# MEETING OF THE BEECHER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

**Thursday, September 24, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.**

Beecher Village Hall, 625 Dixie Highway, Beecher, Illinois

## I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Schuitema called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Commissioners Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

Members Absent: None.

**Staff Present:** Village Administrator Charity Mitchell, Public Works Superintendent Matt Conner, and Pete Iosue.

**Guests:** President Meyer and Trustee Tieri.

## III. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 20, 2026 MEETING

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the August 20, 2026 meeting. No additions, deletions, or corrections were requested. Commissioner Heim motioned to approve the minutes of the August 2026 meeting. Commissioner Serviss seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Heim.

Motion carried.

## IV. RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC

None.

## V. PUBLIC HEARING - CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST FOR A SPECIAL USE TO OPERATE A PARAMEDICAL TATTOOING BUSINESS IN THE B-3 BUSINESS DISTRICT AT THE PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS 715 DIXIE HIGHWAY.

Commissioner Serviss made a motion to open the public hearing at 6:02PM and Commissioner Hearn seconded.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

The petitioner, Margarita Vega-Suarez, explained that the proposed business would provide paramedical and restorative tattooing rather than conventional artistic tattooing. Services would include camouflage of

surgical scars and other scars and reconstructive areola tattooing for patients who have undergone mastectomies.

Pete Iosue explained that tattoo establishments are classified as a special use in the B-3 Business District so each proposed business can be reviewed individually. He stated that he had no objection to the proposed use and recommended that any approval require compliance with all applicable State of Illinois licensing and operational requirements.

The Commission asked whether the petitioner would lease the premises and who owned the property. The petitioner stated that the property was believed to be owned by Dr. DeForest. No additional concerns were raised by the Commission or the public.

Commissioner Heim made a motion to close the public hearing at 6:04PM. Commissioner Serviss seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

## VI. RECOMMENDATION - CONSIDER A MOTION OF RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE BOARD REGARDING A REQUEST FOR A SPECIAL USE TO OPERATE A PARAMEDICAL TATTOOING BUSINESS IN THE B-3 BUSINESS DISTRICT AT THE PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS 715 DIXIE HIGHWAY.

Commissioner Serviss made a motion to recommend approval of the requested special use to the Village Board, subject to compliance with all applicable State of Illinois laws and regulations. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

The Commission advised the petitioner that the recommendation would proceed to the Village Board and explained the anticipated timing for approval.

## VII. PUBLIC HEARING - CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST FOR A VARIANCE FROM THE FENCE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO PERMIT A FENCE WITHIN THE FRONT YARD AREA OF A CORNER LOT IN THE R-1A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT AT THE PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS 1569 SAWGRASS.

Commissioner Heim made a motion to open the public hearing at 6:06PM. Commissioner Eich seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

Pete Iosue explained that a corner lot is treated as having two front yards because both street-facing sides are subject to front-yard requirements intended primarily to preserve visibility. The petitioner requested permission to place the fence farther forward along the side of the home than the ordinance permits. The proposed location would generally align with fences on neighboring properties and remain approximately 16 feet from the sidewalk.

The petitioner stated that moving the fence forward would provide enough room for a riding lawn mower and allow more of the usable backyard to be enclosed. She indicated that the fence would not be a solid privacy fence and would allow wind to pass through it. Iosue stated that the unusual setback of the house substantially limits the area that can be enclosed under the current ordinance and that the proposed fence would not obstruct intersection visibility.

Chairman Schuitema read into the record a written objection from a nearby resident. The letter expressed concerns regarding neighborhood appearance, consistent application of the fence standards, and the safety of motorists, pedestrians, and children near the intersection. A second anonymous written objection raised similar concerns regarding visibility, aesthetics, and equal treatment of other homeowners.

Staff displayed the proposed fence location and clarified that the phrase "front yard" was a technical zoning designation resulting from the corner lot. The fence would enclose the side and rear yard rather than the area ordinarily understood as the home's front yard. After reviewing the distance from the sidewalk and stop sign, the Commission concluded that the proposal would not create a visibility obstruction. Staff also noted that forthcoming zoning amendments may provide clearer administrative standards for similar corner-lot fences.

Commissioner Serviss made a motion to close the public hearing at 6:16PM. Commissioner Hearn seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATION - CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE BOARD FOR A REQUEST FOR A VARIANCE FROM THE FENCE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO PERMIT A FENCE WITHIN THE SECOND FRONT YARD AREA OF A CORNER LOT IN THE R-1A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT AT THE PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS 1569 SAWGRASS.

Commissioner Heim made a motion to recommend approval of the requested fence variance at 1569 Sawgrass to the Village Board. Commissioner Eich seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

## IX. PUBLIC HEARING - CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST FOR A VARIATION FROM THE MINIMUM FLOOR AREA REQUIREMENTS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO PERMIT THE CONSTRUCTION OF 1,499-SQUARE-FOOT HOMES IN THE R-1A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT AT THE PROPERTIES COMMONLY KNOWN AS 648 & 652 PENFIELD STREET.

Commissioner Serviss made a motion to open the public hearing at 6:18PM. Commissioner Hearn seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

Dennis Dooley of Vulcan Builders appeared in support of the request to construct 1,499 square-foot homes on the two lots. Dooley stated that a 2,000-square-foot home would be substantially larger than many homes in the surrounding neighborhood and, at current construction costs, would likely be priced beyond the intended entry-level market. He described the proposed homes as quality residences with basements, future expansion potential, and exterior materials selected to complement the neighborhood.

Pete Iosue stated that the minimum floor-area requirements were carried forward from the prior zoning ordinance. Since this was the first such variance request that staff could recall, the zoning review committee had favored leaving the existing standard in place and considering unusual sites individually. Pete Iosue stated that the applicant had presented a practical economic and neighborhood-compatibility argument for these particular lots.

Commissioner Barber requested that approval be conditioned on construction substantially consistent with the exterior elevations presented to the Commission. Dooley explained that the first-floor street-facing facades would use brick or stone. Board-and-batten siding was proposed for a second-floor portion, with conventional siding in smaller areas where board-and-batten would not be practical.

Commissioners also discussed site grading and the history of drainage and flooding near the creek. Dooley stated that his engineer had revised and resubmitted the site plans in response to comments from the Village's third-party engineer. He explained that a nine-foot basement was proposed for 648 Penfield, while the second home would not have a nine-foot basement, and stated that the final design and elevations would comply with the engineering review.

Several commissioners stated that the proposed floor area was compatible with the older surrounding neighborhood. The Commission emphasized that the substantial reduction from the 2,000-square-foot requirement should be evaluated in light of the specific location and circumstances and should not be treated as an automatic precedent for other developments.

Commissioner Eich made a motion to close the public hearing at 6:27PM. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioner Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

## X. RECOMMENDATION - CONSIDER A MOTION OF RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE BOARD REGARDING A REQUEST FOR A VARIATION FROM THE MINIMUM FLOOR AREA REQUIREMENTS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 1,499 SQUARE-FOOT HOMES IN THE R-1A RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT AT THE PROPERTIES COMMONLY KNOWN AS 648 & 652 PENFIELD STREET.

Commissioner Barber made a motion to recommend approval of the requested minimum floor-area variance to the Village Board, subject to the condition that the first-floor street-facing facade of each home be constructed with brick or stone substantially consistent with the elevations presented. Commissioner Hearn seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioner Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: Commissioner Heim.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

## XI. DISCUSSION – PROPERTY LOCATED ACROSS FROM DEJONG EQUIPMENT. THIS LOT IS BEING USED TO DISPLAY AGRICULTURE EQUIPMENT. THE OWNERS BELIEVE THEY HAD AN AG EXEMPTION FROM A PREVIOUS AGREEMENT.

The Commission discussed the B-3-zoned property across from DeJong Equipment that is used to display agricultural equipment. The owner had questioned whether the property previously received an agricultural exemption after a significant increase in the property's tax assessment.

Commissioner Barber recalled that the Village granted a special use in approximately 2015 allowing implements of husbandry to be displayed on the commercially zoned property. Conditions included maintaining and mowing the property and obtaining prior approval for lighting or signage. The Commission found no indication that the property had been rezoned to an agricultural district or that the Village had recently changed its zoning status.

The Commission discussed the distinction between Village zoning and county property-tax assessment. Iosue explained that the assessor may consider the property's actual use regardless of its municipal zoning classification. Members concluded that rezoning the property would not necessarily reduce the tax bill and that the owner should continue addressing the assessment with the appropriate assessing authority. No formal action was taken.

## XII. DISCUSSION - STEERING COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

Iosue reported that the steering committee had reviewed several minor zoning ordinance issues earlier in the day. He will prepare a redlined draft of the affected sections and circulate it to the committee to confirm that the proposed changes accurately reflect the discussion. The draft amendments are expected to return to the full Commission for discussion at a future meeting, potentially in October. No formal action was taken.

## XIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regular Planning and Zoning Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

## XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Barber raised concerns regarding an ice cream truck operating in the Village without the required Village and health permits. Staff stated that the operator had previously been directed to leave and agreed that the matter should be referred for enforcement.

The Commission also discussed a residential property on Catalpa Street where baked goods and other food products were reportedly being offered for sale from the front porch during posted business hours. Pete Iosue explained that the home-occupation provisions allow limited office-type activity but do not permit retail food sales from a residence. The matter was identified for code-enforcement review.

Members noted with approval that plans had been submitted for the former Buchmeier building on Penfield Street. Staff reported that the proposal included office space on the first floor and two apartments on the second floor.

Staff reported that underground tanks had been removed from the former gas station and that the State Fire Marshal's Office had contacted the Village regarding nearby municipal wells. Direct communication with the property owner remained limited.

Chairman Schuitema raised concerns regarding extensive firewood stored along residential driveways. Members discussed the prohibition on open storage in front yards and referred the concern for code-enforcement review.

President Meyer reported on Chamber of Commerce and Lions Club discussions concerning improvements at Woman’s Welfare Park, including possible gazebo replacement and community landscaping. She also discussed involving a local horticulture professional or youth participants in planting and maintenance.

Chairman Schuitema announced that a celebration of life for longtime community member Chuck Hoehn would be held Sunday from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Firemen's Park. Members recognized his many years of service to local organizations.

## XV. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Heim made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:47PM. Commissioner Eich seconded the motion.

AYES: Commissioners Barber, Eich, Gardner, Hearn, Heim, Schuitema, and Serviss.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

Motion carried.

*The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:47PM*

Respectfully submitted,

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**Heidi Demas, Deputy Clerk / PZC Secretary**
Village of Beecher