

Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Florence County Board of Zoning Appeals
Tuesday, August 19, 2025
Florence County Complex, Room 803
180 N. Irby St., Florence, South Carolina 29501

Florence County Planning Department staff posted the agenda for the meeting at the following locations:

- The County's Website
- Information Board / Main Entrance of the County Complex (180 N Irby St, Florence)
- Information Board / Main Lobby of the County Planning & Building Dept (518 S Irby St, Florence)
- Elevator Landings / 1st Floor and 8th Floor of the County Complex
- The agenda was also mailed to the media.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Brian Casey called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

II. Attendance:

Board Members Present: Chairman Brian Casey
 Craig Floyd
 Wesley Martin
 Kenneth Muldrow
 Louie Hopkins
 Jessica Wright

Board Members Absent: Vice-Chairman Brenda Deas

Staff Present: Mr. Ethan Brown, Deputy Director
 Mr. J. Shawn Brashear, Planning Director
 Ms. Lisa Becoat, Administrative Assistance
 Ms. Holly Smith, Secretary
 Ms. Caroline Dunlap, Planner III
 Patrick Ward, IT Dept Staff

Staff Absent: Mr. Malloy McEachin, County Attorney

Public Attendance: See sign-in sheet on file at the Florence County Planning Department.

III. Review and motion of the minutes:

- Minutes of the BZA Meeting of July 15th, 2025

Motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Louie Hopkins/
 Ms. Jessica Wright **Seconded** the Motion. All were in favor.

The minutes of the July 15, 2025 BZA Meeting were unanimously approved 6 to 0.

IV. Public Hearing:

BZA#2025-07

A variance requested by Christina James from requirements of the Florence County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 30 - ZONING ORDINANCE, ARTICLE V. - SIGN REGULATIONS, Sec. 30-202. - Signs on private property. Table VIII: Number, Dimension, and Location of Permitted Signs, by Zoning District. For property located at 2491 Florence Harllee Boulevard, Florence, SC 29506, as shown on Florence County Tax Map Number 00236, Block 01, Parcel 038.

Chairman Brian Casey invited Mr. Ethan Brown to the podium to present the staff report for this item to the Board. A copy of the report and presentation are available at the Florence County Planning Department and on the Florence County website at: <http://florenceco.org/planning/bza/archives.php>.

Mr. Brown stated to the Board that the request for this variance was made by Christina James representing the Sign Connection, who was authorized by the property owner to make the variance request. He explained that the requested variance was for the new Cheney Bros building within the Pee Dee Commerce City West Industrial Park located off of SC 327 at Interstate 95, Exit 170 and the specific address for the site was 2491 Florence Harllee Blvd. He stated the request was more specifically for the property bearing Florence county tax map number 00236-01-038 which, he described as being approximately 44 acres in size and being owned by Cheney Bros Inc. Mr. Brown stated to the board that the variance requested would allow the applicant to exceed the maximum number of allowed building wall signs within the B-6, Industrial zoning district and obtain a certificate of zoning compliance for two (2) additional building wall signs, bringing the total number of building wall signs to four (4).

Mr. Brown went on to explain to the Board that the background provided within the staff report gave some detailed information regarding the height, width, and square footage of the signs and these details may have given the Board the idea that the applicant was asking for a lot with this variance request, but he explained that those details were all well within the bounds set by the ordinance and the only issue at hand this evening was the number of building wall signs they wished to place on the building. He explained that only two (2) building wall signs are allowed within the B-6, Industrial zoning district, but the applicant was requesting a total of four (4). Mr. Brown then presented several maps regarding the subject property of the variance request including a vicinity map and a zoning map that he noted showed the subject property being surrounded by the B-6, heavy industrial zoning with the exception of some B-3, Commercial areas that were across Interstate 95 that he described as the Bucees' property. He also presented an aerial map of the property that showed the footprint of the Cheney Bros building, as it was captured at the beginning of construction of the building. The next map he presented was a layout map that included an overlay of the site plan as well as the proposed locations of the building wall signs. He explained that the applicant had already received a sign permit for two of the signs shown on the layout map and he pointed those out to the Board. He then highlighted the other two proposed sign points as being the two additional signs the applicant was requesting in the variance request. With that, he also noted the pictures included on the layout map of those two additional building wall signs being requested. He gave a brief description of the general size, shape and content of the two additional signs being requested.

Mr. Brown further explained that the applicant had procured a letter of approval for the two additional building wall signs from Mr. Greg Robinson, the Executive Director of Florence County Economic Development. Mr. Brown then reviewed the call log for this item, noting that only one person had called from a nearby industry to merely inquire about the posted yellow sign on the property. (A copy of comments and inquiries *if received* are maintained at the Florence County Planning and Building Department for inspection during regular business hours.)

Next, Mr. Brown read aloud to the Board, the answers the applicant provided on their variance application [form 3]. Mr. Brown presented all information/photos compiled by staff and provided by the applicant. He also noted that public notice of the variance request was posted on the property, letters were mailed to adjacent property owners and notice of the meeting and copies of the agenda were posted in public places per the requirements set forth in the Florence County Code of Ordinances.

At the conclusion of the Staff presentation, there were no questions and no further discussion from the board.

Chairman Brian Casey proceeded to inquire if there was anyone from the public in attendance who desired to speak in favor of the requested variance request.

Mrs. Stephanie Grosick, the Vice President of Business Development at the Florence County Economic Development Partnership was in attendance and approached the Board to speak in favor of the variance request. Mrs. Grosick stated she wanted to provide a little more context for the Board. She stated her office has worked really closely with Cheney Bros in their arrival to the Florence area and their development represents a \$66 million dollar investment, the creation of 280 jobs in the community and poses a very exciting investment for Florence County. She explained to the Board that the very large, 380,000 sq. ft. facility had a unique, butterfly layout and this layout would house various types of food storage/distributions facilities needed for their operations. She explained to the Board that the sheer size, coupled with the unique layout calls for more signage to ensure truck drivers, visitors, and employees could properly and safely identify/access the building. Mrs. Grosick ended by thanking the Board for the opportunity to speak in favor of the matter.

Chairman Brian Casey proceeded to inquire if there was anyone else, in attendance, who would like to speak in favor of the variance request. There were no other members of the public in attendance who spoke in favor of the requested variance.

Chairman Brian Casey then inquired if there was anyone in attendance who desired to speak in opposition to the variance request. There were no members of the public in attendance who stood to speak in opposition to the requested variance request.

Chairman Brian Casey, along with the other Board Members in attendance then moved to discussion. The Board agreed that the property's double road frontage, and vicinity to the Interstate created a unique situation that could be alleviated with the requested variance. There was also mention from the Board that including the extra building wall signs would improve the safety of those utilizing the facility and would bring no substantial detriment to neighboring properties or negatively impact the character of the industrial park. At this time, there were no other questions posed; or discussions held by any of the Board Members or Staff in attendance.

Motion – Mr. Wesley Martin made a motion that BZA #2025-07 be approved as presented, granting the allowance of two additional building wall signs for the Cheney Bros Building/ Mr. Louie Hopkins seconded the motion to approve. All were in favor. The motion carried with a vote of 6 to 0 to approve BZA #2025-07.

Chairman Brian Casey closed the Public Hearing.

V. Other Business

Mr. Casey proposed that in order to help alleviate time conflicts among Board members, future monthly BZA meetings should be moved up to 6PM rather than the current start time of 6:30PM. There were no issues posed by this suggestion and all of the Board was in favor of the proposed time change of the monthly BZA meeting from 6:30PM to 6PM.

Motion – Mr. Mr. Louie Hopkins made a motion that all future monthly BZA meetings shall begin at 6PM/Mr. Kenneth Muldrow seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried with a vote of 6 to 0 to move start time of monthly BZA meetings to 6PM.

VI. Adjournment

There being no other business, questions, or discussion, Chairman Brian Casey adjourned the meeting at 6:44PM.

Holly Smith, BZA Secretary

Approved by:

Ethan Brown, Deputy Director of Planning & Building

**These minutes reflect only actions taken and do not represent a true verbatim transcript of the meeting.*