

ZONING HEARING BOARD MEETING

SUMMARY

March 3, 2025

The Zoning Hearing Board of Bethel Park came to order at 7:30 pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: Duff, Kanon, Regan, Stewart

Also Present: Vince Kelly, Dave Montgomery, Kim Strnisa

APPROVAL OF SUMMARY:

1. Mr. Regan asked if there were any changes, additions, corrections and/or deletions to the summary of February 3, 2025. Mr. Montgomery suggested the following amendments to Case #2867:

Relevant Factors:

The subject property has an existing garage. The applicant testified that the variance for the encroachment into the front yard setback was sought in order to construct an additional garage large enough to park oversized recreational vehicle(s). The applicant failed to present a rendering of the proposed garage or precise dimensions showing the size, height and mass of the proposed garage that would encroach into the existing setback.

Opponents Testimony:

Brian Kelly of 2621 Summit Street objected to the variance and testified that the neighborhood had consistent 50' front yard setbacks for corner lots and that the proposed encroachment into the front yard setback for the Subject Property would have a detrimental effect on the uniform layout of the neighborhood.

Mr. Kanon made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stewart. There was no further discussion on the motion. Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Invoice from Kim Simms-Strnisa – A motion was made by Ms. Stewart to approve invoice #020325BPZ in the amount of \$295 for an attendance fee for the February 3, 2025 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Duff. There was no further discussion on the motion. Roll was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Case #2868

APPLICANT: LUCIUS STEIMER

LOCATION: 4840 RITTENHOUSE ROAD

SUBJECT: DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE TO THE SIDE YARD SETBACK TO
ALLOW FOR A GUEST HOUSE/ACCESSORY BUILDING

It is hereby requested that the Zoning Hearing Board to hear an application for a variance. The land involved is 4840 Rittenhouse Road. **Current Zoning Classification:** R-3 **Involved ordinance or Legislative Act:** Ord. 7-12-93A **Section:** 69.25.4

Variance Type:

A 5ft variance is requested to create a 5ft setback from the left side of the property line. Current code requires a 10ft setback.

Applicant's Petition:

Asking to lift the 10ft minimum build for an accessory building. It should be granted as it doesn't affect any other neighbors land and the 5ft would be against an unused easement. This easement may be closed in the future. The surrounding neighbors also use this 5ft setback for their garage and I should be granted the same use.

Applicant's Arguments:

The accessory building guest house will be built to all other applicable zoning codes. We will follow all 2018 building code requirements. Mr. Steimer conceded that there is nothing unique about his property that would prevent him from constructing the guest house without the requested variance. He also did not present any further testimony to establish the required elements for that granting of a dimensional variance.

Relevant Factors:

Questions were raised as to whether the unopened paper street known as South Alley located adjacent to the proposed guest house would affect the calculation of the required setback and whether to apply the 10' setback under the Zoning Ordinance or the 5' setback provided in the original Plan of Lots.

The application was presented by Lucius Steimer

Proponents: None

Opponents: Bill Bretthole
113 Horning Road

Mary Verno
4855 Rittenhouse Road

Jim Swasey
117 Horning Road

Kathleen Bretthole
113 Horning Road

Ronald Thomas
4865 Criss Road

Opponents Testimony:

Bill Bretthole (113 Horning Road) objected to the requested variance on the grounds that Mr. Steimer had conceded that the guest house could be built in compliance with the Zoning Code. He also objected that the proposed variance would have an adverse effect on property values in the neighborhood. Other neighborhood residents objected that the project could potentially have an adverse effect on safety and access to the alley adjacent to the Subject Property.

A motion was made by Ms. Stewart to table case #2868 to allow the Board Solicitor to provide legal guidance on the relevant factors that were raised. Mr. Kanon seconded the motion. DUFF – yes, KANON – yes, REGAN – yes, STEWART – yes. Motion passed 4-0.

Case #2869

APPLICANT: RONNIE & MELANIE COREY

LOCATION: 5028 BELMONT AVENUE

SUBJECT: DIMENSIONAL VARIANCE TO THE SIDE YARD SETBACK TO
ALLOW FOR AN ADDITION

It is hereby requested that the Zoning Hearing Board to hear an application for a variance. The land involved is 4840 Rittenhouse Road. **Current Zoning Classification:** R-1 **Involved ordinance or Legislative Act:** Ord. 7-12-93A **Section:** 69.23.4

Variance Type:

A 10ft variance is requested to create a 10ft setback from the left side of the property line. Current code requires a 20ft setback.

Applicant's Petition:

We are requesting a side yard setback variance of 10 ft from the minimum 20 ft setback requirement to build an addition where my mother will be able to age in place. My father sadly passed away in November from cancer. My mother has Parkinson's Disease, arthritis in her back, as well as knee difficulties, which affects her mobility greatly. My mother can no longer live in her two-story house, or on her own, and needs to live with us to receive support for a greater quality of life. We would like to utilize the side porch on the left side of our house to build an addition. We would be able to tap into the existing plumbing of the powder room on the main floor behind the porch to provide an ADA compliant bathroom. By using the space from the side of the house, not only would my mother have easy entry into the house, and she would also have access to the kitchen with minimal distance. This room would provide my mother with a safe space to live.

Applicants' Arguments:

Due to the topography of the property, the addition on the left side of the house would be the most reasonable location. The back of the property slopes downward and we have a retaining wall on the back part of the house; all of this would make construction difficult and would cost exponentially more in labor and material. By building the addition on the side of our house we will be able to utilize the side covered

porch, tap into the plumbing of the house from our existing powder room on the main floor to utilize for my mother's bathroom. My mother would also have the ability to have her own main entry with minimal obstacles/distance to get to her room, as well as into the kitchen.

The variance requested is the least modification of the ordinance possible for the addition considered for my mother to live comfortably in a space that is fitting for someone with a mobility disability with zero dead ends, and an ADA compliant bathroom for her to age into as she lives with Parkinson's disease and other mobility barriers. On a 100' wide lot, the living space on the main floor of the house measures 27' wide. The side porch is an additional 10' wide. There is approximately 28' from the left side of the house to the property line, while the distance from the house to the property line on the driveway side measures approximately 35' wide. If the house was originally built more centered on the property, the request for a variance would greatly decrease.

The application was presented by Ronnie & Melanie Corey

Proponents: Brian Kelly

2621 Summit Street

Jessica Smith

5032 Belmont Avenue

Jake Rosenbaum

5000 Highland Avenue

Proponents Testimony:

Proponents testified that the project and variance would not alter the essential character of the neighborhood and supported the project.

Opponents: None

A motion was made by Mr. Duff to approve case #2869. Mr. Kanon seconded the motion. DUFF – yes, KANON – yes, REGAN – yes, STEWART – yes. Motion passed 4-0.

A motion was made by Mr. Duff to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kanon seconded the motion. DUFF – yes, KANON – yes, REGAN – yes, STEWART – yes. Motion passed 4-0

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.