

**The City of Lake Forest
Building Review Board
Proceedings of the December 3, 2025 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at 6:30 p.m., at the City of Lake Forest Municipal Services Facility, 800 Field Drive, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Building Review Board members present: Chairman John Looby and Board members Eric Lohmueller, Sarah Lamphere, Scott Renken, Sally Downey, Justin Stamer, and Chris Collins

Building Review Board members absent: None

Staff present: Luis Prado, Assistant Planner and Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

1. Introduction of Board members and staff, overview of meeting procedures – Chairman Looby

Chairman Looby reviewed the role of the Building Review Board and the meeting procedures followed by the Board. He asked the members of the Board and staff to introduce themselves.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the November 5, 2025 Building Review Board meeting.

The minutes of the November 5, 2025 meeting were approved as submitted.

3. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of a building scale variance for a pergola at 58 Marion Avenue.

Property Owner: Michael Brokaw

Representative: Michael Carney, Architect

Chairman Looby asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Carney described the property and pointed out the proposed location of the pergola adjacent to the existing screen porch. He stated that the pergola complies with the zoning setbacks. He stated that a building scale variance is requested and reviewed the applicable criteria for a variance. He stated that the height of the pergola at the low point is 11 feet and less than 25 feet at the highest point to align with the roof of the screen porch. He pointed out the existing vegetation on the east, west, and north side of the property which will screen the pergola. He stated that the pergola will be lower than the roof ridge of the main house and will not be visible from the street. He presented a photo of the rear yard noting the deciduous trees on the

neighboring property. He presented images of the proposed pergola noting that it will be constructed of cedar with a standing seam metal roof. He stated that granite colored uni-lock blocks are proposed for the surrounding hardscape.

Mr. Prado stated that the house currently exceeds the allowable size by 115 square feet or five percent. He noted that a portion of the design element allowance is available and can be applied to the pergola leaving an overage of 109 square feet for which a variance is requested. He stated that if the variance is approved, the overall square footage will exceed the allowable square footage by nine percent. He stated that the pergola will not be visible from the street and will be screened fairly well from neighboring properties by existing vegetation. He stated that findings in support of the variance are detailed in the staff report.

Chairman Looby invited questions from the Board.

Board member Stamer asked if the cedar used to construct the pergola will be left natural. He suggested adding evergreen plantings along the west side of the pergola to provide screening to benefit the neighbor.

Board member Downey stated support for the project noting that in her opinion, the criteria for a building scale variance are satisfied. She noted that the pergola is open and will not add to the appearance of mass of the house.

Board member Lohmueller asked whether lighting is proposed in or around the pergola.

Board member Lamphere commented that if lighting is proposed there could be impacts on the neighboring property.

Board member Collins questioned the choice of natural cedar noting that cedar colored treated lumber will be more durable, will retain the original color, and is more economical.

Board member Renken noted that the structure is low and shielded from view from off the site from almost every side. He stated that the Board encourages the use of real cedar, adding that staining the cedar will keep it looking good for a long time. He stated that the pergola will only increase the impervious surface on the site slightly and stated that City engineering staff will determine whether a drainage plan is required.

Chairman Looby expressed concern about the potential for off site light impacts. He invited the petitioner to respond to the Board's questions and comments.

Mr. Carney stated that an LED strip light is proposed up in the rafters, inside the pergola, adding that the light will be directed down to avoid reflection on to neighboring properties. He stated that a soft colored light is proposed. He stated that

natural cedar is proposed to blend in with the surrounding fences as it fades over time.

Chairman Looby invited public comment, hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Board. Hearing none, he invited a motion.

Board member Stamer made a motion to recommend approval of a building scale variance for a pergola in the rear yard at 58 Marion Avenue. He stated that the motion is based on the findings detailed in the staff report which are adopted as part of the motion and he stated that the Board's deliberations are incorporated as additional findings. He stated that the recommendation includes the following conditions of approval.

1. The standing seam metal roof panels shall be no wider than 12 inches.
2. All modifications to the plans presented to the Board made as a result of final design development and any changes to exterior materials shall be clearly called out on the plans submitted for permit. Staff is directed to review any changes, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, to determine whether the modifications are in conformance with the Board's direction and approval prior to the issuance of any permits.
3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a plan to protect all trees that have the potential to be impacted during construction must be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City. The existing trees to the east of the pergola in particular must be protected.
3. A plan for contractor parking and material staging shall be submitted for review and will be subject to approval by the City's Certified Arborist, City Engineer and Director of Community Development.

The motion was seconded by Board member Downey and approved by a vote of 7 to 0.

4. Consideration of a new house with a detached garage proposed on the site of a previous demolition at 163 Washington Road, the associated hardscape, and a conceptual landscape plan.

Property Owners: Aristothomas and Mykel Nicholson

Representative: Mark Golan, Architect

Chairman Looby asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Golan stated that the property is deep and narrow and is currently vacant. He stated that the design of the house is focused on the front and rear elevations with few windows on the side elevations. He stated that the house is simple and

symmetrical. He stated that no variances are requested. He stated that hardi-board shingles are proposed for the siding and asphalt shingles are proposed for the roof. He noted that a small barrel roof is proposed above the front door. He acknowledged that the house to the south is only 15 feet away. He stated that the large window on the south elevation is desired by the petitioners to allow natural light into the home. He stated that the large window was reduced from the larger window that was originally proposed. He commented on the siting of the house noting that it is setback from the street and sited to avoid encroaching into the drip line of trees in the rear yard. He noted that the driveway pulls away from the south property line in front of the house to comply with zoning requirements. He stated that the height of the house is four feet below the allowable height and is about at the average of the heights of other homes on the street. He presented samples of the proposed exterior materials and confirmed that the siding is panels, not individual shingles.

Mr. Nicholson stated that his wife grew up in Lake Forest and stated that they purchased the property with the intent of building a tasteful home that fits in with the neighborhood.

Mr. Prado stated that as proposed, the driveway is sited on the south property line except in front of the house where it pulls away from the south property line to comply with the zoning requirements. He stated that if the driveway remains on the property line, a curb will be required to prevent runoff from the driveway on to the adjacent property to the south. He suggested consideration of flipping the plan to position the driveway for the new home adjacent to the driveway on the property to the north, adding this will avoid cars driving within a few feet of the home to the south. He stated that in general, the front and rear elevations align with the City's Design Guidelines. He stated that the shutters should be proportional to the windows. He suggested that consideration be given to adding further articulation to the side elevations to break up the large two story walls and help to mitigate impacts of the two story home on the smaller homes to the north and south. He noted that the Board has not approved the use of hardi-board panels imitating shingles for siding in the past.

Chairman Looby invited questions from the Board.

Board member Lamphere commented that overall, the house appears to fit in well with the neighborhood. She stated that the setback of the house from the street will help to soften the impact of the house on the streetscape. She asked for more details on the windows including the configuration and the proposed divisions. She stated support for breaking up the monolithic side elevations.

Board member Lohmueller suggested reconsideration of the large window on the south elevation. He observed that the window appears high above the stair landing. He suggested considering two vertical windows in place of the single large window. He stated that an asphalt roof on the porch is appropriate. He stated that if synthetic material is used for the siding, appropriate detailing will be important to create a

more authentic, rather than plastic appearance as a result of the hardi-board shingle panels. He suggested refining the columns on the front porch noting that they appear square. He stated that the door should be arched. He asked about the intended treatment at the bottom of the walls noting that the hardi-board panels should not extend to the ground and questioned whether a water table is proposed. He stated that the divisions in the windows should be consistent and suggested consideration of increasing the size of the square window on the front elevation to allow the individual lites to be more consistent with the shape of the lites in the other windows.

Board member Downey agreed that the front door should be arched. She stated that the finish on the hardi-board siding panels should be flat, not shiny. She stated that side by side driveways work better than a driveway that is very close to a neighboring home. She stated that four different sizes of windows are currently reflected on the plans. She stated that the windows should be consistent around the home. She stated that further refinement is needed on the north elevation, commenting that it does not appear right as drawn. She stated that with refinement, the new home will fit nicely into the neighborhood.

Board member Stamer questioned the narrow windows. He stated that more effort is needed to provide consistency on the windows around the house in placement, shape, and size. He commented that the apron on the lower windows appears to be narrower than on the second story windows. He stated support for the use of the synthetic siding panel product. He stated that the panels should be staggered to improve the overall appearance of the house. He commented that the vents on the front of the house are not repeated anywhere else. He stated that the vent should be arched.

Board member Renken stated that in general, the house will fit nicely into the neighborhood. He commented however that the Craftsman style is foreign on the street. He suggested replacing the arched front entry with a gable. He questioned what appears to be fascia without a frieze board. He stated that the metal roof as shown will create a "ski slope". He suggested consideration of a flat roof to address that issue. He complimented the proportions of the windows on the front elevation and suggested one less horizontal muntin to allow the individual lites to appear taller than they are wide. He stated that full trim should be added to the windows on the side elevations adding that it will make the 2'6" wide windows appear wider improving upon the proportions visually. He acknowledged that articulation on the side elevations is difficult on narrow lots adding that the side facing gable could step out slightly or the gable could be made wider with the windows incorporated to make the slope lower and less imposing on the neighboring property. He suggested breaking the large stairway window into two windows to reduce the oversized appearance.

Board member Colins agreed with comments of the other Board members. Chairman Looby agreed that the siding panels should be staggered to avoid the

appearance of shakes in a straight line. He stated that the side elevations appear flat and stated that they will be improved with more dimension. He complimented the proposed exterior colors. He stated that relocating the driveway to the north side of the house will provide more room to maneuver vehicles around the corner of the house. He invited the petitioner to respond to the Board members' questions.

Mr. Golan stated that the driveway is positioned on the south side of the home to maximize the potential for natural sunlight into the home. He pointed out that there is currently a fence along the south property line. He agreed to consider refinements to the roof above the front entrance. He reviewed the muntin patterns in the windows noting the intention for the divisions to be rectangular, not square, and to be identical in proportions around the house. He confirmed that simulated divided lite windows will be used. He commented that the small window above the vanity could be shortened. He reviewed the gable element on the south elevation stating that it is designed to avoid invading the driveway space. He stated a desire to increase the height of the stairway window on the south elevation and agreed to consider a second window below. He stated that the windows are placed to accommodate artwork and furniture. He agreed to "dress up" the columns at the front entrance. He stated that hardi-board is proposed for the trim around the windows which will include a crown and a sill. He stated that the composite wood proposed for the trim will have a texture.

Board member Stamer acknowledged that historically, wall cladding should be natural material but stated that it is a worthwhile compromise to approve synthetic siding in this case.

Board member Renken encouraged consideration of a gable at the front entrance and modification of the roof form to eliminate the metal roof.

Mr. Prado confirmed that consistent with previous Board approvals, although the siding will be a synthetic product, the trim will be cedar.

Chairman Looby invited public comment, hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Board. Hearing none, he invited a motion.

Board member Renken made a motion to recommend approval of a new residence, detached garage, the associated hardscape, and the conceptual landscape plan at 163 Washington Road. He stated that the motion is based on the findings detailed in the staff report which are adopted as part of the motion and he stated that the Board's deliberations are incorporated as additional findings. He stated that the recommendation includes the following conditions of approval.

1. Prior to the submittal of plans for permit:
 - a. Replace the arched front entry with a gable. (Arched front door is appropriate if desired.)

- b. Replace the sloped metal roof above the front entry, between the dormers, with a flat roof.
 - c. Refine the columns at the front entry.
 - d. Consider additional articulation of massing on the north and south elevation to soften the impact of a flat two story wall on the smaller homes on either side.
 - e. Refine the stairway window on the south elevation to reduce the oversized appearance. Consider breaking the window into two smaller, narrower windows.
 - f. Refine the windows around the house with respect to size, shape (more rectangular than square), and division pattern and to better balance the relationship of openings to solid walls on the north and south elevations.
 - g. Trim shall be provided on the four sides of the windows.
 - h. The following annotations shall appear on the plans:
 - i. If used, standing seam roof panels shall be no wider than 12 inches.
 - ii. Hardi-board siding shingle panels shall be staggered.
 - iii. Finish on the hardi-board siding panels shall be flat, not glossy.
 - iv. Natural cedar shall be used for all of the trim including, but not limited to fascia, frieze boards, window trim, and soffits.
 - v. All windows shall be simulated divided lites with muntins affixed to the interior and exterior.
 - i. Consider refinement to the vent on the front elevation and consider referencing the vent elsewhere on the house.
 - j. Reflect a curb along the south side of the driveway in all areas where the driveway is less than 12 inches from the south property line.
2. All modifications to the plans, including those detailed above and any others made in response to Board direction or as the result of final design development, shall be clearly called out on the plans submitted for permit. Staff is directed to review any changes in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate to determine whether the modifications are in conformance with the Board's direction and approval prior to the issuance of any permits.

3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit:

Tree Removal and Landscaping

- a. A tree plan shall be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist. The plan shall identify trees proposed for removal, and trees identified for protection and preservation.
- b. A plan shall be submitted identifying the location of tree protection fencing to be installed prior to the start of construction and describing pre and post construction treatments proposed to increase the chances of long term survival of the trees intended for preservation which are located close to construction activity both on the property and on neighboring properties.

- c. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, a detailed landscape plan shall be submitted and will be subject to review and approval by the City's Certified Arborist. The plan shall meet the landscape requirements for new residences detailed in the Code and, in addition, provide all required replacement tree inches to account for trees removed from the site. The landscape plan must include the quantity, species, and size at the time of planting for all new landscaping.

Drainage and Grading

- d. Detailed drainage and grading plans must be submitted. Grading or filling is limited to the minimum necessary to meet accepted engineering standards and practices. The property must continue to accept water that is tributary to the site and runoff from new construction must be addressed to avoid increasing stormwater runoff on to neighboring properties during and after construction.

Exterior Lighting

- e. Details of all exterior lighting proposed on the residence, garage, and on the site shall be provided with the plans submitted for permit. Cut sheets for all light fixtures shall be provided and all fixtures, except those illuminated by natural gas at low light levels, shall direct light down and the source of the light shall be fully shielded from view. All exterior lights shall be set on automatic timers to go off no later than 11 p.m. except for security motion detector lights.

Construction Parking, Staging, and Tree Protection

- f. A plan for contractor parking and equipment and materials staging shall be submitted for review and will be subject to approval by the City's Certified Arborist, City Engineer and Director of Community Development. No on street contractor parking or staging is permitted on Washington Road due to the narrow road.
- g. Any damage to parkways along the street must be repaired on a continuous basis during construction and the street must be regularly cleaned and remain free of mud and debris.

The motion was seconded by Board member Stamer and approved by a vote of 7 to 0.

5. Consideration of a new house with an attached garage and the associated hardscape and conceptual landscape on a vacant property at 1241 Ashlawn Drive.

Property Owner: Daniel Daoud

Representative: Oana Herghelegui, Architect

Chairman Looby asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Herghelegui stated that the proposed house is designed in a Scandinavian style reflecting a simplicity of massing and the use of natural materials. She stated that the property is large and is encumbered by a pond at the front of the property and a Conservation Easement along the south portion of the property which together, restrict the buildable area. She stated that access to the property is possible only along the west property line. She stated that no variances are requested. She reviewed the proposed site plan noting the location of the driveway and adding that landscaping is proposed on both sides of the driveway. She stated that the building pad will be elevated and supported by a retaining wall along the edge of the pond. She reviewed the elevations of the proposed residence and presented some options for mitigating off site light impacts due to the expanse of windows planned. She stated that the side elevations are opaque with the large expanses of glass on the front and rear of the homes. She presented a conceptual image of the residence as it will appear from the streetscape noting the extensive setback from the street due to the pond. She stated that a composite material is proposed for the siding along with natural cedar trim and a standing seam roof. She stated that the color palette is a range of gray tones. She presented options for the garage doors.

Mr. Prado confirmed that the building pad on the property is restricted by a large pond at the front of the property and a Conservation Easement along the rear property line. He stated that the Conservation Easement is required to be maintained in a natural vegetated state. He stated that in general, the elevations align with the City's Design Guidelines. He stated that the primary concern is the potential for off site light impacts due to the expansive windows on the front and rear of the home and on the garage doors. He acknowledged that the petitioner is offering some options intended to mitigate the off site light impacts and requested Board input on the options. He stated that several letters were received from neighboring property owners and were provided to the Board. He reviewed that the Board does not mandate a particular architectural style and added that there are other examples of contemporary architecture in other parts of the community. He stated that the City Engineer reviewed the preliminary drainage and grading plan and will be conducting additional reviews before a permit for any work on the site can be issued.

Chairman Looby invited questions from the Board.

Board member Collins stated that the proposed residence appears out of character with the surrounding neighborhood and the natural area around it. He acknowledged that the house is distinct and well designed. He stated that options need to be explored to minimize the number and size of windows on the house. He stated that glass garage doors are not appropriate, adding that wood doors should be used instead.

Board member Lamphere stated that the house appears non-residential in character noting concern not only about off site light impacts, but also about the potential for views into the home. She stated that the garage doors should be solid with only limited windows if desired. She questioned the reason for windows on the back side

of the garage. She stated that there does not appear to be plantings around the base of the house to anchor it noting that foundation plantings are required. She asked for clarification on the purpose of the door next to the garage. She stated that options should be considered for screening the glass on both the north and south elevations of the house.

Board member Lohmueller complimented the overall design noting that it is elevated from others that have come forward. He stated that the renderings are well done. He acknowledged that the house will be unique in the neighborhood. He stated that efforts should be made to make the house appear more residential and softened to the extent possible. He stated that adding some solid screens to mitigate the expansive windows could be helpful noting that the house will be visible from several of the neighboring homes. He stated that further study and refinement of the front entrance is needed.

Board member Downey stated that the garage doors should be solid wood. She acknowledged that the desire for fewer windows is in conflict with the intended Scandinavian design. She stated that options for breaking up the expanse of glass with slats should be further explored. She asked for clarification on whether the hedge that will need to be removed for the driveway is on the subject property or on the neighboring property to the west. She asked whether the house to the west will lose the buffer now provided by the hedge. She stated that the reality is that with the removal of vegetation that will be necessary to construct the garage, the proposed house will be more visible than it now appears. She asked for clarification on the extent and location of vegetation that will ultimately be removed.

Board member Stamer stated that a landscape barrier is needed along the driveway to provide a buffer for the neighboring home from the headlights of vehicles pulling on to the site. He stated that the location of neighboring homes needs to be kept in mind in relation to the driveway placement. He commented that if the goal is for the house to blend in with the natural environment, in the Winter, without leaves on the trees, the house will appear gray, heavy, and out of place. He suggested allowing the cedar siding to remain natural with only a clear protective coating. He stated that an earth tone will blend in better with the natural environment. He referenced another contemporary house that was just completed on the east side of Green Bay Road, just south of Vine Avenue, noting the balance of windows to solid walls that was achieved to avoid a ship-like appearance.

Board member Renken stated that based on his observation at the site, installation of the driveway as proposed will require removal of the hedges near the west property line. He stated that vegetation will need to be planted along the driveway to restore the plantings that will be lost. He complimented the simplicity of the house and the proposed color of the siding and suggested consideration of a bronze, rather than dark charcoal, roof to complement the lighter siding. He suggested sloping the roof at the center of the home noting that it appears flat. He stated that the appearance of some mass in that area could be an improvement. He stated support for a wood

garage door. He stated an understanding of the desire for some natural light in the garage but cautioned against a configuration that appears non-residential. He asked for clarification on the proposed color and material of the spandrels. He stated that selecting the exterior color is important if the intent is to blend in with the natural surroundings.

Chairman Looby suggested adding more wood to the house including a wood front door and wood garage doors. He stated that sample of the proposed materials and colors should be brought to the next meeting. He stated support for a bronze color for the windows and roof. He invited the petitioner to respond to the questions and comments offered by the Board.

Ms. Herghelegui acknowledged that the middle section of the home needs further study and refinement but noted that options are limited because the house is close to the maximum allowable square footage. She presented options being considered to limit off site light impacts and views into the home. She stated that the spandrel panels will be the same color as the roof, adding that only two colors are proposed on the exterior, one for the siding and another for all of the metal elements. She stated that floor to ceiling windows are important to the design theme. She stated that plantings along the driveway and around the foundation are planned.

Chairman Looby invited public comment.

Dan Costanzo, 584 Fletcher Circle, stated that he lives just south of the subject property. He stated that he has been looking at the subject property for 11 years. He stated that there is no way a driveway will be able to be constructed on the property without removing substantial vegetation. He stated concern about potential drainage impacts if the grade of the property is raised noting that drainage is already a problem adding that the property is like a marsh. He stated concern about light pollution impacting his property and surrounding homes. He stated appreciation for the property owner's desire for a Scandinavian style home but expressed concern about the number and size of the windows. He stated that the previous owner removed the dead Ash trees from the Conservation Easement area and all that remains is buckthorn. He stated that the aesthetic is one of the draws of the area. He stated that the proposed house does not fit in with the atmosphere of the neighborhood. He stated that the house will be the most visible house in the neighborhood.

Matt O'Neill, 585 Meadowood Drive, stated that there are significant drainage issues in the neighborhood. He stated that the area is a huge swamp and expressed concern that elevating the grade of the property will exacerbate the drainage problem. He stated that the proposed house has a commercial appearance due to all of the windows. He stated that the house will not fit in with the neighborhood or the natural character of the area. He stated that much of the existing vegetation on the property will need to be removed to construct the driveway and the house as proposed. He stated that no other house in the neighborhood has a metal roof. He

asked the Board to ensure that the house fits the character of the neighborhood. He added that the house does not appear to provide much privacy for the occupants due to visibility through the windows from several of the surrounding homes.

Andra O'Neill stated that she is a real estate agent and has sold homes in the area. She stated that the proposed project needs to be carefully considered from a drainage standpoint. She stated that trees have been lost in the area due to drainage issues. She stated that as proposed, the grade of the site will be raised and the new house will appear as a raised glass box creating light pollution in the neighborhood.

Corey O'Neill, 585 Meadowood Drive, agreed that drainage needs to be seriously considered. She stated that because of drainage, nothing will grow in the Conservation Easement area. She questioned who received notice of the hearing, adding that some of her neighbors did not receive notice.

Chairman Looby stated that the drainage and proposed grading will be carefully considered by the City Engineer. He stated that a landscape plan will be required. He stated appreciation for the neighbors' concerns about light impacts and compatibility with other homes in the neighborhood. He invited a response to public comments from the petitioner.

Ms. Herghelegui stated appreciation for the feedback. She commented on the proposed regrading of the building site and stated that the house is proposed at 29' tall. She stated that some of the other homes in the neighborhood are taller than the proposed house. She commented on the distance between the proposed house and the neighboring homes. She stated the intent to add plantings to the site to mitigate light impacts on neighboring homes. She added that the windows can be tinted to minimize light spillover. She stated that the architectural style reflects the desire of the property owner.

Hearing no further public questions or comments from the Board, Chairman Looby invited a motion.

Board member Stamer made a motion to continue consideration of the petition with direction to the petitioner to carefully consider and respond to the comments and concerns offered by the Board, members of the public, and City staff. He stated that in particular, the front elevation should be refined, opportunities to mitigate off site light impacts should be explored further and incorporated into the plan, and solid wood doors should be used. He stated that samples of the proposed materials and colors should be provided at the next meeting along with a detailed landscape plan.

The motion was seconded by Board member Lamphere and approved by a vote of 7 to 0.

6. Opportunity for the public to address the Building Review Board on non-agenda

items.

No additional public testimony was presented to the Board.

7. Additional information from staff.

The Board approved the meeting calendar for 2026.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Czerniak
Director of Community Development