

The City of Lake Forest
Zoning Board of Appeals
Proceedings of the May 27, 2025 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Zoning Board of Appeals members present: Chairman Ari Bass and Board members Henry Kleeman, Mike Adams and Jeffrey Giannelli.

Zoning Board of Appeals members absent: None (Three positions are vacant.)

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 Bass

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

2. Recognition of past Zoning Board of Appeals member Laurie Rose.

Chairman Bass reviewed the various petitions heard by the Board during Ms. Rose's tenure and thanked her for her contributions to the Board and to the community. He recognized her service on other Boards and Commissions totaling 25 years of community service in Lake Forest and in other communities.

Ms. Rose thanked the Board members and City staff for the opportunity to serve and encouraged others to do so.

3. Consideration of the minutes of the April 28, 2025 meeting.

The minutes of the April 28, 2025 meeting were approved as presented.

4. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of variances from the setbacks along the east and west property lines for a new residence on a vacant lot at 375 Deerpath Square. A variance is also requested to allow a driveway wider than 16 feet within the front yard setback.

Property Owners: Daniel and Adriana Axente

Representative: John Nelson, 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. Nelson stated that the property is unique in that it is the only house on the block and has frontage on four roads. He stated that the owners currently live in Lake Forest and recently purchased the property. He noted that there are 40 foot setbacks on all sides of the property as required by the R-3 zoning district. He stated that the buildable area is narrow. He stated that the house is designed to fit, for the most part, within the buildable area. He noted that on the rear, east side of the property, the second floor is cantilevered over the first floor and encroaches slightly into the zoning setback. He stated that on the front of the property, an open front porch and the eave overhang encroach into the 40 foot setback. He pointed out that the footprint of the house itself is in conformance with the setbacks. He reviewed the applicable criteria for a zoning variance and noted that they are met. He stated that the design aspects of the proposed house were recently recommended for approval by the Building Review Board. He showed images of other homes in the neighborhood and the church across the street. He reviewed the site plan and elevations noting the areas of encroachment. He reviewed the floor plans noting that the rooms are not oversized. He noted that a drainage and grading plan was prepared.

Mr. Prado confirmed that the property is unique with public streets on all four sides. He stated that the lot is long and narrow and that in combination with the 40 foot setbacks, creates a narrow building pad. He stated that the proposed residence faces west and the open front porch encroaches five feet into the setback from the west property line. He stated that the roof overhang on the second floor encroaches into the setback two feet. He stated that a three car garage is proposed and to provide adequate access to the garage, a 30 foot wide driveway is proposed within the setback from the west property line. He stated that there is a cantilevered portion of the second floor on the east elevation which encroaches four feet into the setback from the east property line. He noted substantial vegetation along the east side of the property adding that there are no homes to the east of the property. He stated that the vegetation along the property lines is intended to remain. He confirmed that the Building Review Board recently recommended approval of the design aspects of the project.

Chairman Bass invited questions from the Board.

In response to a question from Board member Adams, Mr. Nelson clarified that the cantilevered portion extends two feet beyond the house, into the setback.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Bass invited public comment. Hearing none, he stated that the project is reasonable and acknowledged that the

narrow buildable area due to the 40 foot setbacks on all sides. He complimented the open front porch and stated support for the variances.

Board member Adams stated support for the petition and acknowledged that the lot is challenging.

Board member Giannelli stated support and commented that in his opinion, the new home will add character to the neighborhood. He noted there is some established landscaping along the property lines that should be retained.

Board member Kleeman stated support for the variance and agreed with the comments of the other Board members.

In response to a question from Chairman Bass, Mr. Prado stated that there has never been a home on the property.

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

Board member Adams made a motion to recommend approval of variances to allow:

- An open front porch to encroach and, to a lesser extent, the roof overhang of the main house, no further than five (5) feet into the setback along the west property line.
- Encroachment of the second story of the residence no further than four (4) feet into the setback along the east property line.
- A variance to allow the driveway to be no more than 30 feet wide within the setback along the west property line 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 recommendation includes the following conditions of approval.

1. The front porch shall remain open.
2. The vegetative screening along the east property line shall remain or, if removals are approved by the City, replanting must occur to achieve a similar density in three planting seasons.

The motion was seconded by Board member Kleeman and approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

7. Public testimony on non-agenda items.

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

8. Additional information from staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Czerniak
Director of Community Development