

**TOWN OF JAMES ISLAND
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
Town Hall
1122 Dills Bluff Road, James Island, SC 29412
BZA AGENDA
May 19, 2026
5:00 PM**

NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS POSTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

(MEETING WILL BE STREAMED ON THE TOWN WEBSITE jamesislandsc.us)

Members of the public addressing the Board in support or opposition of this case at Town Hall must sign in. The Town invites the public to submit comments on this case prior to the meeting via email to kcrane@jamesislandsc.us referencing the Case #. Emailed comments not sent to this email address, and comments that do not include a home address for the record, will not be accepted. Emailed comments must be received by noon on May 18th.

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. COMPLIANCE WITH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT
- IV. INTRODUCTIONS
- V. REVIEW SUMMARY (MINUTES) FROM THE APRIL 21st, 2026 BZA MEETING
- VI. BRIEF THE PUBLIC ON THE PROCEDURES OF THE BZA
- VII. ADMINISTER THE OATH TO THOSE PRESENTING TESTIMONY
- VIII. REVIEW OF THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS:
 1. **CASE #BZAV-3-26-048** Variance request for the reduction of the required 25' front/streetside setback on a corner lot for a carport addition to an existing single-family home in the Low-Density Suburban Residential District (RSL) at 668 Sterling Dr. (TMS #454-07-00-114)
- IX. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS:
 1. Next Meeting Date: June 16th, 2026
- X. ADJOURN

*Full packet available for public review on website, and Monday through Friday during normal business hours.

Variance Application

Town of James Island Board of Zoning Appeals

Town of James Island
Zoning/Planning Department
1122 Dills Bluff Road
James Island, SC 29412
Phone 843-795-4141
Fax 843-795-4878
www.jamesislandsc.us



This application must be complete and submitted in person to the Town of James Island Zoning/Planning Department in order to apply for a Variance. Please read the entire form prior to completing the application. The applicant shall receive a copy of this completed form at the time the application is filed. **This application will be returned to the applicant within fifteen (15) working days if these items are not submitted with the application or if any are found to be inaccurate:**

- 1) Completed Variance application signed by the current property owner(s).
- 2) Copy of **Current Recorded Deed** to the property (Owner's signature must match documentation). If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the **Current Property Owner(s)** must sign and print the **Designation of Agent** found below.
- 3) **Restrictive Covenants & Posted Notice Affidavit(s)** signed by the applicant or current property owner(s).
- 4) A **letter of intent** signed by the applicant or property owner(s) stating the reason for the request that explains why this request should be granted and how it meets the Approval Criteria of §153.049 F. All proposed Variances, except single family, shall satisfy the Site Plan Review process and attend at least one Site Plan Review meeting prior to submitting this application.
- 5) An accurate, legible **Site Plan drawn to Engineers Scale** must be attached. The site plan must show property dimensions, dimensions and locations of all existing and proposed structures and improvements, parking areas, Grand trees (18" DBH or greater, Pine, Sweetgum, SC Invasive Pest Trees are exempt), wetlands (properties containing DHEC-OCRM Critical Line areas must contain an up to date DHEC-OCRM signature on site plan or plat), holding basins and buffers when applicable.
One 24 x 36 copy and one digital copy via email.
- 6) Copy of a legible **Approved and Recorded Plat** showing present boundaries of property.
- 7) **Fee \$250** check made out to "Town of James Island". Grand tree variances add \$50 each additional tree

Applicant Name: Laura T. Bowers
 Mailing Address: 668 Sterling Dr.
 City, State, Zip Code: James Island, SC 29412 Daytime Phone: 843-412-8435
 Email Address: Laura@helmprop.com
 Subject Property Address: 668 Sterling Dr.
 Present Use of Property: Residential
 Variance Description: Owners wants to add a carport.

[Handwritten signature of Laura T. Bowers]

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

Designation of Agent (Complete only if owner is not applicant): I hereby appoint the person named as Applicant above as my (our) agent to represent me (us) in this application.

Owner Print Name _____ Date _____ Owner Mailing Address _____
 Owner Signature _____ City, State, Zip Code _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:	
Application #: <u>BZAV-3-26-048</u>	Flood Zone: _____
Zoning District: <u>RSL</u>	Fee Paid (\$250): <u>ck# 1043</u>
Date Filed: <u>3/28/2020</u>	Zoning Officer: <u>KC</u>
TMS#: <u>454-07-00-114</u>	



Charleston County SC

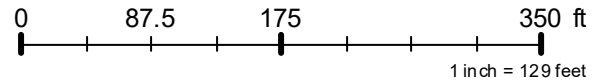
PID: 4540700114

OWNER1: BOWERS T J

PLAT BOOK PAGE: CA-183

DEED BOOK PAGE: M282-160

Jurisdiction: TOWN OF JAMES ISLAND



Note: The Charleston County makes every effort possible to produce the most accurate information. The layers contained in the map service are for information purposes only. The Charleston County makes no warranty, express or implied, nor any guaranty as to the content, sequence, accuracy, timeliness or completeness of any of the information provided. The County explicitly disclaims all representations and warranties. The reader agrees to hold harmless the Charleston County for any cause of action and costs associated with any causes of action which may arise as a consequence of the County providing this information.



Author: Charleston County SC

Date: 4/29/2026



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7



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Staff Review:

The applicant, Mrs. Laura Bowers, is requesting a Variance for the reduction of the required 25' front/streetside setback on a corner lot for a carport addition to an existing single-family home in the Low-Density Suburban Residential (RSL) Zoning District at 668 Sterling Drive. All adjacent properties are zoned RSL in the Town of James Island, with the exception of one home in the City of Charleston's jurisdiction.

The subject property is around 0.27 acres in size and currently has one single-family home built in 1991 per Charleston County records, as well as a storage shed. The applicant is requesting the variance *"because parking in the open driveway leaves vehicles vulnerable to heavy falling debris from mature trees and creates unsafe conditions during severe weather. The addition of a carport would significantly improve safety, protect my property, and enhance daily usability without negatively affecting neighboring properties or the character of the street."*

Findings of Fact:

According to §153.049 F, Zoning Variance Approval Criteria of the Town of James Island Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance (ZLDR), The Board of Zoning Appeals has the authority to hear and decide appeals for a Zoning Variance when strict application of the provisions of this Ordinance would result in unnecessary hardship. A Zoning Variance may be granted in an individual case of unnecessary hardship if the Board of Appeals makes and explains in writing the following findings:

F. (a): *There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular piece of property;*

Response: **There may be extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to this particular piece of property due to the location and number of grand trees and two front setbacks, combined with the location of the existing driveway and entrance to the home.**

F (b): *These conditions do not generally apply to other property in the vicinity;*

Response: **There does not generally appear to be properties in the vicinity with similar conditions, from an aerial perspective. The location and number of trees on surrounding lots vary, as do layouts and site features.**

F (c): *Because of these conditions, the application of this Ordinance to the particular piece of property would effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property;*

Response: **The application of this Ordinance to the subject property would prohibit the construction of the carport and may unreasonably restrict the utilization of the**

property as the letter of intent states: *“it provides the safest and most functional access point for entering the home”*. The owner also explains that *“the proposed location is the least impactful option and the only one that aligns with the existing driveway.”*

F (d): *The authorization of a variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent property or to the public good, and the character of the zoning district will not be harmed by the granting of the variance;*

Response: **The character of the zoning district should not be harmed, and the authorization of the variance should not be of substantial detriment to adjacent property or to the public good. The applicant states that they *“discussed this proposal with my neighbor on the west side, who has expressed support.”***

F (e): *The Board of Zoning Appeals shall not grant a variance the effect of which would be to allow the establishment of a use not otherwise permitted in a zoning district, to extend physically a non-conforming use of land or to change the zoning district boundaries shown on the Official Zoning Map;*

Response: **The variance does not allow a use that is not permitted in this zoning district, nor does it extend physically a nonconforming use of land or change the zoning district boundaries.**

F (f): *The need for the variance is not the result of the applicant’s own actions; and*

Response: **In the letter of intent, the applicant explains that *“the addition of a carport would significantly improve safety”* and *“due to the irregular shape of the lot and the placement of existing trees and structures, every possible location would result in some degree of setback encroachment”*. Therefore, the need for the variance is not the result of the applicant’s own actions.**

F (g): *Granting of the variance does not substantially conflict with the Comprehensive Plan or the purposes of this Ordinance.*

Response: **The granting of the variance does not substantially conflict with the Comprehensive Plan or the purposes of this Ordinance.**

In granting a Variance, the Board of Zoning Appeals may attach to it such conditions regarding the location, character, or other features of the proposed building or structure as the Board may consider advisable to protect established property values in the surrounding area or to promote the public health, safety, or general welfare (§153.045 E 2).

Action:

The Board of Zoning Appeals may approve, approve with conditions, or deny Case # BZAV-3-26-048 (Variance request for reduction of the required 25' front/streetside setback on a corner lot for a carport addition to an existing home in the Low-Density Suburban Residential District) based on the "Findings of Fact" listed above, unless additional information is deemed necessary to make an informed decision. In the event the Board decides to approve the application, the Board should consider the following condition:

1. The applicant shall obtain all required zoning, stormwater, and building permits for the addition.
2. The applicant/owner shall adhere to the recommendations and practices in the arborist report/assessment (Natural Directions, via email) dated March 31, 2026 that was included in the BZA packet and in the application submittal.

To the Members of the Board of Zoning Appeals,

I am writing to request a variance from the front setback requirement in order to construct a carport on the west side of our residence at **668 Sterling Drive, James Island**. The proposed carport will measure approximately **24 feet by 30 feet**, remain open on three sides, and be attached to our existing home. The structure will be supported by four posts, and will obtain approval from a licensed arborist to ensure that any interaction with the existing tree canopy is handled responsibly. The carport will extend only slightly into the setback area.

I have had a thorough evaluation of the property to identify any alternative locations for a carport. Due to the irregular shape of the lot and the placement of existing trees and structures, every possible location would result in some degree of setback encroachment. The proposed location is the least impactful option and the only one that aligns with the existing driveway. It also provides the safest and most functional access point for entering the home.

Currently, parking in the open driveway leaves vehicles vulnerable to heavy falling debris from mature trees and creates unsafe conditions during severe weather. The addition of a carport would significantly improve safety, protect my property, and enhance daily usability without negatively affecting neighboring properties or the character of the street.

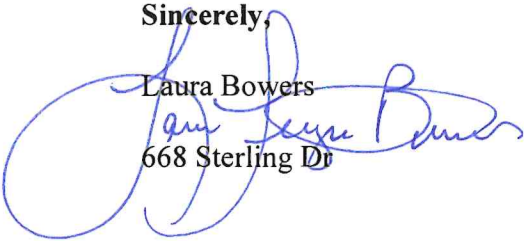
We have discussed this proposal with my neighbor on the west side, who has expressed support.

I appreciate your time and consideration and respectfully request approval of this variance.

Sincerely,

Laura Bowers

668 Sterling Dr



Since 1991



A.H. SCHWACKE & ASSOCIATES

LAND SURVEYING & CONSTRUCTION LAYOUT

1975 FRAMPTON AVE PH: 843-762-7005 FAX 843-762-0109
P.O. BOX 13077, CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29422-3077

REFERENCE:

PLAT BY: F. STEVEN JOHNSON
DATED: MARCH 21, 1989
BOOK: CA PAGE: 183
RMC CHAS. CO.

TAX MAP No. 454-07-00-114
No. 668 STERLING DRIVE

LOT AREA:
11,606.5 Sq. Feet
0.27 Acres

Requested by: TED BOWERS

NOTES:

BEARING SHOWN ARE BASED ON SOUTH CAROLINA STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM, NAD 83.

AREA DETERMINED BY COORDINATE METHOD.

THE PUBLIC RECORDS REFERENCED ON THIS PLAT ARE ONLY THOSE USED AND/OR NECESSARY TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BOUNDARY OF THIS PROPERTY. THEY ARE NOT AND DO NOT CONSTITUTE A TITLE SEARCH. ANYTHING SHOWN OUTSIDE THE DEFINED BOUNDARY OF THIS PLAT IS FOR DESCRIPTIVE PURPOSES ONLY.

THE REQUIRED SETBACKS MAY BE DESIGNATED AND/OR VARIED BY THE JAMES ISLAND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD. THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD RESERVES THE RIGHT TO GRANT VARIANCES RESPECTING SETBACK GUIDELINES AND/OR TO EXPAND THE "BUILDABLE" AREA.

THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS JURISDICTIONAL WETLANDS IS UNDETERMINED AS OF THE DATE OF THIS SURVEY.

NO SUBSURFACE OR ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION OR SURVEYS WERE PERFORMED FOR THIS PLAT, THEREFORE THIS PLAT DOES NOT REFLECT THE EXISTENCE OR NONEXISTENCE OF WETLANDS CONTAMINATION OR OTHER NONVISIBLE CONDITIONS WHICH MAY AFFECT THIS PROPERTY.

PROPERTY APPEARS TO BE LOCATED IN FLOOD ZONE AE (EL 12') AS PER FEMA FLOOD MAPS. PANEL No. 45019C 0681J DATED: NOVEMBER 17, 2004 COMMUNITY No. 450263

* SETBACKS SHOULD BE VERIFIED PRIOR TO DESIGN OR CONSTRUCTION BY CONTROLLING AUTHORITY.

SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATION

I hereby state that to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, the survey shown hereon was made in accordance with the requirements of the Standards of Practice Manual for Surveying in South Carolina, and meets or exceeds the requirements for a Class A survey as specified therein. Also there are no visible encroachments or projections other than shown.

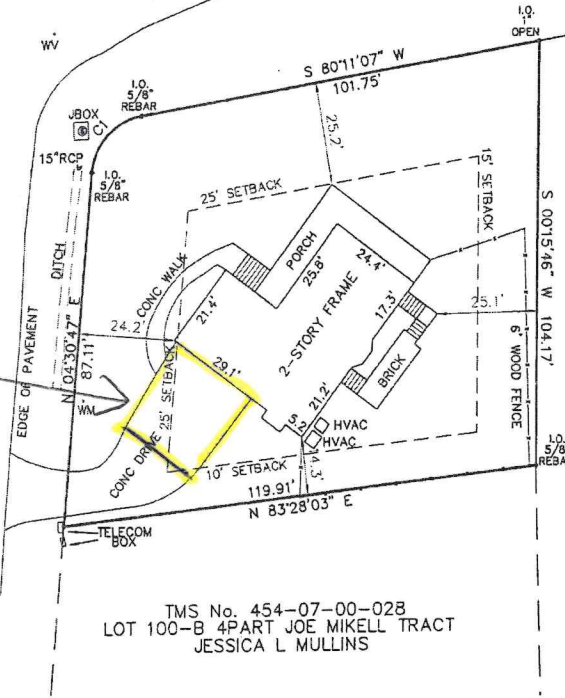
KEVIN M. SCHWACKE, SR. PLS
S.C. Registration Number 20468

CERTIFICATIONS ARE NOT TRANSFERABLE TO ADDITIONAL INSTITUTIONS OR SUBSEQUENT OWNERS. THIS PLAT IS COPYRIGHTED AND IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE ENTITY OR PERSON(S) SHOWN HEREON. THIS PLAT REPRESENTS A SURVEY BASED ON THE LISTED REFERENCES ONLY AND IS NOT THE RESULT OF A TITLE SEARCH. KIM18 / 18111

*Proposed
Carport*

STERLING DRIVE (50' R/W)

STERLING DRIVE (50' R/W)



TMS No. 454-07-00-028
LOT 100-B 4PART JOE MIKELL TRACT
JESSICA L MULLINS

TMS No. 454-07-00-029
LT 101 PT JOE MIKELL TRACT
RALPH W MARTIN

LEGEND:

- I.O. IRON OLD (FOUND)
- JBOX JUNCTION BOX
- WM WATER METER
- WV WATER VALVE

CURVE	RADIUS	ARC LENGTH	CHORD LENGTH	CHORD BEARING	DELTA ANGLE
C1	15.00'	19.92'	18.49'	S 42°30'23\" W	78°06'14\"



AS-BUILT SURVEY
LOT 100-A
EASTWOOD SUBDIVISION
TOWN OF JAMES ISLAND
CHARLESTON COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA



DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2020 SCALE: 1" = 30'

GRID

Kristen Crane

From: Donnie Skinner <dskinner@naturaldirectionssc.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 7:38 AM
To: Kristen Crane [REDACTED]
Subject: 668 Sterling Drive

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the Town of James Island. Maintain caution when opening external links/attachments

Kristen,

I hope you're doing well. I met with Ms. Bowers last week regarding her proposed carport. She had her builder on site as well.

The purpose of our meeting was to discuss the installation of footers within the protected root zone of the two Laurel Oaks adjacent to her driveway.

One Laurel Oak is 27.5" and the other is 25".

Based on my understanding, the objective is to install two 2'x2' concrete footers 2' deep. My recommendation is to have an arborist on site while the footers are being excavated. The goal is to avoid severing any structural roots over 3 inches. If any roots 3 inches or greater are present, the footer should be shifted to avoid those roots. This is especially critical in the area within 3 times the diameter of the tree.

In my professional opinion, if performed properly, we can minimize the impacts to the root system while accomplishing the goal of installing the footers. I do not believe the work will be detrimental to the long term health of the trees.

Other tree protection practices should also be followed including tree protection fencing throughout the project, no parking or storage of materials within the tree protection zone at any time, any work within the tree protection zone should be done by hand, etc.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Donnie Skinner | Sales Arborist
ISA Certified Arborist SO-5166A
S.C. Registered Forester #1707
Natural Directions
Summerville Office 29483
M: 843.296.1581 O: 843.873.8939