

**Meeting of the Sandy Springs Board of Appeals was held on March 4, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.**

**Chair Sherri Allen presiding.**

**I. Call to Order**

**Chair Sherri Allen** called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**II. Roll Call and General Announcements**

**Members Present:** Chair Sherri Allen, Vice Chair Justin Sparano, Board Member Jason Bodwell, Board Member Kim Gay, Board Member Nathan Kongthum, Board Member Susan Maziar.

No members were absent. A new Board Member Jeffery Howe, was appointed by Mayor City Council on March 3, 2026, and is awaiting his swear-in.

**III. Approval of Meeting Agenda**

**Motion and Vote:** A motion was made by **Board Member Susan Maziar**, seconded by **Vice Chair Justin Sparano** to **approve** the agenda for the **March 4, 2026** meeting. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

**Motion and Vote:** A motion was made by **Board Member Kim Gay**, seconded by **Board Member Susan Maziar** to **approve** the meeting minutes from the **February 4, 2026** meeting. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**Discussion:**

**Chair Sherri Allen** noted that this case was deferred from the Board's previous meeting on **February 4, 2026**. She explained that the board had questions for both the applicant and staff and that the board would be rehearing portions of the case. She asked that the applicant make his presentation first, after which staff would respond, and then the applicant would be given time for rebuttal.

**V. Cases**

**V-25-53 - 870 Edgewater Drive** — Request for a Variance from Sec. 6.1.2.B. to encroach into the 60-foot primary street setback by 20 feet for a new home.  
*(Presented by: Michele McIntosh-Ross, Planning & Zoning Manager)*

**Chair Sherri Allen** asked if the applicant had more time for rebuttal (14 seconds left on the clock). She asked the Board if they would like to make a motion for extra rebuttal time for the applicant.

**Motion and Vote:** A motion was made by **Boad Member Jason Bodwell**, seconded by **Board Member Nathan Kongthum** to allow 5 minutes of rebuttal time for the applicant. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**Chair Sherri Allen** opened the public hearing for comments.

**Support**

None

**Opposition**

1. Deborah Selbert (emailed comment card) – 990 Mountain Creek Trail, Sandy Springs, Ga

**Chair Sherri Allen** closed the public hearing and opened the floor for discussion.

**Discussion:**

**Chair Sherri Allen** stated that the board operates under the requirements of the City of Sandy Springs Development Code. She explained that the development code was established with input from residents regarding the type of development and neighborhoods they wish to see in the community.

**Chair Sherri Allen** noted that the development code sets strict criteria for granting variances. Variances cannot be granted unless the request meets the specific conditions outlined in the code. She further explained that, although the board may feel sympathetic toward an applicant's situation, its decisions must be based on the requirements of the development code. She added that a variance must represent the minimum relief necessary to allow reasonable development of a property and must be justified by an extraordinary hardship, not merely an inconvenience. **Chair Sherri Allen** emphasized that while applicants may believe they qualify for a variance, the board's decisions are ultimately governed by the standards established in the development code.

**Planning & Zoning Manager Michele McIntosh-Ross** wanted to mention that Deborah Selber added a comment in opposition from the previous meeting.

**Board Member Jason Bodwell** stated that he remained unclear about the stormwater management system. He asked for clarification regarding the existing culvert on the property and how it currently functions compared to the stormwater system shown on the applicant's presentation site plan.

**Planning & Zoning Manager Michele McIntosh-Ross** stated that she is not an expert in that area however, the culvert and swale functions differently than what is required to capture stormwater from the house which is the tank that the applicant is referencing. On new builds that are done today must have stormwater to be captured by a tank to hold the water and that the preexisting swale functions differently.

**Board Member Jason Bodwell** stated that what was discussed last time the existing culvert collects storm water from multiple properties. He asked the applicant about the black box shown on the site plan as the stormwater management for the property.

The applicant (**Bruce Bowen**) stated that it does percolate into the swale and that the topography shows that it pushes it down and that his tank would hold more water.

**Member Jason Bodwell** wanted to confirm that the water is captured from the applicant's property, and it will slowly leak back into the swale overtime.

The applicant (**Bruce Bowen**) also states that he has 900 square feet space that would capture the access water.

**Member Jason Bodwell** asked if it was the same size, whether it is at the back of the property or in front of the property, it's just the location.

The applicant (**Bruce Bowen**) confirms that with the variance he can nestle the box closer to the front of the property with a small retaining wall. Without the variance he would have to put it outside the retaining wall, which is what the hydrologist outlined.

**Chair Sherri Allen** wanted the applicant to speak on an alternat design that does not require a variance.

The applicant (**Bruce Bowen**) stated that on slide seven or eight, that it would be in the nook of the culvert outside. He described that it is the black box in the upper right corner of the diagram. He explained that it would be before the swale. It would be a 20-inch hardwood and a 33-inch hardwood. The large trench would destroy the roots zones of the trees.

**Chair Sherri Allen** also asked the applicant if he had any expert reports regarding his research.

The applicant (**Bruce Bowen**) explained that the files that were provided were from the hydrologist who drew the plans that were submitted.

**Vice Chair Justin Sparano** asked staff to explain from their report why they considered the topography to be extreme when there are various levels of degrees and stated if it was because of the consistent steepness that it would be unbuildable.

**Planning & Zoning Manager Michele McIntosh-Ross** clarified that the change in elevation is for the parcels that are closer to the river, from the street to the back of the property is over 100 feet difference verses what the applicant has submitted. She goes on to explain the calculations of the elevation.

**Board Member Susan Maziar** noted that, according to the report from the Sandy Springs Building Official, the homes along the street are aligned with the front of the existing house

at 870 Edgewater, and many are set even farther back. She added that the applicant could eliminate the golf cart parking garage, which would reduce the encroachment into the front yard by as much as 10 feet. She stated to the board and staff that she sat on the Board for the Development Code Updates committee for 2 years and felt it was very well thought out for future designs as what is being presented today.

**Board Member Nathan Kongthum** followed up with what **Board Member Susan Maziar** stated regarding the Development Code. He asked the applicant what would happen if he eliminated the parking garage and if that would affect the design.

The applicant (**Bruce Bowen**) stated that the golf cart parking is underneath the screened in porch and they designed it, that included a breakfast nook as part of the design to create a nicer family room that would be more of a welcoming space. He goes on to state that if he eliminates the storage shed formally known as the golf cart garage, he will lose 10 feet of depth on the screened in porch which makes it not as welcoming as they would like.

**Motion and Vote:** A motion was made by **Board Member Susan Maziar**, seconded by **Vice Chair Justin Sparano** to **deny V-25-53** with staff recommendations. The motion was **(4) in favor** (Vice Chair Justin Sparano, Board Member Susan Maziar, Board Member Jason Bodwell, Board Member Kim Gay), **(1) opposed** (Board Member Nathan Kongthum) the motion passed.

## **VI. Ongoing Business**

## **VII. New Business**

**Planning & Zoning Manager Michele McIntosh-Ross** made mention that at Mayor City Council that the mayor appointed Jeff Howe to the board to take the place of Fred Jewell whose term had expired. She also goes on to mention the date of the 2026 Board of Appeals/ Planning Commission Retreat that will take place on Friday, March 20, 2026, at 1 Galambos Way (City Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Terrace Room) at 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

**Motion and Vote:** A motion was made by **Vice Chair Justin Sparano**, seconded by **Board Member Nathan Kongthum**, to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

**Approved: April 8, 2026**