

VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING MINUTES
May 10, 2018

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 10, 2018 in the Community Room of the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Martin, Members Berni, Dombrowski, Lucchese, O'Brien, Ruehle, and Swindal

Absent: None.

Also Present: Clifford Radatz, Secretary

II. PUBLIC HEARING - VARIATION REQUEST FOR 631 EDGEWOOD PLACE

Chairman Martin explained the public hearing was being held because the Board of Trustees remanded this matter to the Zoning Board to consider another design for the garage in question.

Secretary Radatz swore in all parties wishing to speak.

In response to a request from Chairman Martin, Mr. Radatz outlined the differences in the applications that have been submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Radatz summarized how the lot in question is unusual, due to the shape and diagonal sides of the property.

Under the previous plan three variations were requested for side yard setback, combined side yard setback, and for the setback to the roof overhang. Under the previous plan submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals, the westerly corner of the proposed garage would be 3 ft. from the property line and the roof overhang would be 1 ft. 8 inches off the property line. To comply with the zoning ordinance, the overhang would need to be 3 ft. off the property line. The proposed side yard setback was 3 ft. off the property line. To comply with the zoning ordinance, the side yard setback to the building must be 10% of lot width or 9.5 ft. for this lot. The proposed combined side yard setback was 17 ft. To comply with zoning, the combined side yard setback must be 25% of the lot width or over 20 ft. for this lot. The revised plan that was submitted moves the garage further away from the south westerly property line so that the westerly corner of the garage is 5 ft. off the property line. This brings the roof overhang into compliance with the zoning ordinance by making it at least 3 ft. off the property line. It also reduces the variations that were requested to the side yard setback and the combined side yard setback.

Maureen Huston, 631 Edgewood Place, started her presentation and agreed with everything Mr. Radatz said, but added that she cannot put garage in the rear third of the property due to the power lines because ComEd refuses to move the lines. She cannot put the garage in the north end of the property line due to its proximity to the neighboring house. She cannot attach the garage to

the house because it would eliminate all of the fenestrations on the first and second floor, taking all of their southerly windows. For the additional problem with drainage she brought in an engineer, Mr. Schloff, to discuss moving the garage further back in yard and issues with drainage. She also pointed out flaws with the other proposals as one would violate ComEd's distance requirements. She said the other violates setback requirements which she states Mr. Radatz would have to address. Because it is not a rectangular lot she required a lot of assistance finding the lines.

Robert Schloff, Engineer, stated pushing the structure back into the lot does not make any sense. His approach is to not fill in anything that would cause distress to somebody else. He states he does not want a project to just work, but it should look nice and blend.

Member Ruehle stated that the property has a low area in the back that water sits in and asks what would be required to move that body of water off the property. Mr. Schloff answered if they filled anything in, they will have to dig out something else to make a place for the water to flow. He could even out and flatten the property but that would "box up the property" and take away what he calls "the soft lines and natural contours." Member Ruehle asked where would there be a logical discharge point. Mr. Schloff noted that the lowest parts of the yard are to the sides of the house. There are two ways to get water past the house. The first way is to cut a notch and lower it down and the other way would be to pipe it to the south west, where there is a drain but this would be a long way. It would go to the street and then wherever it is lowest so probably to the drain that is approximately 150 ft. to the southwest.

Chairman Martin asked Mr. Schloff if all the analysis has to do with difficulties of moving the garage further back towards the back of the lot. Mr. Schloff answered the issue is if the garage is moved back towards the rear, then there will be more pond area to restore.

Chairman Martin asked about the flooding impacts on the property if the garage is built where proposed.

Member Berni and Mr. Schloff discussed if the property will absorb water with the structure being erected or if the area would lose some of the absorbent quality of the property. Mr. Schloff explained that the water would need to be directed to the driveway so that it could end up in the street.

Member Berni asked if building the garage further back will help reduce the ponding, to which Mr. Schloff explained that it would reduce ponding if they fill it in, and building a structure would fill it in.

Chairman Martin clarified that the Board should be discussing moving the garage closer to the existing house structure, not pushing it farther back into the ponding area. The Board never suggested moving the garage structure father back into the ponding area. He and Kevin Horan, 623 Edgewood Place, discussed the removal of the trees to allow room for a driveway on the south side of the property.

Mr. Horan objected to the proposed placement of the structure and stated the further back the structure is moved into the rear third of the lot, the less variances will be needed and he is not

certain why they cannot build closer to power lines since his garage is within 36 inches of those lines. Ms. Huston stated the ComEd issue was not raised when she built garage next door. She continued that re-grading is not a possibility because they would displace too much of the water. She also cannot afford to do a permeable driveway, but she could install an underground pipe to a bubbler to the front, where water would run off into the street.

Members Berni, Ruehle, and Chairman Martin, as well as Ms. Huston discussed the removal of the trees in the front yard. Ms. Huston stated that she will probably be taking out the smaller oak tree in the front yard, closest to 623 Edgewood Place to make room for the driveway, though she does not know when exactly yet.

Ms. Huston and Member Ruehle discussed how moving the building another 4 ft. 7 inches towards the house would avoid any variances but Ms. Huston had concern for ventilation and light, as well as fire wall issues if they were to move the garage closer. If the garage was built that close to the house it would take away any view out of the southern windows and almost all the light coming in, which she would want to avoid.

Chairman Martin asked if there was anyone else who would like to address the Board. Hearing none, he closed the public portion of the hearing.

Member O'Brien asked what the reasonable distance between a garage and building would need to be. Secretary Radatz explained the building code requires 15 feet between a garage and another structure. If it is under 15 ft. but over 10 ft. away a heat detector must be installed in garage. When it is under than 10 ft., but still over 5 ft., the inside of the garage must be lined with gypsum board. Adding a layer of gypsum board around the inside of garage adds 20 minutes in the event of a fire and buys time for the Fire Department to arrive. If the distance is less than 5 ft. it is required that the outside of garage be made with non-combustible materials.

Secretary Radatz explained that they are just dealing with this at a zoning level now and no plans have been submitted with details.

Chairman Martin asked if the garage could be moved closer to the house without increasing the Building Code requirement to which Secretary Radatz answered the distance between the two structures could be reduced to 5 ft. from 6 ft. Member Ruehle noted that then the roof eave is 3 ft. beyond that and 2 ft. from the structure. Member Ruehle then stated that every foot that one structure is closer to another the more you increase risk of spread of fire and there is a trade-off of setback versus fire safety.

A MOTION was made by Member Ruehle and SECONDED by Member Dombrowski that the Zoning Board of Appeals recommend to the Board of Trustees that the current variation be granted as shown in the drawing labeled D1.

Ayes: Members Ruehle and Dombrowski

Nays: Members Swindal, O'Brien, Lucchese, Berni and Chairman Martin

Motion failed.

Chairman Martin stated that he finds that standards 1 and 8 have not been met.

A MOTION was made by Chairman Martin and SECONDED by Member O'Brien that the Zoning Board of Appeals recommend to the Board of Trustees that the requested variation not be granted.

Ayes: Members Swindal, O'Brien, Lucchese, Berni and Chairman Martin

Nays: Members Ruehle and Dombrowski

Motion passed.

III. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Member Ruehle and SECONDED by Member Dombrowski to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m.


Ayes: Berni, Lucchese, O'Brien, Ruehle, Swindal, Chairman Martin, Dombrowski

Nays: None.

Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:

Clifford Radatz, Secretary

 Date: 5/25/2018
Frank Martin, Chairman
Zoning Board of Appeals