the [Applicable Criteria] and contains notice of constitutional allegations as a reservation of the Applicant's rights.

II. DEKALB COUNTY VARIANCE CRITERIA

1. There is an extraordinary or exceptional physical condition pertaining to the particular piece of property, which was not created by the current owner, previous owner, or applicant; by reason of a clearly demonstrable condition, the strict application of the requirements of this chapter would deprive the property owner of rights and privileges enjoyed by other property owners in the same zoning district, as distinguished from a special privilege or convenience sought by the property owner;

The Subject Property is zoned R-75 in Tier II of the Scottdale Overlay district. The R-75 district minimum lot size is 10,000 sqft. but Tier II of the Scottdale Overlay district allows for lots to have a minimum of just 5,000 sqft. The Subject Property is 4,021 sqft. Nearly 1,000 sqft. smaller than the minimum lot size under Tier II of the Scottdale Overlay district and nearly 6,000 sqft. smaller than the minimum lot size under the R-75 district. This is clearly demonstrable on the County's GIS map which shows the Subject Property being almost half the size of the other lots on the same block. Additionally, the Subject Property is a corner lot as defined by the DeKalb County Code of Ordinances. As such, the Subject Property is subject to increased setbacks, specifically the side corner lot setback of 15'. Combined with the small size of the lot, these factors significantly impact the Applicant's ability to use the Subject Property. Furthermore, the exceptionally small size of the Subject Property is not the result of action by the Applicant or a prior owner.

2. The requested variance does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief and does not constitute a grant of special privilege consistent with the limitations upon other properties in the zoning district tin which the subject property is located;

The requested variances do not go beyond the minimum to afford relief. The site plan shows that the existing building comes within 5.7 feet of the northern property line and 5.9 feet of the western property line. The requested variances will reduce the setbacks to those distances and no more.

3. The grant of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zoning district in which the subject property is located;

3562 Habersham at Northlake • Building J, Suite 100 • Tucker, Georgia 30084 • Ph: 404.601.7616



The grant of the variances will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zoning district. The Subject Property is already developed with a single-family detached home. The reduced variances will accommodate the building as it is. The Applicant recently enclosed a porch on the northern side of the Subject Property but did not move the building any closer to Walnut Street. So, the variances requested will not in any way affect the surrounding properties. Rather, the variances will simply accommodate the building as it exists today.

4. The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable provisions or requirements of this chapter would cause undue and unnecessary hardship;

The strict application of the provisions and requirements would create an undue and unnecessary hardship. The small size of the lot combined with the regulations that accompany corner lots make the Subject Property untenable for use. The hardship is the result of the size of the property and the regulations as applied. The strict application of those requirements would be unjust.

5. The requested variance would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of this chapter and the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan text.

The requested variances would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of this chapter and the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan.

III. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant hereby requests that the application for a variance to reduce the side yard setback from 15' to 5.7' and the rear yard setback from 30' to 5.9' be approved. The Applicant welcomes any questions and feedback from the planning staff.

IV. NOTICE OF CONSTITUTIONAL ALLEGATIONS AND PRESERVATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

The portions of the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance, facially and as applied to the Subject Property, which restrict or classify or may restrict or classify the Subject Property so as to prohibit its development as proposed by the Applicant are or would be unconstitutional in that they would destroy the Applicant's property rights without first paying fair, adequate and just compensation for such rights, in violation of the Fifth Amendment and Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and Article I, Section I, Paragraph I of the Constitution of the State of Georgia of 1983, Article I, Section III, Paragraph I of the Constitution of the State of Georgia of 1983, and would be in violation of the Commerce Clause, Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States.



The application of the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance to the Subject Property which restricts its use to any classification other than that proposed by the Applicant is unconstitutional, illegal, null and void, constituting a taking of Applicant's Property in violation of the Just Compensation Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, Article I, Section I, Paragraph I, and Article I, Section III, Paragraph I of the Constitution of the State of Georgia of 1983, and the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States denying the Applicant an economically viable use of its land while not substantially advancing legitimate state interests.

A denial of this Application would constitute an arbitrary irrational abuse of discretion and unreasonable use of the zoning power because they bear no substantial relationship to the public health, safety, morality or general welfare of the public and substantially harm the Applicant in violation of the due process and equal protection rights guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment and Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, and Article I, Section I, Paragraph I and Article I, Section III, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution of the State of Georgia.

A refusal by the DeKalb County Zoning Board of Appeals to amend the land use and/or rezone the Subject Property to the classification as requested by the Applicant would be unconstitutional and discriminate in an arbitrary, capricious and unreasonable manner between the Applicant and owners of similarly situated property in violation of Article I, Section I, Paragraph II of the Constitution of the State of Georgia of 1983 and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Any Variance of the Property subject to conditions which are different from the conditions requested by the Applicant, to the extent such different conditions would have the effect of further restricting Applicant's utilization of the property, would also constitute an arbitrary, capricious and discriminatory act in zoning the Subject Property to an unconstitutional classification and would likewise violate each of the provisions of the State and Federal Constitutions set forth hereinabove.

A refusal to allow the land use amendment and/or variance in questions would be unjustified from a fact-based standpoint and instead would result only from constituent opposition, which would be an unlawful delegation of authority in violation of Article IX, Section II, Paragraph IV of the Georgia Constitution.

A refusal to allow the land use amendment and/or variance in question would be invalid inasmuch as it would be denied pursuant to an ordinance which is not in compliance with the Zoning Procedures Law, O.C.G.A Section 36-66/1 et seq., due to the manner in which the Ordinance as a whole and its map(s) have been adopted.

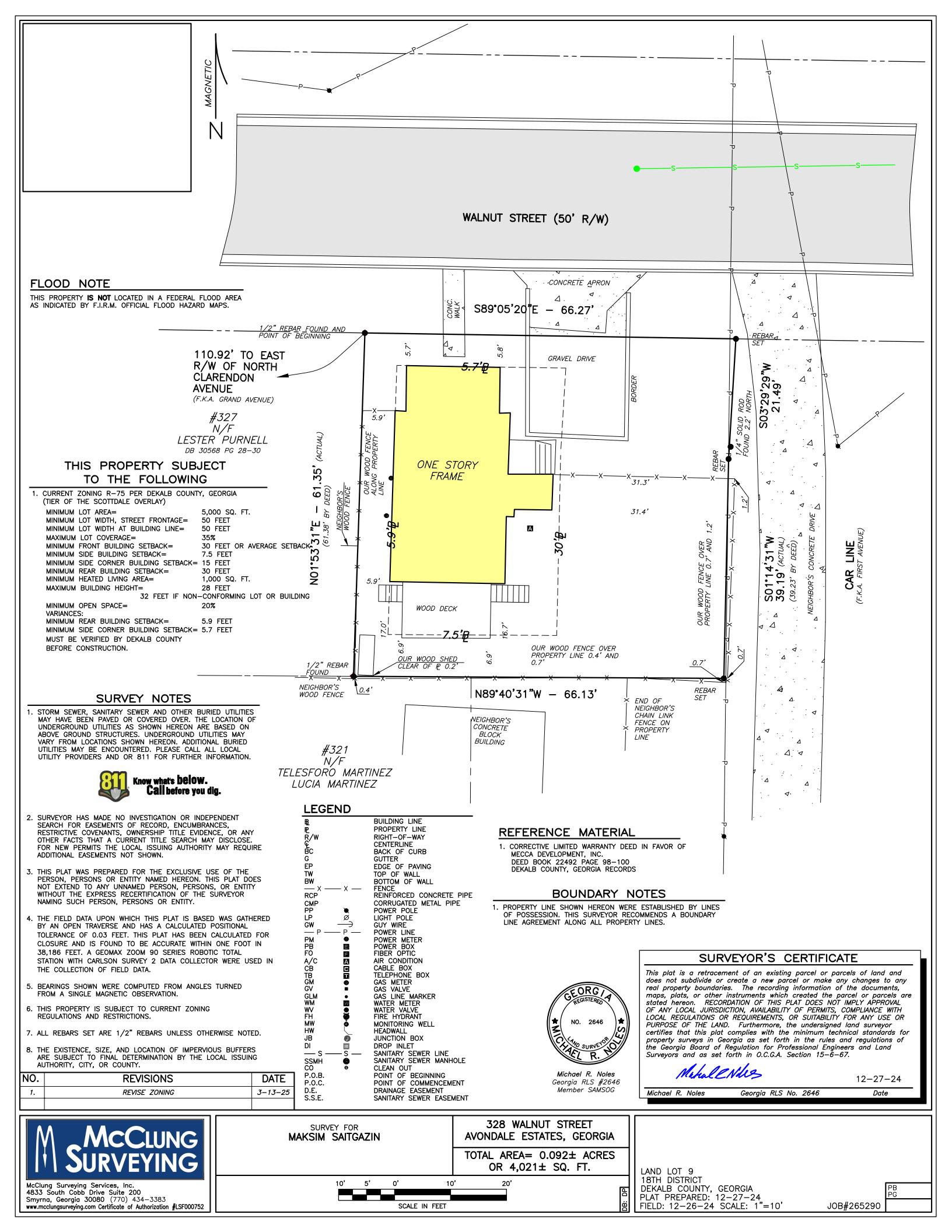
The existing land use designation and/or zoning classification on the Subject Property is unconstitutional as it applies to the Subject Property. This notice is being given to comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. Section 36-11-1 to afford the County an opportunity to revise the Property to a constitutional classification. If action is not taken by the County to rectify this unconstitutional land use designation and/or zoning classification within a reasonable time, the Applicant is hereby placing the County on notice that it may elect to file a claim in the Superior Court of DeKalb County demanding just and adequate compensation under Georgia law for the



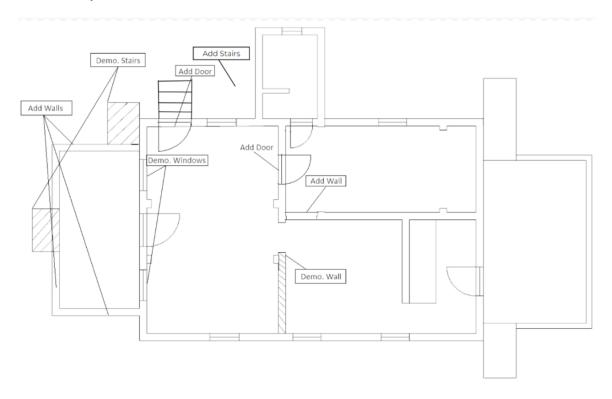
taking of the Subject Property, diminution of value of the Subject Property, attorney's fees and other damages arising out of the unlawful deprivation of the Applicant's property rights.

Michele L. Battle, Esq. Attorney for the Applicant

MLB



A 1.4 Proposed Plan: Scale 1" = 6.25'



Purnell Lester

327 N Clarendon Ave, Scottdale, GA 30079 Scottdale, GA 30079

12/20/2024

Zoning Board or Planning Commission

Dear Members of the Zoning Board,

I, Purnell Lester, owner of the property located at 327 N Clarendon Ave, Scottdale, GA 30079, am writing to express my support for the variance request submitted by my neighbor, Maksim Saitgazin, for the property at 328 Walnut St, Scottdale, GA 30079.

I understand that the request involves enclosing the porch, and after discussing the matter with Mr. Saitgazin, I have no objections to the proposed change. I believe that this request will not have a negative impact on my property or the surrounding neighborhood.

Thank you for considering this letter of support.

Sincerely,

Punnell Cesten



