

**The City of Lake Forest**  
**Zoning Board of Appeals**  
**Proceedings of the August 26, 2024 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Monday, June 26, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Zoning Board of Appeals members present: Chairman Ari Bass and Board members Laurie Rose, Art Miller, James Moorhead and Mike Adams (one vacant position)

Zoning Board of Appeals members absent: Henry Kleeman

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development, Abigail Vollmers, Senior Planner and Michelle Friedrich, Planning Technician

**1. Introduction of Board members and staff, overview of meeting procedures - Chairman Bass**

Chairman Bass reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Board and asked the members of the Board to introduce themselves.

**2. Recognition of past Board member Pete Clemens.**

Chairman Bass recognized past Board member Pete Clemens and thanked him for his service to the community.

**3. Consideration of the minutes from the June 24, 2024 meeting.**

The minutes of the June 24, 2024 meeting were approved as presented.

**4. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of a variance to allow a driveway to be widened within the corner side yard setback at 130 Niles Avenue. Property Owners and Representatives: Fred and Valerie Jones**

Chairman Bass asked for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Jones introduced the project and reviewed the proposed modifications to the driveway. She noted that as proposed, the driveway will be expanded by two feet to the east and a parking pad will be added west of the driveway. She pointed out that the driveway is setback from Buena Road and is only minimally visible from the street. She stated that there are plantings along the Niles Avenue street frontage which will help to screen the expanded pavement and vehicles. She stated that she spoke with her neighbors, and some sent in letters of support.

Ms. Friedrich stated that the Board has recommended approval of variances to allow expanded pavement in the front and corner yard setbacks on other corner lots due to the limitations for on site and on street parking in those cases. She noted the house is sited right at the front and corner setback lines along both Niles Avenue and Buena Road. She noted that the Jones family recently purchased the home and want to improve the functionality of the driveway by adding two feet to the east side to straighten the driveway and create a parking pad 13 feet wide by 20 feet long on the west side of the driveway to accommodate today's vehicles. She confirmed that the bushes along the Niles Avenue frontage will remain and will help to screen the parking area. She stated that six letters of support from neighboring property owners were provided to the Board.

Chairman Bass invited public comment. Hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Board.

Board member Adams stated support for the variance and stated that he appreciated hearing the support from neighbors.

Board member Rose stated support for the variance. She asked that consideration be given to using impervious material for some portion of the expansion.

Board member Moorhead stated that the request appears to satisfy the variance criteria and stated support for the petition.

In response to a question from Chairman Bass, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that the City Arborist took a look at the tree to the east of the driveway and expects that with care, it can be preserved.

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

Board member Moorhead made a motion to recommend approval of a variance from the corner side yard setback to allow expansion of the existing driveway to a maximum of 18 feet and the addition of a parking space west of the driveway no larger than 13 feet wide by 20 feet long, consistent with the site plan presented to the Board. He stated that the recommendation is based on the findings as detailed in the staff report which are adopted by the Board as part of the motion.

The motion was seconded by Board member Adams and approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

**5. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of a variance to allow construction of a garage addition and driveway modifications within the corner side yard setback at 390 N. Green Bay Road.**

**Property Owners: Jagdeep and Elisabeth Dosanjh**

**Representative: Diana Melichar, architect**

Chairman Bass asked for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Melichar stated that the petitioners purchased the property in 2022 and have been making modifications to the home since that time. She stated that the petitioners plan an addition on the west side of the home for a first floor bedroom and an addition on the east side to add a third garage bay. She stated that a variance is required for the third garage bay on the east side. She reviewed the existing site plan noting the driveway entrance from Green Bay Road which is located at the northeast corner of the property. She pointed out the significant vegetation which screens the property from Green Bay Road. She noted however that the existing garage doors are just inside the entry gates. She stated that adding a third garage bay provides the opportunity to re-orient the garage doors away from the front of the house to face east. She stated that this change will allow some of the existing hardscape to be removed. She acknowledged that some additional hardscape will be needed to provide access to the re-oriented garage doors. She stated that the garage doors and the garage apron will be screened from views from Green Bay Road by existing and planned vegetation. She stated that the shed, which is currently visible from Green Bay Road, will be removed. She stated that the required setback from Green Bay Road is 50 feet and noted that the existing garage encroaches slightly into the required setback. She stated that the proposed third garage bay will also encroach slightly into the required setback. She reviewed some alternate design concepts that were considered but noted that the concepts resulted in more significant encroachments into the setback and more visibility of pavement and garage doors from Green Bay Road. She acknowledged the driveway apron is tight to navigate, but workable. She stated that the goal is to keep it to the minimum size needs and to fully screen the garage doors and parked vehicles from the road.

Ms. Vollmers confirmed that a variance is requested from the corner side yard setback for a small part of the garage and additional for the hardscape that is needed to provide access into the garage. She stated that no other variances are requested. She stated that the Historic Preservation Commission will review the design aspects of the petition at the next meeting. She stated that as proposed, the garage addition will encroach into the corner side yard setback four feet and the driveway will encroach 34 feet.

In response to questions from Board member Adams, Ms. Vollmers confirmed that the same setbacks apply to both structures and hardscape within the corner side yard setback.

In response to questions from Board member Rose, Ms. Czerniak stated that the minimum width for a driveway is nine feet, and the maximum width for a driveway within the setback area is 16 feet unless a variance is granted.

In response to questions from Chairman Bass, Ms. Melichar explained that a three point turn is required to get into the new garage bay. She stated that the proposed garage is small and is intended for a small car or as a storage area. She stated that the other two garage bays do not require three point turns to enter.

In response to questions from Board member Adams, Ms. Melichar stated that Green Giant Arborvitae are planned along the east side of the new garage apron. She stated there are lower evergreen plantings throughout the area.

Chairman Bass invited public comment. Hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Board.

Board member Miller commented that the proposed plan is a unique way to adapt a French Manor home in a way that enhances the neighborhood. He noted that the proposed landscaping will help mitigate any potential views of the garage and additional hardscape along Green Bay Road. He stated appreciation that Green Giant Arborvitae are planned. He commented that overall, the additions will create a visually more balanced house.

Board member Rose stated that the plan is a thoughtful solution to expanding the home.

Board member Moorhead stated that the variance criteria appear to be satisfied. He thanked the petitioner for providing the auto turn study.

Board member Adams stated support for the variance.

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

Board member Moorhead made a motion to recommend approval of variances from the corner side yard setback to:

- 1) Recognize the encroachment of the corner of the existing two car garage as an existing condition.

- 2) Allow a small portion of a third garage bay, no more than 36 square feet, to encroach into the setback no further than four and a half feet.
- 3) Allow hardscape for the garage apron to encroach no further than 34 feet.

He stated that the site plan submitted for permit must be consistent with the site plan presented to the Board. He stated that the recommendation is based on the findings as detailed in the staff report which are adopted by the Board as part of the motion. He stated that the recommendation is subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. The existing hardscape as identified on the plan presented to the Zoning Board of Appeals shall be removed as a requirement for closing out the permit.
2. The east facing garage doors, and the garage apron shall remain fully screened from Green Bay Road by fencing and plantings along the east property.

The motion was seconded by Board member Adams and approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

- 6. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of an amendment to the Special Use Permit for Ragdale to recognize a shift in the Ragdale Campus boundary to incorporate an additional parcel into the garden. No changes to or expansion of the overall use of the property are proposed. The Ragdale Campus is addressed as 1230, 1260 and 1272 N. Green Bay Road.  
Property Owner: The City of Lake Forest  
Representative: City Staff**

Chairman Bass asked for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest.

Board member Miller stated that he has had an association with Ragdale in the past and currently offers tours of the campus as a volunteer. He stated that he is able to consider the petition impartially.

Hearing no further declarations from the Board, Chairman Bass invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Czerniak stated that an amendment to the Ragdale Special Use Permit is requested to recognize a boundary change on the Campus. She stated that no change to the existing use of the Campus is proposed. She stated that as anticipated the last time the Special Use Permit was amended, a neighboring property owner, the Hart/Lansing family, is gifting a parcel of land to the City to allow it to be reincorporated into the Ragdale Garden as it was originally. She provided a brief history of the property and noted that since the original Special Use Permit was approved in 1978, it has been updated four times as Ragdale has grown and changed. She stated that the parcel will add 4,700 square feet to the Ragdale Campus.

In response to a question from Board member Moorhead, Ms. Czerniak stated that the City received any complaints about activity on the Ragdale Campus following the last amendment to the Special Use Permit. She confirmed that notice was provided to the neighbors consistent with standard City practices and legal requirements. She confirmed that the cabin, which is owned by the Hart/Lansing family will continue to have access through the Campus on the established access easement. She stated that the easement will remain as is.

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

Board member Moorhead made a motion to recommend approval of an amendment to the Special Use Permit for the Ragdale Campus for the sole purpose of incorporating the donation garden parcel into the boundaries of the Ragdale Campus. He stated that the recommendation is based on the findings as detailed in the staff report which are adopted by the Board as part of the motion.

The motion was seconded by Board member Adams and approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

**5. Public testimony on non-agenda items.**

No public testimony was presented to the Board on non-agenda items.

**6. Additional information from staff.**

Ms. Friedrich noted the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 23, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Czerniak  
Director of Community Development