NORTH EAST BOARD OF APPEALS
North East Town Hall Meeting Room
106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901
Thursday, May 28, 2026
7:00 P.M.

-CALL TO ORDER-

Chairman SJ Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M. Present for the meeting included members, Martha Kline and Colleen McCandless. Also in attendance were Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning, Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant. Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Town Administrator, Russell Polo and Justine Patterson were not in attendance due to prior commitments.

-MINUTES-

February 12, 2026
Mrs. McCandless made a motion to approve the February 12, 2026 minutes as presented. Mrs. Kline seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-OLD BUSINESS-

Case-A-2025-01-SE: Special Exception Live for Thomas Foundation. 22 North Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901. Tax Map 031B; Parcel 0088. Annual Review of extended hours.

April Maenner, serves on the non-profit board for Live for Thomas and Den 22.

Mrs. Vennell read an email that was sent by Amy Ocasio March 10, 2026 to the Planning Office which stated that "Although we received permission to stay open until midnight, limited staffing has prevented us from implementing it. Once we have sufficient staff to implement and maintain it, we would still like to proceed."

Chairman Anderson inquired if there was a timeline of when the extended hours would be implemented. Ms. Maenner replied that there is not a timeline at this time. Ms. Maenner added that they are in the process of hiring staff between the ages of 18 to 24 and it has been difficult. Ms. Maenner reported that some of the current staff members will be going away to college and one staff member is moving out of Town.

Ms. Maenner stated that mental health issues often occur during the later evening to early morning hours. Therefore, they would like to maintain the prior approval of the extended hours because the goal continues to be to hire and train adequate staff to fill those hours. Ms. Maenner also stated that once new hires are trained, they will initially be filling the staff positions for those that are scheduled to leave. On Monday June 8th, a full in-service training seminar is being held for new hires. The training will include "In Her Shoes" where stations are set up around the room teaching new hires how to handle different situations they may be presented with. In

addition, Ms. Maenner will be going over Child Protective Services reporting and will close the seminar with selfcare training. Chairman Anderson commented that the training sounds very in-depth.

Ms. Maenner stated that Covid impacted the way teens communicate. They are hoping that Den 22 will build relationships with 18- to 21-year-olds by providing them needed skills and services. Ms. Maenner reported that there were 12 teens standing near the bridge and the Den leader invited them all in for a tour and she happily reported that 6 of the teens have continued to come back. In addition, to providing dinner two times a week, a basket of hygiene items and snacks are always available. Mrs. Vennell suggested that Ms. Maenner reach out to the North East Chamber of Commerce.

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Planning Commission reviewed Case-A-2025-01-SE at their May 2, 2026 Planning Commission meeting and sent a recommendation for the continuation of the extended hours with the conditions of Case-A-2025-01-SE official opinion.

Mrs. Kline inquired how many clients has the business been serving. Ms. Maenner reported that on this past Tuesday night while she was seeing one client, there were 9 other clients there having dinner. Ms. Maenner reported that they serve dinner twice a week. Ms. Maenner also commented that they have found there is a lot of food insecurity for our youth and more clients do come on the night's dinner is being served.

Ms. Maenner also reported that they just received a grant for a vehicle to provide transportation for clients.

Mrs. McCandless made a motion to approve the continuation of the extended hours, for an additional year, for Live for Thomas Foundation and Den 22, 22 North Main Street, North East, Maryland as stated in the Special Exception Opinion for Case-A-2025-01-SE. Mrs. Kline seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-REPORTS-

None.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None.

-NEXT MEETING-

The next Board of Appeals meeting is scheduled for June 25, 2026 has been cancelled due to a lack of agenda items.

APPROVED
August 27, 2026

-ADJOURNMENT-

Mrs. McCandless made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 P.M. Mrs. Kline seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully submitted:

Lisa Rhoades
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Attest:

Sarah J. Anderson
Chairman

APPROVED
August 27, 2026