

David Whitaker, Esq.  
*Director*  
Irvin Corley, Jr.  
*Executive Policy Manager*  
Marcell R. Todd, Jr.  
*Director, City Planning Commission*  
Janese Chapman  
*Director, Historic Designation Advisory Board*

John Alexander  
LaKisha Barclift, Esq.  
Timarie DeBruchl  
Paige Blessman  
M. Rory Bolger, Ph.D., FAICP  
Victory Corley  
Lisa DiChiera  
Eric Fazzini, AICP  
Willene Green  
Christopher Gulock, AICP

**City of Detroit**  
**CITY COUNCIL**  
LEGISLATIVE POLICY DIVISION  
208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
Detroit, Michigan 48226  
Phone: (313) 224-4946 Fax: (313) 224-4336

Marcel Hurt, Esq.  
Sandra L. Jeffers  
Kimani Jeffrey  
Anthony W. L. Johnson  
Phillip Keller, Esq.  
Edward King  
Kelsey Maas  
Jamie Murphy  
Dolores Perales-Lara  
Analine Powers, Ph.D.  
W. Akilah Redmond  
Renee Short  
Floyd Stanley  
Thomas Stephens, Esq.  
Theresa Thomas  
Janice Tillmon  
Ian Tomashik  
Emberly Vick  
Ashley A. Wilson

TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director  
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: October 10, 2025

RE: **BZA QUESTIONS**

Council President Mary Sheffield has requested that LPD provide answers to the following questions regarding the fee schedule for the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA):

- 1. When did City Council approve a service fee for the public to receive copies of BZA Hearing Transcripts at the rate of “Court Reporter Cost Per Page?”**
- 2. Where can versions of the BZA Fee Schedule prior to 2013 be found?**

Our office requested that the Detroit City Clerk’s Office provide a copy of the historical BZA fee schedules in their records. The Clerk’s Office provided copies of prior fee schedules from 1981, 1983, 1988, 2002, and 2006.<sup>1</sup> The charge for transcript pages first appeared on the 2002 fee schedule at a cost of \$0.50 per page. This charge remained at \$0.50 per page until 2013.

The City Council first adopted a fee schedule which included a fee for transcripts at the “Court Reporter Cost Per Page” on November 7, 2013.<sup>2</sup> No prior fee schedule we reviewed include this language. Council’s resolution references a 20% increase in the Appeal Fee Schedule and does not specifically refer to the change in fees of transcripts to “Court Reporter Cost Per Page.” However, City Council approved

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<sup>1</sup> See Attachment 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Attachment 2.

the fee schedule which included the change. The fact that the accompanying resolution does not reference the change in the fees for transcripts has no bearing on the validity of the fee, as the Council adopted the entire fee schedule including the change to transcript fees.

On February 13, 2024, City Council approved a resolution to adjust the BZA fee schedule to include a \$1,500 fee to cover the cost of administering hardship relief petitions.<sup>3</sup> There was an additional proposed resolution to amend the BZA fee schedule to add a \$30 fee to cover the cost of mailing and printing for community appeals.<sup>4</sup> On February 28, 2024, Council approved a motion to bring the item back after budget, however this item never returned to the agenda and no action has been taken on it.

Please contact our office if we can be of any further assistance.

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<sup>3</sup> See Attachment 3.

<sup>4</sup> See Attachment 4.