

MINUTES – ZONING BOARD – April 17, 2023

The Cranford Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting scheduled for Monday, April 17, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. was conducted virtually.

This meeting is in compliance with the “Open Public Meetings Act” as adequate notice of this meeting has been provided to the Westfield Leader and the Star Ledger with the agenda specifying the time, place and matters to be heard having been posted on a bulletin board in the Town Hall reserved for such announcements and the filing of said agenda with the Township Clerk of Cranford. Formal action may be taken at this meeting.

The workshop portion of the meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. Ms. Daly, Chair.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Ms. Daly
Mr. Marotta
Mr. Cukierski
Mr. Lucas
Mr. Quinn
Mr. Rees

Members Absent:

Mr. Aschenbach

Alternates Present:

Ms. Oliver

Alternates Absent:

Mr. Giuditta

Also, in attendance: Mark Rothman, Esq., Kathy Lenahan, Board Administrator, Jacque Dirmann, Board Engineer

COMMUNICATIONS:

None

MINUTES:

A motion to adopt the minutes of the March 27, 2023 meeting, was made by Mr. Marotta, seconded by Mr. Quinn and passed on unanimous voice vote.

RESOLUTIONS:

1. Application #ZBA 23-001
Frank Litterio
322 Manor Avenue
Block: 235 Lot: 14, R-4 Zone

Applicant is requesting “c” variance relief where the maximum story height is 2.5 stories and 3.5 stories is proposed, §255-34, Attachment 1, Schedule 1. Maximum building coverage is 30%, where 34.25% is existing and 34.8% is proposed, §255-34, Attachment 1, Schedule 1. Existing

uncovered front steps with nonconforming setback may be replaced but not expanded (current encroachment of 7 ft.) where proposed is to relocate the front steps and encroach 5 ft. into the existing nonconforming front yard setback, §255-35D (3).

The Resolution of Memorialization was reviewed by the Board. After discussion, a motion to approve the resolution, as amended, was made by Mr. Marotta, seconded by Mr. Cukierski, and passed by roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Daly, Mr. Marotta, Mr. Cukierski, Mr. Quinn, Mr. Rees, Ms. Oliver

Opposed: None

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Discussion was held regarding Board meetings staying virtual or returning to in-person. Some members felt there was more flexibility when traveling to still be able to attend the meetings. Discussion ensued.

A motion for the Board to stay virtual and revisit the topic in six months, was made by Mr. Marotta, seconded by Mr. Cukieriski, and passed on unanimous voice vote.

The workshop portion of the meeting concluded at 7:45 p.m.

PUBLIC PORTION:

A public meeting of the Cranford Board of Adjustment was called to order by Ms. Daly on April 17, 2023, at 7:45 p.m. via Google Meet. Ms. Daly announced in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Open Public Meetings Act, the Westfield Leader and the Star Ledger have been notified and the agenda posted in the municipal building as required.

Ms. Daly explained the protocol, purpose and procedure that will be followed during the hearing.

1. Application # ZBA 22-007
Eric Greenwald & Shannon Strisel
22 Wall Street
Block: 598 Lot: 15, R-4 Zone

The applicant is requesting c(2) variance relief for the construction of a deck in the rear yard. Maximum allowed building coverage is 30%, where 32.6% is existing and 39.4% is proposed, §255-34, Attachment 1, Schedule 1. Minimum required side yard setback is 7 feet, where 7.58 is existing and 4.25 feet is proposed, §255-34, Attachment 1, Schedule 1. Minimum required rear yard setback is 30 feet, where 32 feet is existing and 22.5 feet is proposed, §255-34, Attachment 1, Schedule 1.

Rich Pierce appeared and was sworn in. Mr. Pierce presented his qualifications and was accepted as an expert in architecture.

Mr. Pierce appeared on behalf of the applicants and reviewed the application. Stated the applicants would like to add a deck off their main floor. Their rear yard abuts to Hillside Avenue school's field. They are over on their building coverage and decks are only allowed to encroach into the rear yard 25%, as long as they are not more than four feet above grade. Their main floor is six or seven feet off the ground and they are not looking to increase impervious surface. Presented the site plan. The deck would be 9 ½ feet deep. It is not a large lot. To put a deck on the lower level, would include adding steps. With the patio and shed being removed, it decreases the amount of impervious surface. The deck will be wood construction.

Applicant would like to have stairs on the driveway side to get to the deck. They do not have a garage and there is no direct neighbor behind their house.

Questions from the Board for Mr. Pierce ascertained the following:

The driveway goes to the end of the house. Underneath the deck will be open with dirt, gravel and grass. Removing about 200 sq. ft. of impervious coverage, but adding to the building coverage. The deck is 9 ½ feet wide. They have a shared driveway and the stairs would be on the left side of driveway. Trying to maximize their living space. Stairs will be along the side of the house with risers. Putting stairs anywhere else would take away from the size of the deck.

Discussion was held regarding the Environmental Commission's suggestions.

Ms. Daly asked if anyone from the Public had questions for this witness, no one appeared.

Eric Greenwald and Shannon Strisel appeared and were both sworn in. Stated the deck will allow them to spend more time outside. They love the neighborhood and the backyard can be improved by adding the deck. Their neighbors have a big deck and no one has said they would be unhappy with it. It would be nice to have it right off the back with no extra steps. Hoping to spend a lot more time outside. There is a shared driveway and the stairs would be on their side of driveway. The driveway goes further than the house on both sides. Stated they would be willing to put in a rain barrel.

Ms. Daly asked if any members of Public had questions for these witnesses, no one appeared.

Mr. Pierce stated there is more than enough room for the cars, and the stairs would not prevent the neighbor from reaching their garage. Google Earth shows a lot of their property is covered in trees.

2 DELIBERATION – Application # ZBA 22-007
Eric Greenwald & Shannon Strisel
22 Wall Street
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Board comments consisted of the following:

Appreciate taking the patio and shed out of the yard and adding a rain barrel. The size of the deck is narrow, just enough room for a table and chairs. Fits with the neighborhood.

Ms. Dirmann requested that when doing the resolution, to specify the size of the rain barrel.

Discussion was held as to the size of rain barrel. Consensus was that a 50-55-gallon barrel would be enough and it would be connected to the roof drains.

Mr. Pierce proposed to put the rain barrel underneath the deck.

A motion to approve the application with a 50-55-gallon rain barrel, with roof drain leaders, and that the shed and patio will be removed from the property, was made by Mr. Marotta, seconded by Mr. Quinn and was passed on roll call vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Daly, Mr. Marotta, Mr. Cukierski, Mr. Lucas, Mr. Quinn, Mr. Rees, Ms. Oliver

Opposed: None

PUBLIC PORTION:
None

The next meeting scheduled for April 24, 2023 at 7:30 p.m., is being cancelled due to lack of applications being ready to be heard before the Board.

The next meeting will be May 8, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. virtually.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was regularly made, seconded and passed. The meeting concluded at 8:36 p.m.

Kent Lucas, Secretary