RIVER FOREST
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
MEETING AGENDA

A meeting of the River Forest Zoning Board of Appeals will be held on Thursday, December 10, 2026, at 7:30 P.M. in the Community Room of the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

Anyone interested in this matter is encouraged to share their comments with the Zoning Board of Appeals. If you are unable to attend the public hearing, you may submit written comments to Jessica Spencer, Assistant Village Administrator, by 12:00 p.m. on the day of the hearing. Comments may also be emailed in advance to jspencer@vrf.us.

You may listen to the meeting by clicking here:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89224408478

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of the Minutes from the meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals on August 27, 2026

III. Public Hearing – Zoning Variation Request for 847 Ashland Ave – Fence construction type and height regulations

IV. Approval of Findings of Fact for the Zoning Variation for 847 Ashland Ave

V. Public Comment

VI. Adjournment

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

August 27, 2026

A Special Meeting of the River Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held at 7:30 pm on Thursday, August 27, 2026, in the Community Room of the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Martin called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. Meeting started by calling roll. Upon a roll call the following people were:

Present: Chairman Frank Martin, Members Mark Poulin, Chris Plywacz, Ron Lucchesi, and Corina Davis

Absent: Members Mary Shoemaker and Sheila Price

Also present at the meeting: Jessica Spencer, Assistant Village Administrator, Luke Masella, Deputy Clerk, and Christian Luis, Secretary.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS ON MAY 14, 2026

Chairman Martin asked if there were any comments about the minutes from the last meeting, there were none.

A MOTION was made by Member Lucchesi and seconded by Member Davis to approve the minutes of the May 14, 2026, meeting.

Ayes: Chairman Frank Martin, Members Poulin, Plywacz, Lucchesi, and Davis

Abstain: None

Motion passed.

Secretary Luis swore in those who wished to testify.

III. PUBLIC HEARING – ZONING VARIATION REQUEST FOR 632 BONNIE BRAE PL – SECONDARY FRONT YARD SETBACKS AND LOT COVERAGE REGULATIONS

Chairman Martin introduced the applicants, Andrew and Jennifer Stein, represented by Mark Zinni, who presented their application. He is the architect on this project. He noted the family wanted to add a mudroom to their home. He noted the increased lot coverage request is for .9%. The hardship in this case is due to the lot size. The requested variance for the secondary side yard setback detailed the mudroom taking up space in the northern edge of the property.

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Jennifer Stein, the applicant, spoke on behalf of their application. She noted the entryway to their home is small and a bit of a hazard for her family. She also noted that she and her husband spoke with the neighbors and they support this project.

No other members of the public wished to speak on this topic.

Chairman Martin asked about the current lot coverage of the site. Mr. Zinni noted that it is 30.1% of the lot, 1,935 sq ft, and increase by 77 sq ft with the addition but decrease it by the size of the shed to be removed, net roughly 30 sq ft.

Chairman Martin noted that the survey shows the garage and the shed as one common building. He asked if the shed can be removed without causing damage to the garage, which isn't noted on the survey. Mr. Zinni responded yes, it can be removed without causing damage.

Member Poulin asked if the homeowners would like to remove the shed. Mr. Zinni stated they would rather keep it but were trying to keep the lot coverage as low as possible. Chairman Martin suggested making it a condition of the recommendation.

Chairman Martin closed the public comment portion of the hearing.

Member Plywacz noted that he appreciates removing the shed from the lot and the interest of the family to be safe. Member Poulin agreed, as did Chairman Martin.

A MOTION was made by Member Lucchesi and seconded by Member Plywacz to approve the zoning variation request for 632 Bonnie Brae. Contingent upon tearing the shed down.

Ayes: Chairman Frank Martin, Members Poulin, Plywacz, Lucchesi, and Davis
Nays: None
Motion passed.
Chairman Martin directed the applicant to follow up with staff for the next steps.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

1) Jim Cone – Asked if this group has intention to discuss the O'Hare Flyer.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Cone and Jim Cotton addressed the proposed O'Hare Flyer rail project that had recently been announced. Assistant Village Administrator Spencer and Chairman Martin noted that the meeting was not the appropriate forum to discuss the project.

V. Approval of Findings of Fact for the Zoning Variation for 632 Bonnie Brae.

Chairman Martin asked for any questions from the Board on the findings.

A MOTION was made by Member Lucchesi and seconded by Member Davis to approve the zoning variation request for 632 Bonnie Brae.

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Ayes: Chairman Frank Martin, Members Poulin, Plywacz, Lucchesi, and Davis
Nays: None
Motion passed.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Member Davis to dismiss the meeting, seconded by Member Plywacz to adjourn. A unanimous voice vote passed the motion.
Meeting Adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Submitted:

_____
Christian Luis, Secretary

_____ Date: _____
Frank Martin, Chairman
Zoning Board of Appeals

DRAFT

RIVER FOREST
Proud Heritage • Bright Future

Village President
Catherine Adduci

Village Clerk
Rosa Castellano

Village Trustees
Erika Bachner
Kathleen Brennan
Lisa Gillis
Megan Keskitalo
Robert O'Connell
Respicio F. Vazquez

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 20, 2026

TO: Zoning Board of Appeals

FROM: Christian Luis CL
Building Department Manager

SUBJECT: Variation Request – 847 Ashland Ave

Cynthia Gronkiewicz & Mark Tomera, owners of the property at 847 Ashland Ave, have applied for a variation to the fence construction type, Type 3 fence (4-8-3-C), for a proposed 7 foot high privacy wood fence to replace the existing same fence.

The proposed fence, as shown on the submitted site plan, will be situated in the side yard at the southern property line where the old fence exists. Please note that the owners have indicated that this new fence will replace a 30 year old fence that is currently 7 foot high and fully private. Village records indicate that the most recent fence permit obtained by the current owners was issued in August 1997, but to replace an existing 8 foot high wood fence with same. No records were found that a variation was obtained, if any was required at the time.

For fences located in a side yard, section 4-8-3-C for fence construction types allows for a Type 3 fence, which shall be of any approved type of fence construction... The maximum height of a type 3 fence shall be seven feet above the established grade; provided, however, that the portion of a fence which is higher than six feet above the established grade shall have an area open for view of at least fifty percent. That portion of the fence below six feet above the established grade shall not be regulated in regard to the area open to view.

The applicant is requesting that the upper 1 foot of each fence section for the new fence be solid, so the entire 7 foot height and run of the fence is private.

If the Zoning Board wishes to recommend the approval of this variation to the Village Board of Trustees, the following motion should be made:

Motion to recommend to the Village Board of Trustees the approval of a variation to Section 4-8-3-C for the fence construction types at 847 Ashland Ave.

If you have any questions regarding this application, please do not hesitate to call me.

Thank you.

APPLICATION FOR ZONING VARIATION
Village of River Forest Zoning Board of Appeals

Address of Subject Property: 847 Ashland Ave **Date of Application:** 10/30/2026

Applicant		Architect / Contractor	
Name: Cynthia Gronkiewicz/Mark Tomera		**Name:** Top Line Fence	
Address: 847 Ashland Avenue		**Address:** 2130 N Cicero	
City/State/Zip: River Forest, IL 60305		**City/State/Zip:** Chicago, IL 60639	
Phone:	**Fax:**	**Phone:** (773) 637-2122	**Fax:**
Email: [redacted]		**Email:** TopLineFence@aol.com	

Relationship of Applicant to Property (owner, contract purchaser, legal counsel, etc.): owner

Zoning District of Property: ● R1 ○ R2 ○ R3 ○ R4 ○ C1 ○ C2 ○ C3 ○ PRI ○ ORIC

Please check the type(s) of variation(s) being requested:

☐ Zoning Code ☑ Building Code (fence variations only)

Application requirements: Attached you will find an outline of the other application requirements. Please read the attached carefully, the applicant will be responsible for submitting all of the required information.

Also attached for your information are the Zoning Board of Appeals "Rules of Procedure" for their public hearings.

Application Deadline: A complete variation application must be submitted no later than the 15th day of the month in order to be heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals in the following month. The Zoning Board of Appeals meets on the second Thursday of each month.

SIGNATURES:

The undersigned hereby represent for the purpose of inducing the Village of River Forest to take the action herein requested, that all statements herein and on all related attachments are true and that all work herein mentioned will be done in accordance with the ordinances of the Village of River Forest and the laws of the State of Illinois.

Owner: Cynthia Gronkiewicz Date: October 30, 2026

Applicant (if other than Owner): _____ Date: _____

Application Fee: A non-refundable fee of **$750.00** must accompany every application for variation, which includes the cost of recording the variation with the County. Checks should be made out to the Village of River Forest.

APPLICATION FOR ZONING VARIATION

Address of Subject Property: 847 Ashland Ave **Date of Application:** 10/20/2026

Summary of Requested Variation(s):

Applicable Code Section (Title, Chapter, Section) *Example:* 10-8-5, lot coverage	**Code Requirement(s)** *Example:* no more than 30% of a lot	**Proposed Variation(s)** *Example:* 33.8% of the lot (**detailed calculations an a separate sheet are required**)
4-8-3-C Type 3 fence	• 6 foot fence allowed • 7 foot fence above grade height if top 1 foot has ~50% visibility is permitted	Request 7 foot height solid cedar fence to replace in kind to maintain safety and privacy with neighbor to south.
		• South lot line is 183'-10 3/4" • Replacement fence: (see plat 92 ft + 22 ft + 30" = 114 ft + 30" for tree build around • Wood fence would run along ~62% of south property line

THE APPLICANT IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT DETAILED LONG HAND CALCULATIONS AND MEASUREMENTS FOR ALL APPLICABLE ZONING PROVISIONS. APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED COMPLETE WITHOUT THESE CALCULATIONS AND MEASUREMENTS.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MAJOR VARIATIONS

A. **General Requirements.**

1. A complete copy of the application shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator for processing. The written application form, bound together with supplementary exhibits shall contain at least the following information:

   a. The name, address and phone number of the applicant.

   b. If the applicant is not the owner of the property in question, (i) the name, address and phone number of the owner, (ii) the interest of the applicant in the subject property, (iii) proof of consent by the owner to the filing of the application, and (iv) any beneficiaries of the owner or developer.

   c. The date of the application.

   d. Identification of the property in question by street address. If there is no street address, the applicant must provide a description of the location of the property in relation to surrounding streets and properties.

   e. A short, written description of the nature of the proposed variation, development or re-development, and the proposed use(s).

   f. A plat of survey of the property which includes the location and dimensions of all existing or planned easements, land subject to covenant, rights-of-way, scale and north arrow.

2. In addition, the applicant shall submit drawings which graphically explain the site's present conditions and how they would be affected if the proposed variance were granted. Information should include, but not be limited to, the proposed structure's relation to the property line, nearby trees, and other existing structures on both the applicant's and the neighbor's properties. Information on the proposed structure's height, type of construction and depth of eaves should be provided. All drawings should be dimensioned and to scale. A copy of the plat of survey with this information noted on it would be sufficient.

3. **Submit one (1) hard copy of the completed application - initially. Once the application has been reviewed by Village Staff, and after the applicant makes all necessary changes, the applicant will then submit a total of nine more hard copies and one electronic copy of the completed application.**

B. In addition to the requirements identified in Section A, the following additional information shall also be provided on the drawings accompanying an application for a variation:

1. The height in stories and feet, gross floor area, lot coverage (footprint area of the proposed structures in relation to the area of the site, expressed as a percentage), and floor area ratio of all existing or proposed buildings located on the lot where the development is to take place.

2. If the development is a multiple-family residential development, the number of one-, two-, three-, or four-bedroom dwelling units proposed for construction.

3. Dimensions of the development site, indicated along the property line. Distances to all buildings, structure, freestanding signs, on adjoining properties.

4. The location of freestanding signs on the site.

5. Identification of vehicular areas including parking areas, loading areas, and circulation areas, and showing the layout and size of parking spaces, aisles and direction of travel on or in lanes, aisles, or driveways.

6. Legal documentation establishing homeowners associations or other legal entities responsible for control over required common areas and facilities.

7. It is also recommended that the application include photographs of the subject property/building, and written testimony/letters from neighboring property owners indicating support of proposed project.

C. No order of the Village Board of Trustees permitting a variation from the provisions of the Zoning Code shall be valid for a period longer than nine months, unless such use or structure is initiated within such period; provided, however, that where such use permitted is dependent upon the erection or alteration of a building, such order shall continue in force and effect if a building permit for erection or alteration is obtained within such period of nine months and such erection or alteration is started and proceeds to completion in accordance with the terms of such permit.

A variation shall be deemed to authorize only the particular construction or development which was applied for. A variation shall automatically become null and void if such construction or development is removed and not replaced within nine months following such removal.

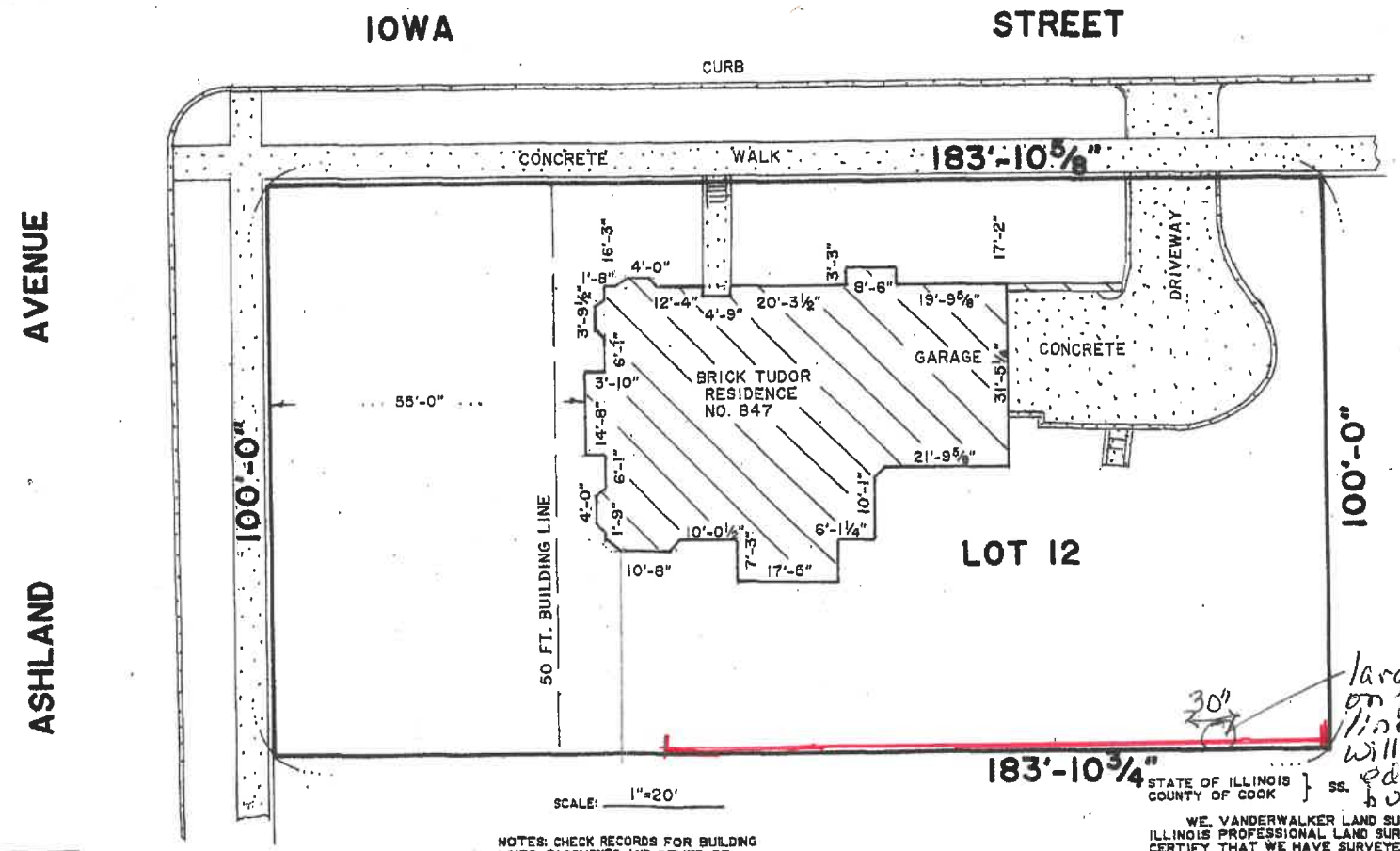
847 Ashland

VANDERWALKER
LAND SURVEYORS

Plat of Survey

12543 S. 73rd AVE.
PALOS HEIGHTS, ILL. 60463-1418
PHONE (708) 361-1161
FAX (708) 361-7818

Lot 12 in Block 12 in Waller and Others Subdivision of part of Northwoods in the South 1/2 of the East 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of Section 1, Township 39 North, Range 12 East of the Third Principal Meridian in Cook County, Illinois.



SCALE: 1"=20'

ORDERED BY:
GLOOR REALTY

ORDER No. 969-32

THIS PLAT WAS PREPARED FOR REAL ESTATE SALE AND OR FINANCING PURPOSES, NO MONUMENTATION WAS RESET. BEFORE ESTABLISHING FENCE LINES OR CONSTRUCTION, A "STAKED" SURVEY SHOULD BE PERFORMED TO VERIFY CORNERS.

NOTES: CHECK RECORDS FOR BUILDING LINES, EASEMENTS AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS IF ANY NOT SHOWN.

DO NOT ASSUME THAT PROPERTY STAKES ARE AT PROPERTY CORNERS UNLESS SHOWN HEREON ALSO DO NOT ASSUME THAT PROPERTY STAKES REMAIN IN PLACE.

COMPARE ALL POINTS BEFORE BUILDING AND REPORT ANY DIFFERENCE.

STATE OF ILLINOIS } ss.
COUNTY OF COOK }

WE, VANDERWALKER LAND SURVEYORS, LICENSED ILLINOIS PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE SURVEYED THE ABOVE DESCRIBED PROPERTY ON THE HEREON DRAWN PLAT.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL THIS 25th.
DAY OF SEPTEMBER IS 96

Frank C. Vanderwalker

LICENSED PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR No. 1925
TO INSURE AN AUTHENTIC COPY SURVEYOR'S SEAL MUST BE IMPRESSED.

STANDARDS FOR MAJOR VARIATIONS (SECTION 10-5-4F)

A major variation shall be recommended by the Zoning Board of Appeals only if it makes findings, based upon the evidence presented to it, that each of the following standards has been met:

1. The physical surroundings, shape or typographical conditions of the specific property involved with bring a specific hardship upon the owner as distinguished from an inconvenience if the strict letter of the regulations were to be carried out;

2. The aforesaid unique physical condition did not result from an action of any person having an interest in the property, but was created by natural forces or was the result or was the result of governmental action, other than the adoption of this Zoning Ordinance, for which no compensation was paid;

3. The conditions upon which the petition for variation is based may not be applicable generally to other property within the same zoning classification;

4. The purpose of the variation is not based predominantly upon a desire for economic gain;

5. The granting of the variation shall not be detrimental to the public welfare or unduly injurious to the enjoyment, use, or development value of other property or improvements in the neighborhood in which the property is located;

6. The proposed variation will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, or substantially increase the danger of fire, or otherwise endanger the public safety or substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood;

7. That the granting or the variation would not unduly tax public utilities and facilities in the area;

8. That there is no means other than the requested variation by which the alleged hardship or difficulty can be avoided or remedied to a degree sufficient to permit a reasonable use of the subject property.

Applicants are required to provide detailed written responses to each of the eight above standards.

Gronkiewicz / Tomera
847 Ashland Avenue

Standards for Major Variations (Section 10-5-4F)

1. See pictures #1 and #2 of current 7-foot height stockade cedar fence along south neighbor property border.
   Picture #3 shows neighbor's inground pool.
   Request is to replace with the same current size, style and material (cedar) fence to align with neighbor's wooden fence height to maintain safety and privacy. (Picture #4 showing top 1 foot)

2. Home ownership of the two properties has been unchanged for the past 30 years.

3. The location and existence of the fences between these 2 properties is unique to these properties within the same zoning classification.

4. The purpose of the variation request is to maintain safety and privacy and not economic gain.

5. The proposed fence would replace the current one at approximately 62% of the south border. See plat of survey. The requested variation causes no obstacle to the public. The fence would not be detrimental to the development or value of other neighboring properties.

6. The proposed fence would match the south neighbor's fence in height.
   The current 7-foot fence has not impaired light or air to the neighbor's property, increased the danger of fire or presented any danger to the public. It is reasonable to assume a replacement fence of the same height and material would not diminish or impair property values.

7. No public utilities, facilities or landscaping in the area would be unduly taxed by the fence replacement.

8. The requested variation to replace the current 7-foot stockade fence with the same would be the only means to ensure safety and privacy with the neighbor's property to the south.

* See Addendum - next page

Application for Zoning Variance

Gronkiewicz / Tomera
847 Ashland Avenue

Addendum to fence application and zoning variance request for 7-foot solid fence:

Christian Luis has requested a further explanation of owners' concerns for safety.

The neighbor to the south has an in-ground pool. After moving in 30 years ago, we applied for and installed a village approved 7-foot solid fence. Subsequently, portions of the wood have rotted and some areas have fallen due to inclement weather and high winds. The fence needs to be replaced.

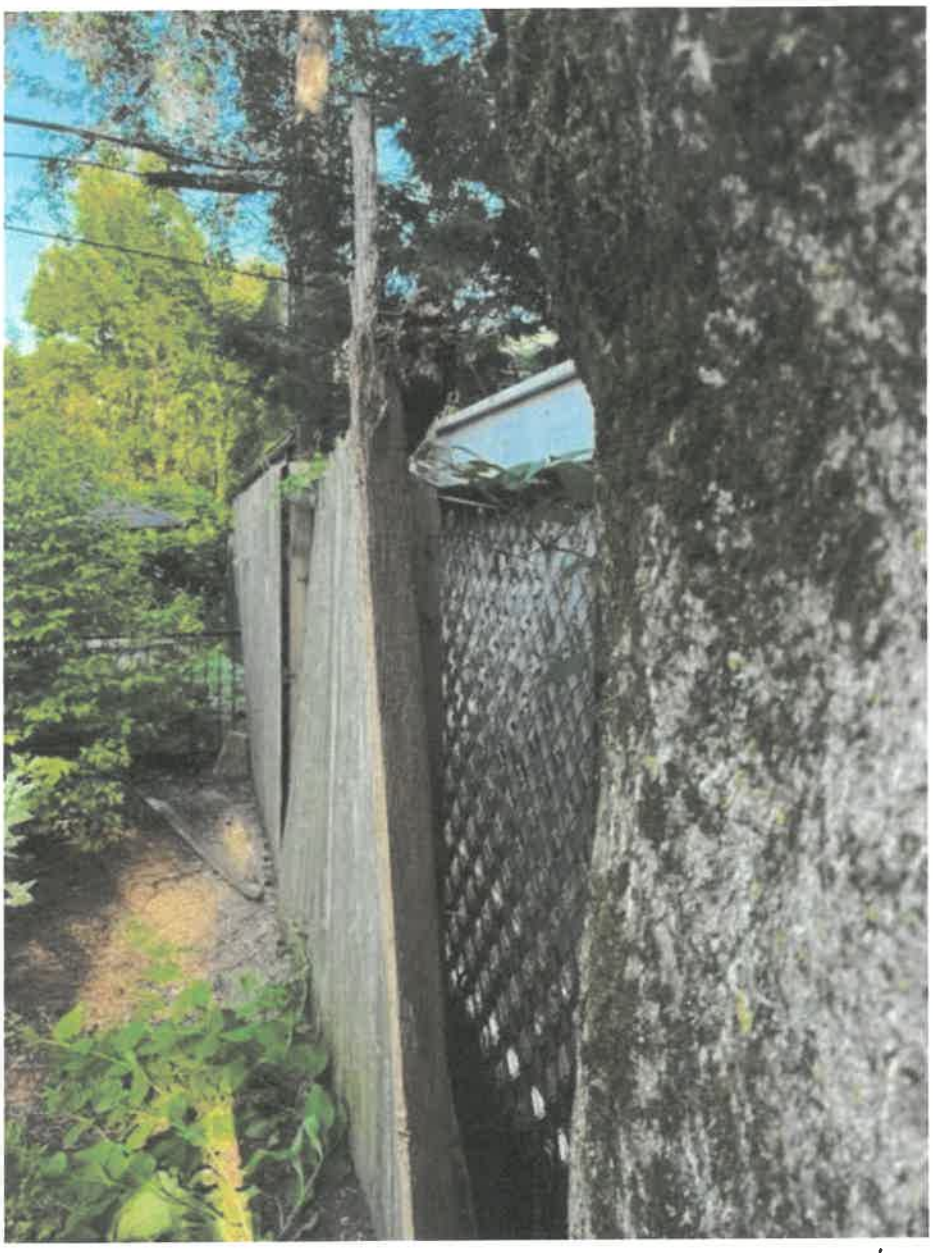
Pools carry an inherent danger and risk for drowning. We raised our two sons in this home, and we anticipate another family with children would likely move in once we sell. A solid 7-foot fence decreases the pool visibility and access from our yard.

We are requesting the exact same fence size, style and materials as we have had for the past 30 years. There is no request for plumbing or electrical additions or any modification from the original fence that would understandably be subjected to changes in village code. Rather, no one at Village Hall to date has been able to explain the rationale for the 50% visibility in the top 1 foot of a proposed 7-foot high fence.

II/.



- Original fence along portion of south l. line at 847 Ashland
- Several slats are cracked or broken off, a couple posts have rotted near base



• View between property lines
fences



- South neighbor fence once 847 Ashland removed solid fence due to safety hazard and fallen planks
- Neighbor has inground pool visible from Iowa sidewalk and our yard

#4



• Fence of neighbor to South



• Wrought iron fence "73" section transition
• Additional 3" acr Wood fence needed to close opening between 2 fenc and south openin back to neighbo fence