

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING
GOODLETTSVILLE BOARD OF ZONING AND SIGN APPEALS

January 6, 2026
5:00 p.m.

Goodlettsville City Hall
Massie Chambers-Auditorium

Present: Chairman Stuart Huffman, Larry Jones, and Scott O'Brien.

Absent: Commissioner Jimmy D. Anderson

Also Present: Addam McCormick (Staff), Tim Ellis-City Manager, Russell Freeman-City Attorney, and Sharon Reed (Staff).

Chairman Huffman called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and declared a quorum.

Approval of December 2, 2025 Meeting Minutes: Jones made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2025 meeting, O'Brien seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

AGENDA

Item #1 Lucas Thomas, Property Owner: Requests an administrative appeal of a Zoning Ordinance notice regarding fencing at 606 Alta Loma Drive per Zoning Ordinance Section 14-208 (1)(b). The 1.03-acre property referenced as Davidson County Tax Map/Parcel# 03401000700 is zoned R-15, Medium Density Residential.

Staff Discussion:

- The fence installed at the above referenced property is a six (6') foot wood fence that extends in front of the two (2) family detached residential dwelling unit (duplex) on the property.
- The City's Zoning Ordinance Section 14-208 (1) (b) limits solid type fences in the front of the property to four (4) feet in height.
- The property owner/appeal applicant was sent a Zoning Ordinance violation on November 3, 2025 regarding the solid fence installation in the front of the property.
- The applicant requests an administrative appeal of the notice due to the Zoning Ordinance section not including an open fence definition.
- The applicant has requested a minimum percentage of visibility for a fence to meet the open fence definition.
- The applicant's appeal is also based on the fence installation design with visibility. Staff presented Zoning Ordinance Sections: 14-208 (1)(b) Fences, walls and hedges, and 14-213 (7)(d)(i) Powers of the Board.
- Motion Option-To approve the administrative appeal to maintain the existing fence based on the referenced Zoning Ordinance section not including a definition of an open fence and the design of the fence installation at the property as determined by the Board during the meeting. If the appeal is approved, staff will present an amendment to the City's Planning Commission and City Commission to include an open fence definition to prevent similar issues with future fence installations.

- Motion Option-To deny the administrative appeal request and require alterations to the existing fence for the fence to be classified as an open fence based on the existing installation being a violation of the referenced Zoning Ordinance section as determined by the Board during the meeting.
- Motion Option-To defer the request for the applicant to provide additional information as determined by the Board during the meeting.

Applicant: Lucas Thomas

- Thomas discussed the ambiguity and his intent of the ordinance.
- Thomas discussed the 13-foot driveway opening providing clear, unobstructed visibility from the fence to the property.
- Thomas stated the intent of the ordinance is to preserve visibility, safety and neighborhood compatibility along the street frontage and feels when you consider the driveway opening the fence meets that intent.
- Thomas stated once the violation was issued, he halted any gate construction and during that period before any gate can be installed; a vehicle was stolen from his property.
- Thomas stated that his appeal is based solely on the fact that the ordinance does not contain a definition of open fence and that reasonable interpretations can differ in the absence of unclear standards.

Huffman opened the Public Hearing for Citizen Comments:

No one requested to speak.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Board Discussion:

- Attorney Freeman asked Thomas, "Did you seek the advice of anybody from planning and zoning before building the fence?"
- Thomas responded he did, and they had agreed on a concept that seemed to fit somebody else's interpretation of an open style fence and the windstorm took it out.
- Thomas discussed building this fence with the 13-foot gap due to the ambiguity of the ordinance.
- Thomas stated that there are no standards of what constituted open versus solid.
- Thomas stated that Mr. McCormick could not tell him what was open versus solid just an interpretation.
- Attorney Freeman asked Thomas if the advice given by Mr. McCormick was okay to build a 6-foot solid fence?
- Thomas responded he did not tell me that the second fence I built was okay we talked about the first fence that got blown away.
- Attorney Freeman commented a reasonable interpretation of something is what an ordinary person would think open means and solid means so what do you interpret an open fence to be?
- Thomas responded if you look up the definitions of open fence there's all sorts like visibility, light to go through the individual planks and there are percentages that have to be deemed as open versus not open so there's ambiguity across the definition.
- Attorney Freeman commented if there was such an ambiguity why was there not a subsequent inquiry with Mr.

- McCormick to say I want to build a 6-foot solid wooden fence in my front yard with an open gate.
- Thomas responded they talked about originally putting up a solid gate with the other fence he had and Mr. McCormick said that was okay so he figured that opening up the gate portion would suffice if the fence was more of a solid look.
- Thomas commented that there's really nothing in the ordinance that says the opening cannot count as a driveway entrance.
- Thomas stated that interpretation is why we are here because the ordinance is not clear and an open fence is not defined.
- Huffman stated we're here on your appeal. We're not here to rewrite the ordinance.
- Huffman explained they look at the ordinance and base the appeal on the ordinance.
- Huffman stated it is not vague that a solid fence has to be 4 feet and not 6 feet.
- Huffman stated they are not going to argue whether or not that's open face or that's solid that's not for them to interpret the ordinance.
- Huffman stated the ordinance says 4 feet in height and this is 6 feet in height.
- Huffman discussed what the ordinance stated, and they are not here to rewrite the ordinance right now.
- O'Brien discussed limitations with emergency service regarding solid fences.
- Thomas discussed nothing in the ordinance defines emergency services so should not apply at this point.
- Thomas asked what he needed to do to make this correct and what constitutes an open fence.
- Thomas stated he would like to know who complained because no one was there to speak.
- Huffman responded he did not know who complained or it could have been City officials that went through and saw it.
- Thomas stated that his appeal is based solely on the fact that the ordinance does not contain a definition of open fence and that reasonable interpretations can differ in the absence of unclear standards.

Motion: Jones made a motion to deny the administrative appeal based on it is a 6-foot solid fence, seconded by O'Brien. The motion passed.

- McCormick commented on the fence his interpretation will be altering the fence boards to be an open look.

With no further business, O'Brien made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Jones. The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 pm.

Stuart Huffman, Chairman

Sharon Reed, Planning Assistant