



VILLAGE OF OAKWOOD
ZONING BOARD MINUTES
January 14, 2026

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT

Marchelle Head (Chair)--Dan Stanton—Joseph Swaton--Ross Cirincione Law—Jim Urankar (CBO)

ABSENT

Meeting opened 7:00pm by Head

Roll call taken

NEW BUSINESS

ZBA#25-102 **LAUREN ROCK**
7279 WRIGHT AVE.
OAKWOOD VILLAGE, OHIO

MS. ROCK IS COMING BEFORE THE BOARD REQUESTING MORE TIME TO GET CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPROVED FOR PROPERTY AND APPEALING THE NOTICE OF VIOLATION DATED OCTOBER 6, 2025.

Cirincione: Swore in Laureen Rock & Bristina Stanfield. **HEAD:** We have come a little bit farther. Tell us where you are now. **Rock:** We stayed, however, we are at a standstill. A couple of the animals have died. Due to it being winter we had to close things down. We were told that type of enclosures we have are not code. There is no other update. **Cirincione:** Can you go over what you went over at the last meeting. We did not have a quorum, so we could not rule. If you could just lay out what your goals are, what animals you have, and your credentials. I have spoken with this board. They are impressed with your credentials and your efforts and what you want to do. We want you to understand the way the ordinances are written. They are very restrictive. Make a presentation to this board as if you did not come last time. What we don't want to do, is have this board approve something if it's not going to carry water, because it's against the ordinances. What we would like to do is go on the record again, tell the members what you're doing. We can see if council and the mayor at some point in the future, can look at amending this ordinance with enough restrictions on it that they would feel confident that people without proper credentials, not caring for the animals would take advantage of the loopholes. My recommendation to this board of Zoning Appeals tonight is to listen to what you have to say, table it, until you have an opportunity for me to talk to the law director. We will get back to you. Perhaps you can make a presentation to Council and the mayor, so that they

can look at perhaps amending this ordinance with the help of the law dept., and the building department, to make it restrictive so we don't open a can of worms. We have a bad history, a couple of properties in the community were running roughshod. They had a mass of chickens, we are talking about hundreds of chickens. The runoff from their waist was awful. **Stanton:** It was terribly maintained. What you are doing and what these people were doing is light years apart. **Cirincione:** They horrified enough of the people who make decisions in the village. We had to call the Board of Health on them. That is the only way it was resolved. Go ahead and make your presentation. **Rock:** We are a 501-C3 non-profit, based out of Africa and out of Nevada. We are now in Ohio. We both are RVT's, (Registered Veterinarian Technicians). Our other three board members are DVM's they are veterinarians. We all work at Metropolitan Veterinary Hospital, which is an animal hospital, we work in ER and critical care. The hospital is located in Highland Heights. The other board members are listed in the application, all three of those board members are all DVM'S. **Cirincione:** What is the educational requirement?

Stanfield: We have an Associate's degree. We must keep up with continuing education every year. **Cirincione:** That is an associates degree in veterinary medicine? **Stanfield:** Yes. It is two year degree. We have to pass a National Board exam. We are licensed in Ohio and Nevada.

Cirincione: Do you have to be affiliated with veterinarians. **Rock:** No. It is just a plus. That was the field we were in. I worked in Africa and did work there then decided to come here.

Stanfield: One of the board members is becoming a critical nurse on the 19th. That is going to be their first day of work. She will be a board certified in emergency and critical care veterinarian medicine. That is the highest you can get for emergency and critical care in veterinary animal care. **Cirincione:** Who is going to get that? **Rock:** One of the board members. We have a board filled with the best animal care that you can possibly think of. All we do is take care of very sick animals that can't be released. **Stanfield:** Example, your regular veterinarian could not take care of these animals they come to us for special care. **Head:** What is a DVM? **Rock:** Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. They serve on the critical list in veterinary emergency and critical care. We are basically veterinary nurses. We are their direct nurses. It is a plus to our nonprofit. We take care of all types of animals in multiple countries. We had listed before, that we had 16 animals, we have about 14 now. At this point we have a variety, quail, Guinea fowl, a variety of birds, that can't get released or need immediate medical care almost every day. There is no way that we could be let them go. Those are the animals that we have. We have small living enclosures. They are behind our building, shed and our garage so they're not visible. We have one neighbor next to us on the right. Across the street is an industrial building. We have vacant lots surrounding us. Technically we are .9 acres. if we were at one acre we would be able to have this. **Cirincione:** The way the ordinance is written you need one acre to have 4 chickens.

Roosters are prohibited. It also says in subsection D, no person may keep or raise any foul other than chickens including ducks, quail, geese or turkeys. It is more inclusive as far as the restrictions. **Rock:** I thought that's what we were asking for in this variance.

Otherwise, the rest is with the Ohio Department of wildlife. The wildlife rehabilitators contact us. We take in and care for an animal. **Swaton:** You take care of quail? They are in the wild.

Rock: Yes. There are a lot of wild animals we care for. **Stanton:** This maybe a technicality, but raising versus caring, they are not breeding animals. **Cirincione:** It says no person may keep, it is a broad category. **Head:** Where are you getting your animals? **Rock:** We get them from work. We have an exotics department at work. There are animals that are not able to get care. If there is an injured animal if we get a call, people reach out to us. That is what we do. They contact us. If we are able to take them in, then we decide if they need to be euthanized. **Head:** There are samples of your operation in other areas throughout our city. **Rock:** No. **Cirincione:** You Mentioned where you work, are you talking about the veterinary clinic? **Stanfield:** Yes. **Cirincione:** The Highland Heights Veterinary Clinic is the source of some of the animals that you get. **Rock:** Yes. Sometimes they are relinquished to us. **Cirincione:** Is there another similar operation in northern Ohio which is similar to what you have? **Rock:** I would contact (Mike), he is the state wildlife officer for the division of wildlife. He stopped by to make sure that our permits were still ok. He gave us a list, I could probably send you an e-mail with the people that do specifically quail, pheasants, peacocks vultures etc. Nothing here in Oakwood village. **Head:** Do you deal only with foul? If there is a cat or a dog that needs critical care, would that be something you would take care of? **Rock:** We do. We make that decision. At work we have something called good Sam's, they are good Samaritans. If someone comes in, if they don't have a microchip, it is not an owned animal, or someone can't take responsibility for them, they are relinquished to the hospital. If the hospital is able to take care of them, they pay for it, as long as a rescue is able to take care of them after. We take care of them once they are out of the hospital. Then we adopt them out. **Head:** Are you open to any kind of animal? **Rock:** Yes, but it is not out of our property. **Head:** Our responsibility is within the code, that dictates our responsibility. It says chickens, I'm asking you about dogs and cats. **Rock:** We do not have a bunch of dog or cats in our backyard. If we treat dogs and cats it is at our hospital. Once they are treated, we find them a home. **Stanfield:** We have our own oath that we follow. **Cirincione:** Do you have specific things you do for pest control? That is one of the concerns that has been raised. Where you have chickens you have rats. **Rock:** We have someone come every three weeks. We us MWI as a supply company that is a veterinary supply company. We get our products through them. We have not had many issues. We have an occasional mouse. Our turnover rate is big. They die quickly. They are sick unfortunately. We are trying to make things better for them. Due to the turnover rate, the chances of us ever having more than 15 small animals. We are not taking in one a month. **Cirincione:** What is the connection to the non-profit? You have mentioned Africa. **Rock:** The non-profits originated out of Africa, in April of 2022 is when the nonprofit originally started in Libya. That is where I started the non-profit. There is a full wildlife foundation there. I own and control 60,000 hectares of land. We have a full anti-poaching team, we take care of the land, we take care of all the animals, provide veterinary care. We also have a school for children. We do a lot of stuff there. I moved to the states from Canada after I went to Africa. I got here and started working in vet medicine. It was in Nevada where I met her. We started my non-profit 501-C3. Technically, in Africa it's called an NGO, it's a non-governmental organization. They are separated as far as financials. We are a 501-C3 in Nevada. We are 501-C3 in Ohio as well. We are tax exempt. There are others who

help animals, not just here. They don't have the knowledge and the expertise, as much as they like to say they do. They don't have the schooling; they don't have the experience. We moved to Ohio two years ago. We want to stay. **Stanfield:** We plan on taking some wildlife courses. We want to grow. We want to finish our basic training. That is why he (Mike) stopped by to make sure we were continuing. There are a lot of eagles, and animals in some foundations that are closing. They need help. He was making sure we were going through the process of application with them. They need our help. We told them they would have to wait until March. That way we can get this figured out. He gave us a lot of information. We have two structures, we have a shed and a garage. They were there when we bought the house. We have two smaller coops a 6'X8' and 4'X6'. We also have fencing that is attached, 10'x10' &15'X15'. It is directly behind our shed and our garage. We do not plan on making any more. **Stanton:** It is noble work. **Rock:** My parents were terrified when I was in Africa, they couldn't get a hold of me. **Swaton:** I cannot imagine doing this in Africa. **Rock:** It is more like the circle of life there. Here we have very good veterinary medicine. **Head:** This board really respects you, your effort, your credentials and everything you are doing. However, we also live in this community and that's why we serve on the boards, to protect everyone's interest. There is a code, we are restricted by that. We want to make sure that what we are doing does not create a problem later. To protect you and protect us, we have been advised to move in a certain direction. You can make a presentation to our council. Our code can maybe be revised to make sure that we don't get into a problem later. It is going to protect you as well. I think that Mr. Cirincione can explain it a little better than I. **Cirincione:** You explained it well. That is the dilemma of these boards, the jurisdiction and discretion is limited by what is in the code. We recognize what you are doing. We are trying to find a way that it can be done. We want to accommodate you, without ignoring the code or opening a can of worms. That is why I asked this board earlier to consider continuing this, at least until the next meeting. We will talk with the Law Dept. and the building dept. The building official can talk with the village council and the mayor, to see if they can change the code with added restrictions. It will be unique in the credentials that you have. The average person who wants to raise more than 4 chickens is not going to study for more than two years, or get a license in order to accomplish this. It might be the professional certification as the way we can structure the ordinance. No promises! We can make an effort. **Rock:** Any of the animals that we do have, if they are able to get released or adopted out, we will do that as well. We try to keep the ones that are ill that need expert care. **Swaton:** What does the code say, if you have an acre, you can have 4 chickens? **Cirincione:** The rule now is very restrictive. It is designed for an urban area. **Stanton:** We are in your corner. **Head:** All the information that you hear about bird flu. **Rock:** We have vaccines. We have vaccine, preventions. We also have prevention for flea, tick and mites. **Swaton:** Does bird flu spread to people? **Rock:** No. **Head:** What we need to do now is make a motion to table this. I motion to request ZBA 25-02 be tabled until the request has been reviewed by the legislative body of Oakwood Village, to see how we can move forward with your request. **Cirincione:** Well said? That is exactly what we are doing. We have your address and phone numbers, if we need to contact you. You may have to come to speak with council and the mayor. We will notify you about that process. My granddaughter is a

photographer, she does wildlife. She was a photographer for some nature sanctuary near here. They take injured animals. She has a photo of an eagle who was injured and cannot be released. **Hladky:** The Ohio Bird Sanctuary in Mansfield? **Head:** There is a motion on the table, I need a second.

TABLE CASE #ZBA 25-102 TOPIC CONDITIONAL USE FOUL FIRST: HEAD; SECOND: STANTON

VOTE: HEAD: Y; STANTON Y; SWATON Y

RESULTS TABLED until the request has been reviewed by the legislative body of Oakwood Village to see how we can move forward with your request

Cirincione: We will contact you through Jim or Joel. **Head:** We have minutes from May 14th.

MINUTES OF MAY 14, 2025 FIRST MOTION: HEAD; SECOND: STANTON

VOTE: HEAD: Y; STANTON Y; SWATON Y

RESULTS APPROVED

MOTION TO ADJOURN: FIRST HEAD; SECOND SWATON

VOTE: HEAD Y; STANTON: Y; SWATON Y

RESULTS ADJOURNED 7:38