

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

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Monday, July 28, 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, Jan Gibson, Fred Brewer and Jeffrey Giannelli.

Zoning Board of Appeals members absent: None (One vacant position.)

Staff present: Michelle Friedrich, Planning Technician 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 members Jamie Moorhead and Art Miller.

Chairman Bass reviewed the various petitions heard by the Board during Mr. Moorhead's tenure on the Board and thanked him for his contributions to the Board and to the community.

3. Consideration of the minutes of the May 27, 2025 meeting.

Consideration of the minutes of the May 27, 2025 meeting was postponed.

4. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of a variance from the rear yard setback for a mudroom addition and covered walkway at 920 Church Road.

Property Owners: Jessica and Jason Wicha
Representative: Neil J. Gerdes, 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.

Ms. Wicha stated that after living in the house for about five years, they are proposing an addition to provide space for a mudroom and a covered walkway connecting the

house to the garage to improve the functionality of the home. She stated that there will be no impact on the appearance of the home from the streetscape.

Mr. Gerdes stated that the house was built in 1923 before the current zoning setback requirements were adopted. He stated that currently, the garage and house are non-conforming to the current setbacks. He stated that the proposed mudroom addition is modest in size, adding that a covered walkway is proposed connecting the house to the detached garage to provide protection from the weather. He reviewed the elevations and noted the location of stairs to address the change in grade between the floor of the kitchen and the adjacent ground.

Ms. Czerniak stated that the addition and covered walkway are behind the home and not visible from the streetscape or from neighboring homes. She stated that the encroachment into the rear yard as proposed will not extend beyond the east wall of the garage.

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

Board member Kleeman stated support for the variance.

Board member Adams stated support for the variance noting that neither the addition nor the covered walkway will be visible from off of the site.

Board members Giannelli, Brewer, and Gibson stated support for the variances.

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

Board member Adams made a motion to recommend approval of a variance to allow a mudroom addition and covered walkway to encroach into the rear yard setback extending no further than the east wall of the existing garage, a distance of 13'7" from the house and encroaching 11'-6" into the rear yard setback as reflected on the site plan presented to the Board. He stated that the motion is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and includes the following condition.

- The covered walkway shall remain open.

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

5. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of variances from the front and extended side yard setbacks for an expanded driveway at the residence at 927 Cherokee Road.

Property Owners and Representatives: James and Amy Mynhier

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

Board member Gibson stated that she met Ms. Mynhier while visiting the site but did not discuss the petition.

Chairman Bass stated that he met Mr. Mynhier while visiting the site but did not discuss the petition. Hearing no further declarations, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Mynhier stated that to avoid moving cars around and parking on the street, a variance is requested to allow the expansion of the driveway to create a parking space alongside the garage and provide a way to access the space. He noted the existing vegetation along the property line which will screen a parked car. He pointed out that Cherokee School is nearby and as a result, there is significant traffic on the street at times. He stated that the intention is not to park cars on the driveway itself, but to use the driveway to access the parking space.

Ms. Friedrich stated that the Code permits a driveway of up to 16' wide in the front yard setback. She stated that the existing driveway is 19'6" wide. She stated that the petitioner proposed to widen the driveway by 10' to access a parking space alongside the garage. She summarized that as proposed, the driveway will be 13'6" wider than permitted by the Code within the front yard setback. She added that the expanded driveway will also encroach into the extended side yard setback of 12 feet and will be located 4'6" from the south property line as proposed. She noted other similar conditions throughout the neighborhood because many of the homes were sited at the front yard setback line. She said that the petitioner stated the intention to retain the existing vegetation along the property line to screen the parking space. She clarified that the parking space is located behind the front yard setback and does not require a variance. She stated that four letters of support were received and were provided to the Board.

Chairman Bass invited questions from the Board.

In response to a question from Board member Gibson, Ms. Friedrich stated that the Board can request year round screening or permit the screening in place on the site. Ms. Friedrich stated that the Engineering staff did review this site plan and did not have any concerns about drainage.

In response to questions from Board member Adams, Mr. Mynhier stated that they did attempt to contact the neighbor to the south and left a letter about the variance but did not receive a response. in the neighbor to the south, but no response.

In response to questions from Chairman Bass, Ms. Friedrich stated that the City Arborist will review the site during the permit review process.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Bass invited public comment. Hearing none, he returned the discussion to the board.

Board member Gianelli stated that year round screening should be required.

Board member Gibson cautioned that year round screening may not survive along the property line due to limited sun exposure.

In response to a question from Board member Brewer, Ms. Czerniak confirmed that the City mailed notice of the petition to neighboring property owners. She noted that the Board can include a condition that the City Arborist review the site.

Board member Kleeman stated support for the variance as requested without any conditions.

In response to a question from Chairman Bass, Mr. Mynhier confirmed that the house to the south faces Cherokee Road and there is small porch on the north side of the house, closest to the proposed driveway expansion.

Board member Adams stated support for the variance without any conditions.

Chairman Bass asked that the City Arborist look at the mature Oak tree to make sure appropriate steps are taken in an effort to preserve them.

In response to a question from Chairman Bass, Mr. Mynhier confirmed that no grass grows along the south side of the garage due to shade and stated that water runs off into the vegetation on the south side of the property line.

In response to a question from Board member Giannelli, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that the drainage along the property line was preliminarily reviewed by City staff.

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

Board member Adams made a motion to recommend approval of a variance to allow expansion of the driveway up to 29'6" wide within the front yard setback and to allow the driveway to encroach no closer than 4'6" to the south property line consistent with the site plan submitted to the Board.

He stated that the recommendation is based on the findings detailed in the staff report and incorporates the Boards's comments as additional findings.

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

Ms. Friedrich noted that staff anticipates a meeting on August 25.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Friedrich
Planning Technician