

The City of Lake Forest
Zoning Board of Appeals
Proceedings of the April 28, 2025 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Monday, April 28, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Zoning Board of Appeals members present: Chairman Ari Bass and Board members James Moorhead, Henry Kleeman, Mike Adams, Art Miller and Jeffrey Giannelli

Zoning Board of Appeals members absent: Board member Laurie Rose

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

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

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

2. Consideration of the minutes of the February 24, 2025 meeting.

The minutes of the February 24, 2025 meeting were approved as presented.

3. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of a variance from the steep slope setback for a partially below grade addition to the residence at 270 Overlook Drive.

Property Owners: Brian and Veronica DeNicolo
Representative: Wells Wheeler, architect

Chairman Bass asked for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner and swore in all those intending to speak at the meeting.

Mr. Wheeler provided a brief history of the house and an overview of some of the work that has taken place since the house was constructed. He stated that at the time the house was constructed, the steep slope setback requirement was not yet adopted by the City. He stated that the house was built in compliance with the setbacks in effect at that time. He stated that today, a significant portion of the house is located in the steep slope setback. He stated that the petitioners recently purchased the home. He described the neighborhood and noted that architect Bob Roloson designed many of the homes in the immediate area. He stated that the proposed addition is primarily below grade, an expansion of the basement, and is located in front of the house,

away from the ravine. He stated that the addition will provide recreational space for the family. He stated that the steep slope setback extends through the addition. He noted that alternative locations for the addition were considered, but the option presented minimizes the mass and visual impact to the site. He stated that the proposed addition is 20 x 40 square feet and extends 3'-6" above the existing grade in front of the house. He stated that the addition complies with all of the standard yard setbacks. He stated that two skylights are proposed and confirmed that the skylights will be shaded at night to minimize light spillover. He stated that to accommodate the addition, three maple trees and a shrub will be removed. He stated that a green roof is being considered. He stated that the addition will have minimal visibility from the streetscape.

Mr. Prado confirmed that the house was constructed in conformance with the setbacks in effect at that time. He stated that since the house was constructed, the steep slope setback was adopted by the City and as a result, a non-conforming condition was created on the property. He stated that the City Engineer reviewed the proposed addition in relation to the steep slope setback and the ravine and recommends approval. He stated that findings in support of the steep slope variance are detailed in the staff report. He stated that conditions of approval as recommended in the staff report limit the height of the addition to 3'6" above the existing grade not including the skylights grade, require submittal of a landscape plan for the area around the addition, and mitigation of light spillover from the skylights.

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

Board member Moorhead stated support for the modest addition. He noted that the criteria for a variance appear to be satisfied.

Board member Kleeman agreed with Board member Moorhead.

Board member Adams stated support for the variance.

Board member Giannelli noted the modest size of the addition and stated support for the variance.

Board member Miller stated that the house is important architecturally and the proposed addition treats the home respectfully.

Chairman Bass agreed with the comments of the other Board members and stated support for the variance. Hearing no further comments from the Board, he invited a motion.

Board member Adams made a motion to recommend approval of a steep slope setback variance to allow a partially above grade basement addition to encroach no further than 16.5 into the steep slope setback at the point of furthest

encroachment and consistent with the plans submitted to the Board. He stated that the recommendation is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and incorporates the deliberations of the Board as additional findings. He stated that the motion includes the following conditions of approval.

- The height of the addition, except for the skylights, will be no more than 3.5 feet above the existing grade, consistent with the plans submitted to the Board.
- A landscape plan shall be submitted reflecting existing vegetation to remain, any vegetation proposed for removal, and new plantings proposed in the area of the addition to mitigate views of the addition and light spillover.

The motion was seconded by Board member Kleeman and approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

4. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of variances from the side and rear yard accessory structure setbacks for a replacement garage at 587-589 Ivy Court.

Property Owner: McIlvaine Enterprises, LLC (Bruce McIlvaine)

Representative: Wells Wheeler, architect

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

Mr. Wheeler stated that after purchasing the property five years ago, the petitioner was granted a variance to allow the addition of a front porch. He noted at that time, the petitioner knew the detached garage needed to be replaced but did not request a variance at that time because removal of the deteriorating garage was not possible due to the location of the neighbor's electric service line. He stated that the electric service line is being addressed and replacement of the garage, in the same location, is now proposed. He explained that because the existing garage is nonconforming to the setbacks, variances are required. He stated that shifting the garage to conform to the setbacks is not possible due to the tight conditions on the lot. He stated that the replacement garage will be taller than the existing garage to allow for a standard size garage door and added that the roof will be properly pitched for water runoff. He stated that a garage has existed at this location for 50 years. He stated that views of the replacement garage from the street are limited.

Ms. Friedrich stated that variances from the rear and side yard accessory structure setbacks are requested to allow construction of a replacement garage. She confirmed that variances were granted for this property in 2020 to allow a front porch and air conditioning units to encroach into the setbacks. She confirmed that the electric service lines are now planned for relocation which will allow replacement of the deteriorating garage. She stated that the replacement garage will be constructed in the same footprint as the existing garage to continue to provide

adequate maneuvering space for vehicles pulling into and out of the garage. She noted that unlike the existing garage, the eaves of the replacement garage will extend 12" out from the garage wall encroaching further into the setback than the existing garage. She stated that the addition of eaves and a gutter will allow stormwater from the garage roof to be properly addressed. She noted that the petitioner has made significant improvements since purchasing the property, which in the past, under different ownership, had numerous issues. She summarized that variances are requested to allow the replacement garage to be located two feet from the side and rear property lines at the point of furthest encroachment.

In response to questions from Board member Adams, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that the replacement garage is in the same footprint as the existing garage but the eaves encroach further into the setback.

In response to questions from Board member Giannelli, Mr. McIlvaine stated that as proposed, there is a sidewalk along the side of the garage with a curb to direct water down the driveway to the street, away from the neighboring property.

In response to questions from Board member Moorhead, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that a drainage and grading plan will be required and will be subject to review and approval by the City Engineer prior to the issuance of a building permit. She confirmed that the utility company approved the garage within the easement.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Bass invited public comment. Hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Board.

Board member Kleeman stated support for the variance.

Board member Miller commented that allowing improvements such as this helps to provide stability in one of the City's more affordable neighborhoods.

Board member Moorhead stated support for the variances noting that the criteria appear to be met.

Board member Adams agreed with the comments of the other Board members.

Board member Giannelli agreed with the comments of the other Board members.

Chairman Bass stated support for the variances. Hearing no further comments, he invited a motion.

Board member Moorhead made a motion to recommend approval of side and rear yard accessory structure setback variances to allow a replacement detached garage no closer than two feet from the side (east) property line and no closer than two feet from the south property line at the furthest extent of the structure consistent with the plan presented to the Board. He stated that the recommendation is based on the

findings detailed in the staff report and incorporates the comments of the Board as additional findings.

The motion was seconded by Board member Adams and approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

5. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of a variance from the front yard setback for an addition to the residence at 1360 Elm Tree Road.

Property Owners: Scott and Anne-Marie D'Angelo

Representative: Diana Melichar, architect

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

Ms. Melichar reviewed the history of the property noting that a family room addition was added to the south elevation in 1969 and a breakfast room was added in 2002. She pointed out that the massing and design of the breakfast room addition is not in keeping with the original house. She reviewed the current floor plan and pointed out that the family room is oddly placed in the home. She reviewed the intent of the proposed project including expansion of the kitchen, recreation of the breakfast room, and the addition of space near the kitchen to improve the overall flow of the home. She stated that as constructed in 1926, a portion of the home encroaches into the 50 foot front yard setback in effect today. She stated that to relate to the original home, the proposed addition encroaches 4 feet 9 inches into the front yard setback. She stated that the addition is designed to be compatible with the original home. She stated that a variance is requested for a minimal encroachment similar to the encroachment of the earlier addition which will be removed. She stated that the proposed addition has minimal, if any visibility from the street and pointed out the existing seven foot stockade fence. She stated that the petitioners plan to plant additional landscaping in the area. She stated that the sheds in the front yard setback will be removed and will not be replaced. She stated that the planned updates will extend the useful life of the home.

Ms. Vollmers reviewed that the request is for a variance to allow a small encroachment into the front yard setback for a replacement addition. She stated that the Historic Preservation Commission recently considered the petition and recommended approval of a small building scale variance to accommodate the addition. She stated that the hardship in conforming to the front yard setback is the construction of the home prior to the adoption of the current setback requirements. She confirmed that the addition will encroach no more than 4 feet 9 inches into the front yard setback.

In response to questions from Board member Miller, Ms. D'Angelo confirmed that one of the sheds is a playhouse that dates back about 20 years.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Bass invited public comment. Hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Board.

Board member Adams commented that the encroachment is minimal and appears to provide a significant improvement to the living conditions of the home. He stated that the addition relates well to the massing on the west side of the south elevation.

Chairman Bass agreed with Board member Adams' comments.

Board member Miller noted the historic importance of the house, adding that the proposed improvements will make the house more functional for the future.

Board member Kleeman commended the project and stated support for the variances.

Board member Moorhead agreed with Board member Kleeman's comments.

Board member Giannelli agreed with the comments of the other Board members.

Hearing no further comments, Chairman Bass invited a motion.

Board member Kleeman made a motion to recommend approval of a variance to allow an addition to encroachment no more than 4'9" into the front yard setback consistent with the plans presented to the Board. He stated that the recommendation is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and incorporates the comments of the Board as additional findings.

The motion was seconded by Board member Moorhead and approved by a vote of 6 to 0.

6. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of variances from the front and extended side yard setbacks for an expanded driveway at 1510 Willow Street.

Property Owner and Representative: Michael Giannelli

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

Board member Giannelli recused himself from consideration of the petition noting that his son is the petitioner.

Hearing nothing further, Chairman Bass invited a presentation by the petitioner.

Mr. Giannelli reviewed the planned driveway expansion in front of the home to accommodate family vehicles. He stated that the house was built in 1951 with a driveway that accommodates only a single car. He stated that parking is not permitted on the street due to the proximity to the high school. He stated that at the

widest point, the driveway as proposed is 17 feet wide. He pointed out other wide driveways in the neighborhood. He stated that the driveway will be three feet from the north property line.

Ms. Friedrich stated that the house and attached garage are located within the front and side yard setbacks limiting the options for expansion of the driveway. She confirmed that variances are required to allow the driveway to exceed the maximum width of 16 feet within the front yard setback and to encroach to within three feet of the north property line rather than meet the ten foot setback requirements. She stated that the proposed conditions are found on other properties in the neighborhood.

Hearing no questions from the Board, Chairman Bass invited public comment.

Mr. Tomaselli, 1520 Willow Street, stated that he lives immediately north of the subject property. He thanked Mr. Giannelli for talking with him about the project and noted that they discussed and agreed on how to manage the stormwater runoff.

Hearing nothing further, he invited final questions and comments from the Board.

Board member Miller provided some history noting that the house was located two blocks from a stop on the North Shore Railroad Line when the line existed which might have led to the decision in the 1950's to limit on site parking for vehicles since residents in the neighborhood could easily walk to the train. He complimented the house.

Chairman Bass observed that the proposed driveway is similar to other driveways in the area and may in fact create less pavement in the front yard than exists on other properties along the street.

Board members Adams and Kleeman stated support for the variances.

Board member Adams made a motion to recommend approval of the variances to allow expansion of the driveway up to a width of 17 feet within the front yard setback and no closer than three feet to the side (north) property line consistent with the plan presented to the Board. He stated that the recommendation is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and incorporates the comments of the Board as additional findings.

The motion was seconded by Board member Moorhead and approved by a vote of 5 to 0 with Board member Gianelli abstaining.

7. Public testimony on non-agenda items.

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

8. Additional information from staff.

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Ms. Friedrich noted the next meeting is Tuesday, May 27.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Friedrich
Planning Technician