

## **Monroe Township General Zoning Questions**

### **1. What is zoning, and why is it important?**

Zoning is often described as a vital tool for shaping the long-term vision and orderly growth of our community. Zoning is the process by which local governments regulate land use by dividing the township into distinct districts or “zones,” such as residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural. Each zone has specific standards governing permitted uses, building types, setbacks, height, lot size, and density.

Zoning is important because it:

1. **Promotes public health and safety** by ensuring incompatible uses—such as industrial next to residential—are appropriately separated.
2. **Protects property values** by maintaining consistent and predictable development patterns.
3. **Encourages responsible development** that aligns with available infrastructure, such as roads, water, sewer, and schools.
4. **Preserves community character** by guiding new growth in ways that reflect Monroe Township’s goals and identity.
5. **Provides transparency and predictability** for residents, property owners, and developers to make informed investment and land use decisions.

Monroe Township adopted its first Zoning Resolution on **November 18, 1987**. Since that time, our zoning regulations have continued to evolve to meet the needs of a growing and changing township. Today, zoning serves not only as a regulatory framework but also as a forward-thinking planning tool to help manage growth, protect our natural and built environment, and ensure a high quality of life for all who live, work, and invest in Monroe Township.

### **2. How do I find out the zoning classification for my property?**

You can determine the zoning classification of your property in Monroe Township by using one of the following methods:

Visit our Zoning Map online: You can view the official Zoning Map by visiting the Monroe Township website at <https://monroetwp-oh.gov/zoning.html>.

Contact the Planning and Zoning Department: We’re happy to assist you directly. Please call (513) 734-6462.

### **3. What uses are permitted in my zoning district?**

To find out what uses are permitted in your zoning district, you can review the Monroe Township Zoning Resolution, which outlines the allowable uses, conditional uses, and development standards for each zoning district.

The Zoning Resolution is available to view and download on our website at:

<https://monroetwp-oh.gov/zoning.html>

If you need help identifying your zoning district or interpreting the permitted uses, Contact the Planning and Zoning Department: We're happy to assist you directly. Please call (513) 734-6462.

#### 4. Can I rezone my property? What is the process?

Yes, property owners may request a zoning change (rezoning) at any time. However, before submitting an application, there are several important steps to take:

1. Determine Your Intended Use: Clearly identify how you plan to use the property and determine which zoning district best supports that use.
2. Schedule a Pre-Application Meeting: Contact the Monroe Township Planning and Zoning Department to schedule a meeting with staff. This allows us to review your proposal, provide guidance, and discuss whether rezoning is a viable option.

Review Key Documents: Before applying, we recommend reviewing the following documents, all available on the Monroe Township website:

- Zoning Resolution – outlines the purpose and regulations for each zoning district.
- Zoning Map – shows existing zoning classifications throughout the township.
- Growth Policy Plan – provides guidance on future land use and development patterns within Monroe Township.

Understand the Rezoning Process: Rezoning is a public process that includes several steps:

- Public Notification – Notices are sent to adjoining property owners and advertised in accordance with Ohio Revised Code.
- Clermont County Planning Commission – Reviews the request and provides a non-binding recommendation.
- Monroe Township Zoning Commission – Holds a public hearing and makes a formal recommendation.
- Monroe Township Board of Trustees – Conducts a final public hearing and issues a decision to approve or deny the rezoning request.

For questions or to schedule a pre-application meeting, contact the Planning and Zoning Department at (513) 734-6462.

#### 5. What is the difference between a variance and a conditional use permit?

A **variance** is a request to deviate from specific zoning requirements—such as setbacks, building height, or lot coverage—due to unique conditions or hardships related to the property. It does not change the permitted uses in the zoning district.

A **conditional use permit** allows a property owner to use their land in a way that is listed as “conditionally permitted” in the zoning code. These uses are generally compatible with the zoning district but may require additional review to ensure they meet specific conditions designed to protect surrounding properties (e.g., traffic, noise, or hours of operation).

## Permit & Application Questions

### 6. Do I need a zoning certificate for a shed, fence, or swimming pool?

Yes, a Zoning Certificate is required for any structure placed on a property.

A "structure" is defined as anything constructed or erected that is located on or attached to the ground. This includes—among other things—sheds, swimming pools, fences, buildings, mobile homes, walls, billboards, and flag poles.

### 7. How do I apply for a zoning permit?

You can apply for a zoning certificate online through our Web Access Portal or by visiting the Monroe Township offices to speak with one of our zoning staff.

For assistance, contact the Planning and Zoning Department at (513) 734-6462 for an appointment.

### 8. What documents do I need to submit with my structure application?

You will need the application completed and filled out to the best of your ability; the staff is there to help you find information that you may have difficulty finding. A site plan or aerial image with the proposed structure and size, and either a manufacturing rendering or engineering drawings

### 9. How long does it take to get a zoning permit approved?

The zoning process in Monroe Township can vary depending on the type of permit or request. For simpler permits—like zoning certificates for uses permitted by right, sign permits, or accessory structures—the review and approval process is often much quicker, typically within 1–5 business days, provided the application is complete and complies with zoning requirements.

For more complex applications—such as a Zoning Map Amendment (rezoning) or a Planned Development—approval typically takes 3 to 4 months, as it involves three public hearings:

- Clermont County Planning Commission
- Monroe Township Zoning Commission
- Monroe Township Trustees

Each of the bodies must review and act on the proposal, with required public notice and time between meetings.

If you're unsure what category your request falls into, the Zoning Inspector can guide you through the expected timeline.

**10. Can I start construction before my zoning permit is approved?**

No, you cannot start construction before your zoning permit is approved.

Per Monroe Township regulations, all construction, site work, or placement of structures must wait until a Zoning Certificate (permit) has been officially issued by the Township. Beginning work prior to approval is considered a violation of the Zoning Resolution and may result in:

- A stop-work order
- Potential fines or penalties
- Delays in your project
- Difficulty obtaining future approvals

To stay compliant, always wait until you receive formal written approval from the Zoning Inspector before beginning any work, including grading, foundation pouring, or structure installation.

**Accessory Structures & Residential Development**

**11. What are the property standards and requirements for my property?**

Property standards vary by zoning district and include regulations such as minimum lot area, setbacks (front, side, and rear), maximum structure height, and required frontage. These standards are outlined in the Lot Area and Setback Summary Table 7-3-1 located in the Zoning Resolution. Additional standards may apply for uses such as accessory structures, home occupations, and driveways. To determine the specific requirements for your property, please contact the Zoning Inspector with your address or parcel number.

**12. Can I build a garage or pole barn before building my house?**

Yes.

**13. Is there a limit on the number of accessory structures I can have, and how big can they be?**

Yes. According to Article 9, Section (2), (3), and (5) of the Monroe Township Zoning Resolution, the number and size of accessory structures on a residential lot depend on the lot size and zoning district. The following general rules apply:

**Number of Accessory Structures:**

You may have up to two accessory structures per residential lot by right, excluding swimming pools, fences, and small sheds 50 square feet or less.

If your lot is larger than one acre, you may have one additional accessory structure per acre, up to a maximum of four structures total.

If you wish to exceed this limit, you must receive approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) or be located in a Planned Development (PD) that allows it.

**14. Fences, Signs & Pools**

**1. Do I need a permit for a fence, and are there height restrictions?**

Yes, you need a zoning certificate (permit) for most fences, walls, and similar permanent structures as per Article 9, sec. (3, B-7c). and (6) of the Monroe Township Zoning Resolution.

**15. What are the sign regulations for my business?**

Business sign regulations depend on zoning district, sign type, and size, as regulated in Article 13: Signs. Generally:

1. You must obtain a zoning certificate before installing any permanent business sign.
2. There are limits on the number, size, height, illumination, and placement of signs.
3. Signs cannot be placed in the right-of-way or block visibility at driveways or intersections.

Please refer to the specific section of Article 13 (7) related to your business's zoning district for detailed standards.

**16. Are temporary signs (e.g., yard sale or political signs) regulated?**

Yes. Temporary signs such as yard sale, real estate, or political signs are allowed with limitations, including:

1. Size and duration limits.
2. Placement restrictions, especially avoiding the public right-of-way.
3. No permit is required for certain small temporary signs, but they must be removed promptly after the event or election.

(For exact dimensions and time limits, refer to the Political and Temporary Sign subsection in Article 13.)

**17. Are there zoning rules for swimming pools or hot tubs?**

Yes. Private swimming pools and hot tubs are permitted as accessory uses with the following requirements (Section 7.08):

1. Must be for residential use only.
2. Must be located behind the front building setback line and at least 10 feet from rear and side property lines.
3. Must be enclosed to prevent uncontrolled access:
  - A fence or wall at least 4 feet tall is required, unless the above-ground pool wall and attached fence meet this height.
    - Openings must be  $\leq 6$  inches and gates must be lockable.
  - Automatic pool covers may substitute for fencing, but only with Board of Zoning Appeals approval.

Community or club pools have separate, more stringent setback and fencing rules (minimum 50 feet from property lines, 6-foot fence, etc.).

**Agricultural & Rural Property**

**18. Are agricultural uses exempt from zoning regulations?**

Yes, in most cases. Per Section 519.21 of the Ohio Revised Code and Article 3, (B) of the Monroe Township Zoning Resolution, agricultural uses are generally exempt from local zoning regulations, especially on parcels over five (5) acres.

However, Monroe Township requires that anyone claiming an agricultural exemption must first submit an Agricultural Exemption Application. This ensures the Township can verify that the property is being used for bona fide agricultural purposes.

1. There is no fee for this application.
2. The Zoning Inspector reviews the application and determines if the exemption is applicable.

On lots under five (5) acres, zoning regulations may apply to:

3. Setbacks for agricultural buildings.
4. The number and type of animals kept.
5. Certain non-agricultural activities, like event spaces or retail sales.

This process helps prevent misuse of the agricultural exemption and ensures compliance with both local and state standards.

### **19. Can I keep animals or chickens on my residential property?**

Yes, but with limitations:

1. In agricultural or rural residential zoning districts, keeping animals (like chickens, goats, or horses) is typically permitted.

It's recommended to check your property's zoning district, HOA if applicable, and confirm with the Zoning Office.

### **20. Do I need a permit to build a barn or stable?**

Yes, a zoning certificate is required for all permanent structures, including barns, stables, and sheds—even for agricultural use.

However:

1. If the structure is used exclusively for agricultural purposes on a parcel over 5 acres, it may be exempt from zoning restrictions (though setbacks still apply).
2. You may still need a building permit from Clermont County, regardless of zoning exemptions.

Always check with the Township Zoning Office and Clermont County Building Department before construction.

### **21. Can I split or combine parcels in a rural zoning district?**

Yes, but it depends on:

1. Minimum lot size and frontage requirements for your zoning district (e.g., A or ER).
2. Access to a public road, or legal easement if no direct frontage.
3. Compliance with Clermont County Subdivision Regulations, which govern:
  - Lot splits (aka minor subdivisions).
  - Combinations or consolidation plats.

You must submit your proposal to the Clermont County Community & Economic Development Office and will need approval from Monroe Township as part of the surveying process.

## **Business & Commercial Development**

### **22. Can I run a business from my home?**

Yes, Monroe Township allows home occupations, but they must comply with the standards set forth in Sections Art. 8 Table 8-2-1, Art. 9 Sec. 3(B,1,2), Art. 9, Sec. (2), (4), and (5), Art. 19 (40).

You must ensure your home business complies with these rules to operate legally in Monroe Township.

### **23. What are the requirements for opening a business in Monroe Township?**

To open any commercial business (i.e. not a home-based occupation), you must:

1. Apply for and obtain a Zoning Certificate or business zoning permit appropriate to the zoning district in which the property sits (e.g. B-1, B-2, or I-1)
2. Ensure the proposed use is permitted in that district (check Articles 7 and 8 Tables 7-2-1 and 8-2-1, Art. 8, Sec. (1)(2)(3), Art. 9, Sec (1)(C), Art. 9. Sec. (1) (D), Art. 9, Sec. (1)(F), Art. 13, Sec. (10), depending on the district)
3. Submit required documentation including plot plan, setbacks, parking count, etc., and pay fees via the Commercial / Industrial Building Structure Permit or Re-Occupancy Permit forms available from the township zoning department
4. If a conditional use or variance is needed, you'll appear before the Zoning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals, following prescribed procedures
5. All applications are reviewed by the Zoning Inspector, who ensures compliance with Resolution standards

In short: locate your business in a district where it's allowed, secure a permit, follow all regulations for signage, parking, setbacks, etc., and get site plan review if needed.

### **24. Can I put up a new sign for my business?**

Yes, subject to Article 13 (Signs) of the Zoning Resolution. The specific rules depend on your zoning district.

1. Signs require a Sign Permit, application submitted via the Township's Forms page (Sign Permit application)



## **25. What zoning regulations apply to food trucks or mobile vendors?**

The Monroe Township Zoning Resolution does not specifically address food trucks or mobile food vendors. There are no provisions that mention mobile vending, food trucks, or transient vendors operating from vehicles.

That said:

1. Transient door-to-door vendors (e.g. solicitors) must register and obtain a Transient Vendor Permit under **Township Resolution 06-02-2022** (valid 90 days,\$150 fee)
2. For food trucks/mobile food units, the following external regulations apply:
  - State and County health departments require a Mobile Food Service Operation License and health inspection compliance.
  - The Ohio Fire Code (OFC 2017, as amended) imposes detailed safety standards for mobile food units: spacing from buildings and other units, fire extinguishers, LP-gas container rules, electrical wiring, egress, CO detectors, no-smoking signs, etc

In practice, operating food trucks in Monroe Township likely requires:

1. Compliance with Ohio health and fire safety regulations.
2. Possibly a Transient Vendor Permit (if considered transient vending).
3. Review by the Township zoning or planning department to confirm whether the operation is allowed in the chosen location (likely restricted to commercial or industrial zoning districts, not allowed in residential districts).
4. If operating on private commercial property (e.g. parking lot), the property owner's permission and possibly a zoning review.

Contact the Zoning Inspector at 513-734-6462 to ask whether your specific food-truck location is permissible.

## **Zoning Enforcement & Violations**

### **26. How do I report a zoning violation or property maintenance concerns?**

To report a zoning violation or property maintenance concerns in Monroe Township, you may contact the Township Zoning Inspector, by calling (513) 734-6462. You may also submit your complaint via email by completing a Zoning Complaint Form and either e-mailing to [kbennett@monroetwp-oh.gov](mailto:kbennett@monroetwp-oh.gov) or dropping it in the drop box located at the Township Hall. Additionally, complaints can be made in person to any staff member at the Monroe Township Hall, located at 2828 State Route 222.

**27. What happens after I file a zoning complaint?**

Once a zoning complaint is received, Monroe Township will conduct a thorough investigation to determine if a violation of the Zoning Resolution has occurred. If a violation is confirmed, the property owner or responsible party will be notified and required to take corrective action. If the issue falls outside the scope of the Zoning Resolution, it will be referred to the Clermont County Sheriff's Office or the appropriate agency for further investigation and enforcement.

**28. What are the consequences of building without a zoning permit?**

If construction or development occurs without first obtaining a zoning permit, the property owner will be issued a violation notice and given Thirty (30) days to correct the issue. Failure to comply within that time frame may result in legal action. If the matter is taken to court and the individual is found guilty under Ohio Revised Code Section 519.99, they may be subject to a fine of \$500.00 per violation for each day the violation continues.

**29. How do I appeal a zoning decision or enforcement notice?**

If you wish to appeal a decision made by the Monroe Township Board of Zoning Appeals, the appeal must be filed with the Clermont County Court of Common Pleas. However, if you are appealing a zoning enforcement notice issued by Township staff, you may file an administrative appeal directly with the Zoning Inspector for Monroe Township.

## **Development & Subdivision**

**30. What is a Planned Development (PD) and how is it different from standard zoning?**

A Planned Development (PD) is a flexible zoning classification that permits a coordinated mix of residential, commercial, and open space uses within a unified, master-planned development. In Monroe Township, PDs are regulated by Article 16 of the Zoning Resolution and are subject to a comprehensive review and approval process by the Zoning Commission and Board of Trustees.

Unlike standard zoning districts which impose rigid, uniform standards — including minimum lot sizes, setbacks, permitted uses, and density limits — a PD allows for creative and site-specific design solutions that can better reflect the topography, environmental constraints, and community goals for a property.

In a PD, developers work closely with Township staff and elected officials to craft a custom zoning and site development plan. In exchange for this increased design flexibility, applicants are required to submit detailed development plans, including architectural themes, internal street layouts, utility concepts, pedestrian connectivity, open space preservation, and stormwater management strategies — all of which are subject to public input and formal approval.

### **Benefits of PDs Compared to Standard Zoning:**

1. **Greater Design Flexibility:** PDs can incorporate a variety of housing types (e.g., single-family, townhomes, or patio homes) within one community, rather than being limited to the strict parameters of a single zoning classification like R-1 (low-density single-family only).
2. **Preservation of Open Space:** PDs often result in more thoughtful preservation of natural features such as creeks, woodlands, or hillsides, as the design can cluster development away from sensitive areas while maintaining overall density.
3. **Improved Infrastructure and Connectivity:** Because PDs are master-planned, they typically include sidewalks, trails, private amenities, internal circulation routes, and improved access to public roads — elements that may not be required in a conventional subdivision.
4. **Higher Quality and More Cohesive Development:** PDs promote architectural consistency, landscaping standards, and amenity packages (like clubhouses, parks, or ponds), helping to ensure a well-designed and marketable product.
5. **Efficient Land Use:** Especially on challenging sites or those located near major corridors, PDs can allow for strategic land use that respects neighboring uses while promoting economic development or residential variety.
6. **Public Participation and Oversight:** Because PDs require public hearings and review by the Zoning Commission and Board of Trustees, they allow for more public transparency and input compared to traditional zoning permits.

In short, Planned Developments offer a flexible, collaborative approach to land use planning that can result in better-designed, higher-quality neighborhoods that align with Monroe Township's long-term vision for growth and development.

### **31. Can I divide my property into smaller lots?**

Yes, property owners may divide land into smaller lots; however, the process depends on the number of lots and the applicable subdivision regulations.

All lot splits or subdivisions in Monroe Township must comply with the Clermont County Subdivision Regulations and the Monroe Township Zoning Resolution. For minor subdivisions (generally five or fewer lots, with no new public roads), the Clermont County Planning Commission reviews and approves the request. Major subdivisions (six or more lots or those requiring new roads or infrastructure) undergo a more extensive review process, including preliminary and final plat approvals.

Before starting the process, you should contact both the Township Zoning Department and the Clermont County Planning and Development Department to ensure zoning compliance and understand subdivision requirements.

### **32. Who approves new subdivisions or commercial developments?**

Approval depends on the type and scope of the proposed development:

#### **New Subdivisions (lot splits, minor or major subdivisions):**

These are reviewed and approved by the Clermont County Planning Commission in accordance with the County Subdivision Regulations and Ohio Revised Code Chapter 711.

#### **Commercial Developments:**

All commercial development proposals are initially reviewed by the Monroe Township Zoning Department for compliance with the Township Zoning Resolution. If the property is located within a Planned Development (PD) district or includes a Conditional Use, additional review and approval may be required from one or more of the following:

**Zoning Commission:** Reviews proposals such as Planned Developments, Zoning Map or Text Amendments, and makes formal recommendations to the Township Trustees. This board ensures proposed developments are compatible with existing land uses and consistent with the Township's long-term planning goals.

**Township Trustees:** As the Township's elected officials, the Trustees make final decisions on zoning amendments, Planned Developments, and certain zoning-related matters. They consider recommendations from the Zoning Commission and staff before making a decision in the public interest.

**Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA):** Reviews and acts on Conditional Use applications, variances, and appeals. For commercial developments that require a Conditional Use, the BZA must grant approval before the project can move forward.

#### **Additional Agencies Providing Input:**

Several other agencies may review development proposals to ensure compliance with technical and environmental standards:

**Clermont County Engineer's Office:** Reviews traffic impacts, access management, stormwater drainage, and road construction requirements.

**Clermont County Water Resources Department:** Reviews water and sanitary sewer availability, capacity, and connection requirements.

**Clermont Soil and Water Conservation District:** Provides input on erosion and sediment control, stormwater management, and conservation practices.

**Clermont County Building Inspection Department:** Reviews building plans for code compliance, permits, and inspections.

**Clermont County Public Health:** Reviews septic systems, water wells, and health-related site considerations for developments not served by public utilities.

**ODOT (if applicable):** Reviews access to state routes and may require a permit for new driveways or traffic impacts.

**Monroe Township Fire District (MTFD):** Reviews for compliance with fire service.

These agencies play a critical role in ensuring that any new development is safe, environmentally sound, and meets local, county, and state standards.

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## **Meetings & Public Involvement**

### **33. When does the Zoning Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals meet?**

**Zoning Commission:** Meets on an as needed. Meetings are held when zoning cases are submitted or when Township staff have topics for discussion.

**Board of Zoning Appeals:** Meets also on an as-needed basis depending on submitted zoning appeals or agenda items from Township staff.

### **34. How can I be notified of zoning changes in my area?**

Monroe Township follows all public notice requirements outlined in the Ohio Revised Code § 519.12 and § 519.14, which govern zoning amendments and Board of Zoning Appeals hearings. These statutes require public notification via:

1. Posting notices on the Township website and official social media platforms
2. Mailing notices to adjoining property owners
3. Publishing legal notices in a newspaper of general circulation (when required)

If you have questions about any proposed zoning changes or would like to verify current zoning activity in your area, please contact the Zoning Department at (513) 734-6462 or email the Zoning Inspector at [kbennett@monroetwp-oh.gov](mailto:kbennett@monroetwp-oh.gov)

### **35. How can I speak or submit input at a public hearing?**

You may attend a public hearing in person and speak during the public comment portion. If you are unable to attend, you may submit your comments via email to the Zoning Inspector, at [kbennett@monroetwp-oh.gov](mailto:kbennett@monroetwp-oh.gov). Please include your name and address. All emailed comments received prior to the hearing will be read into the record by staff.

**36. Where can I view current zoning applications or development proposals?**

Zoning applications and development proposals are available for public review at the Monroe Township Administration Building, located at:

2828 State Route 222, Bethel, OH 45106

By Appointment.