



# TOWN OF ULYSSES

## PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

### STAFF MEMO

**TO:** Board of Zoning Appeals  
**FROM:** Niels Tygesen, Planner  
**DATE:** January 15, 2026  
**MEETING DATE:** January 21, 2026  
**SUBJECT:** Wilson Accessory Dwelling Unit Area Variance

**PROJECT NUMBER:** VAR2512-02  
**PROJECT ADDRESS:** 1587 Taughannock Blvd  
**PARCEL NUMBER:** 18.-1-1.4  
**ZONING:** LS: Lake Shore Zone, Slope Overlay Ro (Rock outcrop)

### INTRODUCTION

The applicant and property owner, Victoria Wilson, proposes a renovation of an existing detached accessory building into a 2-story accessory dwelling unit (ADU). The proposed request is a setback of +/- 9 feet from the mean high water mark (MHWM) where, per the application, 50 feet is required.

### PROCESS

Per the Code of the Town of Ulysses ([CTU 212-44](#)), accessory dwelling units are permitted in the LS zone, but require site plan approval from the Planning Board. Per the Consolidated Laws of New York ([CLNY 62.16.274-A.3](#)), applications for variances related to site plan review by the Planning Board may be made directly to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). It is anticipated that the Planning Board will conduct sketch plan review of the proposal during their meeting on [January 20, 2026](#). The proposal is subject to SEQR, and it is also anticipated that the Planning Board will give notice for intent to act as Lead Agency in the environmental review and request comments from the BZA. Per State Law, the BZA may not issue a decision on the variance until the environmental review has been completed. The proposal was referred to Tompkins County Planning Department per the requirements of [CLNY 24.12-C.239-L, M, and N](#).

Per [CLNY Chapter 62.16.267-B.3.b](#), the BZA is required to consider the listed criteria for an area variance. Per [CLNY 62.16.267-B.3.c](#), if the BZA grants an area variance, it shall grant the minimum variance deemed necessary and adequate and at the same time preserve and protect the character of the neighborhood and the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Per [CLNY 62.16.267-B.4](#), the BZA shall have the authority to impose reasonable conditions and restrictions. The conditions shall be consistent with the spirit and intent of the zoning ordinance, and shall be imposed for the purpose of minimizing any adverse impact the variance may have on the neighborhood or community.

### STAFF COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSAL

Per the Codes, Rules, and Regulations of NY ([CRR-NY Title 6 Chapter V.E.608.11.a](#)), the MHWM for Cayuga Lake is 383.50 (1929 National Geodetic Vertical Datum). The application states 50 feet is required from the MHWM; however, per [CTU 212-124](#), the setback from the lake is 75 feet when within a slope overlay. Additionally, per [CTU 212-167.A](#), ADUs are permitted within 15 feet of the required setback, effectively making the setback from the lake 60 feet not 50. The proposed stairs to the north appear to be an expansion of the existing non-conformity and the proposed second floor will increase the existing building height of the structure. Per [CTU](#)

[212-156](#), substantial restoration of an existing non-conforming building (NCB) is permitted provided the proposed footprint is no larger than the existing NCB and the proposed height does not exceed the existing NCB. It appears an area variance will be required from this provision as well. Further, it appears the proposed second-floor deck supports closest to the lake are closer to the MHW than the current NCB.

## REQUEST TO THE BZA

Review the information in this memo and the [applicant's submission items](#), create a checklist of additional items the Board will require if any from the applicant in order to facilitate its deliberations, consider providing comments to the Planning Board on the environmental review, and discuss timeline for a public hearing.