WHAT IS A VARIANCE?
A Variance is authority extended to the owner to use his property in a manner forbidden by the zoning regulations. A Variance does not create a change of zone for a particular parcel, but authorizes the landowner to use his property in a manner prohibited by regulations.

PLEASE NOTE:
ALL APPLICATIONS TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MUST STATE A HARDSHIP IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED FOR A VARIANCE.

WHAT IS A HARDSHIP?
A hardship is a peculiar or unique feature of a particular piece of property that PREVENTS the landowner from making a reasonable use of the property in conformance with the existing zoning regulations. A hardship has nothing to do with the personal circumstances of the landowner. The fact that the owner might be able to make a more profitable use of the land, if it were not for the zoning regulations, does NOT equate to hardship. Proof of a true hardship is a legal requirement for a zoning board of appeals to issue a variance.

State of Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-6
• Financial considerations are NOT a valid reason for issuing a variance; the possible economic advantage to the landowner is not sufficient. The fact that the proposed use will not be detrimental, and may even be beneficial, to the neighborhood is not sufficient.
• Self-created hardship is not sufficient grounds for granting a variance; i.e., the landowner must not have taken any action that caused the hardship to occur. In some cases, the simple fact that a landowner purchased his or her property with knowledge of the zoning restrictions may prevent a valid claim of hardship. When a condition which results in the hardship is due to one’s own voluntary act, the zoning board is without the power to grant a variance.
• The hardship must arise from the operation of the regulations on the land, not on the landowner, and the land must be ‘peculiarly disadvantaged’ by the regulation for which the variance is sought.
• Disappointment in the use of property does not constitute exceptional difficulty or unusual hardship and a variance should not be granted unless it is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance.
• A hardship resulting from the peculiar topography or condition of the land, or a peculiar location which makes the property unsuitable for the use permitted in the zone in which it lies, may well be such a hardship as is contemplated by the ordinance.