

# Variance

## *Application Packet*

1. **Application Packet** The “Application Packet” for a *Variance* includes the following:

- Application Form
- Supporting Information
- Site Plan Checklist
- Adjoining Property Owner Support Statement (Completion of this form is optional)

**Be sure to complete and submit all the required materials that are part of this Application Packet. Failure to do so will result in a delay in accepting your application until it is complete.**

2. **Zoning Board of Adjustment Meetings** Within three days after the application is received, staff will determine if the application is complete and notify the applicant. The determination will be in writing. The applicant may then update their application as needed or respond in writing that they choose to proceed with the application as submitted. The staff review time does not include time needed to review a Building/Zoning Permit, Minor Site Development Plan, or Sign Permit that is associated with the variance application.

A complete application may be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment if it is determined to be complete at least 14 days before the next regularly scheduled meeting.

The *Zoning Board of Adjustment* conducts a public hearing, considers the recommendation of the Planning and Housing staff and makes the final decision, based on the standards in the Ordinance. **The Board meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.** Additional meetings may be held on the fourth Wednesday of the month, April through October.

3. **Submittal and Filing Fee** The complete application and filing fee must be submitted to:

Department of Planning and Housing  
City of Ames  
515 Clark Avenue, Room 214  
Ames, Iowa 50010  
E-mail: [planning@cityofames.org](mailto:planning@cityofames.org)

**The filing fee of \$150.00 is required at the time the application is submitted.**

4. **Site Plan and Architectural Elevations** The applicant shall submit a Site Plan, drawn to scale, that clearly shows the variance being sought. The Site Plan shall be a reproducible, black line drawing on a sheet of paper no larger than 11” x 17”. If a *Major or Minor Site Development Plan* was submitted as part of the development approval process for the subject property, then that *Major or Minor Site Development Plan* should be submitted with the *Variance* application.

**If the project for which the Variance is sought is a single-family dwelling, a two-family dwelling, or other use exempt from the requirement for a Site Development Plan, then the Site Plan shall include at a minimum the following information:**

- Dimensioned property lines
- Abutting streets and alleys
- Location and size of all existing and proposed buildings and structures (Include distances to all property lines and distances between buildings and structures)
- Required setbacks
- Driveways and parking areas, fully dimensioned
- Other pertinent information necessary to fully understand the need for a Variance (e.g., significant change in topography, location and size of mature trees, etc.)

**Architectural elevations** also should be submitted, where appropriate, to assist the Board in making its decision. These architectural elevations should be black line drawings, drawn to scale on a sheet of paper no larger than 11"x17".

5. **Photos and Exhibits** Materials submitted with the application or presented as evidence during the public hearing ***will not be returned*** and must be kept as part of the public record.
6. **Notification** The City will mail a notice to all property owners within 400 feet of the property that an appeal for a Variance has been filed. This notification is done so that concerned individuals will have an opportunity to learn about what is being proposed and can present information on this matter to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

**IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPLETING THIS APPLICATION  
PLEASE CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND HOUSING.**

Phone: 515-239-5400  
E-mail: [planning@cityofames.org](mailto:planning@cityofames.org)

# Variance

## Application Form

(This form must be completely filled out before the application will be accepted)

1. **Property Address** for this Variance Application: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. **Legal Description** (attach if lengthy): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. I (We) the undersigned, do hereby respectfully appeal to the Ames Zoning Board of Adjustment to grant a *Variance* to the Zoning Ordinance to allow the issuance of a Building/Zoning Permit, Sign Permit, or Site Development Plan to permit:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. The ***Building/Zoning Permit, Sign Permit, or Site Development Plan was refused*** because:  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. **Property Owner:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Business: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

6. **Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Business: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

7. **Contact Person:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Business: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Zoning Board of Adjustment may grant a Variance, provided the Board members can make a finding that literal enforcement of the Ordinance will result in practical difficulties that are not self-created, and that the Variance will not significantly alter the essential character of the surrounding neighborhood, will observe the Spirit of the Ordinance, and will result in substantial justice.**

**This appeal will not be granted unless sufficient facts are presented in this application to justify the variance in light of the standards and to show that the granting of the variance relates to the intent and purposes of the Zoning Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan.**

Approval of the Variance by the Zoning Board of Adjustment in no way absolves the applicant from subsequently obtaining the necessary building permits or other permits from the City of Ames or from other applicable agencies.

*I (We) certify that I (we) have been denied a Building/Zoning Permit, that I (we) have submitted all the required information to appeal for a Variance, and that said information is factual.*

**Signed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Property Owner(s)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Printed Name**  
*Note: No other signature may be substituted for the Property Owner’s Signature.*

# Variance

## Supporting Information

(This form must be filled out completely before your application will be accepted)

**The Zoning Board of Adjustment can grant a Variance only if all of the following standards are satisfied.** In order to facilitate review of this application for a Variance, the applicant must address each of the **Variance Standards** set forth in Section 29.1504(5) of the Zoning Ordinance, which are listed below.

(Note: The applicant's explanation of how the request meets each standard may be attached on a separate sheet if sufficient space is not provided.)

1. **Variance Standards** The Zoning Board of Adjustment shall review each application for the purpose of determining that the Variance Standards are satisfied. Pursuant to Iowa law, a variance shall be granted **only if all of the following standards are satisfied**:

- (a) **The practical difficulties faced are unique to the property at issue and not self-created:**

Please show how beneficial use and/or enjoyment of the property will be affected if the Variance is not granted and how the practical difficulties are unique and unlike other properties in the vicinity (e.g. physical circumstances) and not self-imposed.

Explain how the request meets this standard:

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- (b) **Granting the variance will not significantly alter the essential character of the surrounding neighborhood:**

Please show that the proposed use is compatible with the character of the surrounding area.

Explain how the request meets this standard:

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**(c) The spirit of the ordinance shall be observed even when the variance is granted.**

Please show that the Variance is consistent with the intent of the Sign Ordinance, Zoning Ordinance, and the Comprehensive Plan. A Variance would not be consistent with the intent if alternatives for development exist that do not require a Variance.

Explain how the request meets this standard:

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**(d) Substantial justice shall be done as a result of granting the variance.**

Explain how the request meets this standard:

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# Variance

## *Site Plan Checklist*

(For Properties Occupied by a Single-Family or Two-Family Dwelling)

(This form must be filled out completely before your application will be accepted)

***The applicant shall submit a Site Plan, drawn to scale, that clearly shows the Variance being sought. The Site Plan shall be a reproducible, black line drawing on a sheet of paper no larger than 11"x17". If the project for which the Variance is sought is a single-family or two-family dwelling, or other use exempt from the requirement for a Site Development Plan, then the Site Plan shall include, at a minimum, the following information:***

(NOTE: If the proposed project requires approval of a *Major or Minor Site Development Plan*, it should be included with this application for a Variance, not the *Site Plan* described on this checklist.)

- ☐ Dimensioned property lines
- ☐ Abutting streets and alleys
- ☐ Location and size of all existing and proposed buildings and structures (include distances to all property lines and distances between buildings and structures.)
- ☐ Required setbacks
- ☐ Driveways and parking areas, fully dimensioned
- ☐ Other pertinent information necessary to fully understand the need for a Variance (e.g., significant change in topography, location and size of mature trees, etc.)



# Adjoining Property Owner Statement

(Completion of this form by the applicant is optional)

To Whom It May Concern:

We, the undersigned, own property adjoining \_\_\_\_\_ Ames, Iowa.  
It is our understanding that \_\_\_\_\_ has filed an  
appeal with the Zoning Board of Adjustment to allow \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

As adjoining property owners, we would have no objections to the issuance of this building permit for the purposes stated above.

NAME	ADDRESS	DATE