

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF RIDGEFIELD
MINUTES OF MEETING

JULY 7, 2021

NOTE: These minutes are intended as a rough outline of the web-based Zoom proceedings of the Board of Appeals on Zoning of Ridgefield held on July 7, 2021. Copies of recordings of the meeting may be obtained from the Administrator at cost.

The Chairman called the web-based meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. Sitting on the Board for the evening were: Carson Fincham (Chair), Mark Seavy, Terry Bearden-Rettger, Joseph Pastore and Robert Byrnes.

ROTATION OF ALTERNATES

The rotation for the meeting was first, Mr. Lockwood; second, Mr. Stenko; third Mr. Byrne's. Mr. Cole was not able to attend and asked Mr. Byrnes to sit for him. Thus, the rotation for the next meeting will be: first, Mr. Lockwood; second, Mr. Stenko; third Mr. Brynes.

NEW APPLICATIONS:

Appeal No. 21-017

M. Charles and Betty Ross

51 Catoonah Street

Mr. and Mrs. Ross along with their architect, Merrill Brown, appeared for the hearing. Mr. Ross stated to the Board that they proposed adding a detached pre-fabricated 2 car garage. The lot was over the allotted amount for lot coverage and floor area ratio but additional coverage was requested. Mr. Ross further stated the property shared a driveway with 49 Catoonah Street and there was little space on the driveway for plowed snow. The Ross's hoped a covered garage would allow the snow to be plowed directly into a niche on the side of the driveway. One side of the driveway boarded the neighboring church's parking lot. A shed located partially where the proposed garage was, would be removed. Mr. Fincham stated that hardships for lot coverage and floor area ratio are hard to establish. Mr. Ross stated that no neighbors would be affected by the proposed garage. Ms. Bearden-Rettger stated that a plow might not be able to push the snow solely in the niche and no hardships were established. Mr. Byres agreed. Mr. Pastore appreciated the need for a covered garage and the odd shape of the lot. Mr. Seavy agreed it was an odd lot configuration.

No one appeared to speak for or against the application and the hearing was concluded. A decision can be found at the end of these minutes.

Appeal No. 21-018

Bob Grenier

276 Old Sib Road

Architect Doug MacMillan appeared for the applicant, who was also present. Mr. MacMillan stated the proposed plans were to rebuild the two-car garage 2 ft. wider, with a master suite above. Proposed plans also showed a foyer with a portico addition to the front of the house bringing the setback to 20 ft. The lot was 1.02 acres in the RAA zone with 35 ft setbacks, so therefore a setback variance was requested. Mr. MacMillan listed hardships as the triangular shape of the lot, likely upzoning of the lot from RA to RAA and the topography of the property with a steep slope in the rear and the presence of a stream.

A letter in support of the application was submitted by the neighboring property, 274 Old Sib Road, prior to the hearing and distributed to the Board members.

No one appeared to speak for or against the application and the hearing was concluded. A decision can be found at the end of these minutes.

DECISIONS:

Appeal No. 21-017
M. Charles and Betty Ross
51 Catoonah Street

REQUESTED: Variances of Sections 3.5.F., lot coverage and 3.5.G., floor area ratio, to allow construction of a one-story garage that will exceed the permitted lot coverage and floor area ratio; for property in the R 7.5 zone located at 51 Catoonah Street.

DATES OF HEARING: July 7, 2021
DATE OF DECISION: July 7, 2021

VOTED: To Deny, variances of Sections 3.5.F., lot coverage and 3.5.G., floor area ratio, to allow construction of a one-story garage that will exceed the permitted lot coverage and floor area ratio; for property in the R 7.5 zone located at 51 Catoonah Street.

VOTE: To Grant: 2 To Deny: 3

In favor
Pastore, Seavy

Opposed
Bearden-Rettger, Byrnes
Fincham

The Board voted this action for the following reasons:

1. No hardship was presented to justify the grant of the variance sought in this petition. Applicants were found to have requested more than minimum relief.

Appeal No. 21-018
Bob Grenier
276 Old Sib Road

REQUESTED: A variance of Section 3.5.H., setbacks, to allow construction of an addition within the minimum yard setback; for property in the RAA zone located at 276 Old Sib Road.

DATES OF HEARING: July 7, 2021
DATE OF DECISION: July 7, 2021

VOTED: To Grant, a variance of Section 3.5.H., setbacks, to allow construction of an addition within the minimum yard setback; for property in the RAA zone located at 276 Old Sib Road.

VOTE: To Grant: 5 To Deny: 0

In favor
Bearden-Rettger, Byrnes,
Fincham, Pastore, Seavy

Opposed

CONDITION:

This action is subject to the following condition that is an integral and essential part of the decision. Without this condition, the variance would not have been granted:

1. The addition shall be located exactly as shown on plans and drawings presented to the Board during the hearing and made part of this decision, and the plans submitted for the building application shall be the same as those submitted and approved with the application for variance.

The Board voted this action for the following reasons:

1. The shape of the lot, being a triangle, creates a hardship.
2. Upzoning which has created an undersized lot, 1.02 acres in the RAA zone, also creates a hardship.
3. The topography of the lot, which includes a significant drop-off, along with the presence of a stream bisecting the lot, also creates a hardship.
4. While any one of the hardships may justify the granting of a variance in this case, the combination of the hardships creates an unusual hardship that justifies the issuance of a variance.
5. The proposal is in harmony with the general scheme of development in the area and the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development and will have no negative impact on surrounding properties.

As there was no further business before the Board, the Chairman adjourned the hearing at approximately 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Ryan
Administrator