

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF RIDGEFIELD
MINUTES OF MEETING

APRIL 4, 2022

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 April 4, 2022. Copies of recordings of the meeting may be obtained from the Administrator.

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

ROTATION OF ALTERNATES

The rotation for the meeting was first, Mr. Lockwood; second, Mr. Stenko; third Mr. Byrnes. No alternate was needed, the rotation for the next meeting will be: first, Mr. Lockwood; second, Mr. Stenko; third Mr. Brynes.

CONTINUED APPLICATION

Application 22-005
258 North Street LLC
258 North Street

The applicant withdrew the application prior to the hearing.

NEW APPLICATIONS

Application 22-009
Michelle Hogue, agent for Michael and Cynthia Long
321 Main Street

Michelle Hogue appeared for the home owners, Michael and Cynthia Long. She stated to the Board that the variance application was to reconstruct a barn on the property. The reconstructed barn was to be used for living space, not as an accessory structure. The barn built in the 1800's, was not longer structurally sound and the staircase was not to code. The plans added an attached utility room that added an additional 25 sq ft of lot coverage. The lot was already nonconforming to lot coverage so a variance was requested. The applicants had already appeared before the Historic District Commission who approved the submitted plans. Ms. Bearden-Rettger asked why the utility room had to be located outside the barn structure. Ms. Hogue replied that there wasn't enough room internally and it would fit better to attach the utility room built to code and easier access to any services needed. Ms. Hogue further stated that the HDC wanted the height and roof pitch of the structure to remain as it was originally, so the application was limited in the reconstruction plans. Mr. Cole asked if the requirements of the HDC could be a hardship. Ms. Hogue directed the administrator to the minutes of the HDC meeting on November 18, 2021 where the request for the roof line of the HDC was detailed. She also submitted early plans that were reviewed and edited after meeting with the HDC.

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.

Application 22-010
John Conner
289 Great Hill Road

Applicant John Conner appeared. He stated to the Board that his proposed plans included raising the height of the second-floor ceiling in his single-family house. Mr. Conner’s builder also appeared and stated the vertical enlargement would be 4.9” higher in total, currently 17.3” to 23’. The property was still in the allowable amount for floor area ratio and lot coverage. Setbacks would remain the same. The lot was .30 acres in the RA zone. Two neighbors submitted letters in support of the proposed plans.

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.

Application 22-011
Stephen Silvestri
10 Ramapoo Road

Applicant Stephen Silvestri appeared. He stated to the Board that his proposed plans were to add a second story to his detached two-car garage on his property. The vertical addition was for an office or studio, not an accessory dwelling. The existing garage was approximately 90% in the setback in the R20 zone, the lot was .42 acres. The house and garage were built in 1926. The same footprint and overhang lengths would remain. Mr. Fincham explained to the applicant that the final survey must meet the current setback or he would be required to return to the Board. A neighbor letter in support of the application was submitted.

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

Application 22-009
Michelle Hogue, agent for Michael and Cynthia Long
321 Main Street

VOTED: To Grant, a variance of Section 3.5.F., lot coverage, to allow an addition to a structure that will exceed the permitted lot coverage; for property in the RA zone located at 321 Main Street.

VOTE: To Grant: To Deny: 0

In favor Opposed
Bearden-Rettger, Cole,
Fincham, Pastore, Seavy

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 proposed plans for the construction of a utility room attached to the reconstructed barn is a direct result of the challenges associated with the property's location in the Historic District. The requirement by the HDC of maintaining the same dimensions and roof pitch of the existing barn structure creates the need to the additional square footage to construct the utility room. This represents an unusual hardship that justifies the grant of the variance requested in this case.
2. 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.

Application 22-010
John Conner
289 Great Hill Road

VOTED: To Grant, a variance of Section 8.1.B.2., nonconforming structures, to allow a vertical addition to a nonconforming house; for property in the RA zone located at 289 Great Hill Road.

VOTE: To Grant: 5 To Deny: 0

In favor Opposed
Bearden-Rettger, Cole,
Fincham, Pastore, Seavy

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 location of the house on the undersized lot creates an unusual hardship that justifies the granting of a variance in this case. It is noted that the approved plans do not create an increase in the nonconformity of the lot.
2. 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.

Application 22-011
Stephen Silvestri
10 Ramapoo Road

VOTED: To Grant, a variance of Section 8.1.B.2., nonconforming structures, to allow a second-floor addition above an existing detached garage; for property in the R-20 zone located at 10 Ramapoo Road.

VOTE: To Grant: 5 To Deny: 0

In favor Opposed
Bearden-Rettger, Cole,
Fincham, Pastore, Seavy

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. This undersized lot which predates the enactment of zoning regulations, along with the position of the garage on the lot, creates an unusual hardship that justifies the grant of a variance in this case. It is noted that the approved plans do not create an increase in the nonconformity of the lot.
2. 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 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Ryan
Administrator