

The City of Lake Forest
Zoning Board of Appeals
Proceedings of the August 25, 2025 Meeting

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Monday, August 25, 2025 at 6:30 p.m., in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Zoning Board of Appeals members present: Chairman Ari Bass and Board members Mike Adams, Jan Gibson, Fred Brewer and Jeffrey Giannelli.

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

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 Art Miller.

This item was postponed; Mr. Miller was not available to attend the meeting.

3. Consideration of the minutes of the May 27, 2025 and July 28, 2025 meetings.

The minutes of the May 27, 2025 meeting were approved as presented.

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

4. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of a variance to allow the eave on the east side of the residence and an open pergola to encroach into the lot in depth side yard setback at 375 E. Westminster.

Property Owners: Chris and Anne Policinski

Representative: Peter Witmer, architect, Witmer and Associates

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. Witmer stated that two variances are requested for a new house to allow encroachment into the lot in depth side yard setback. He presented a survey of the property and the proposed site plan. He noted the siting of the neighboring homes to

the east and west. He stated that the new home is sited consistent with the existing homes along the Westminster streetscape. He stated that the home is sited slightly further from the front property line than the required 40 foot front yard setback. He stated that various site plans were studied including plans locating the garage at and near the front of the house. He stated that the plan presented locates the garage behind the home to avoid negatively impacting the streetscape. He stated that as a result, the house does not have a direct connection to the rear yard and instead, the yard on the east side of the house is the usable outdoor space. He stated that a larger than usual side yard setback is required because the property is the front lot of a lot in depth subdivision. He noted that the 40 foot front yard setback is applied to the east side of the property, adjacent to the driveway which provides access to the homes in the rear, rather than the standard ten foot setback required in the R-1 zoning district. He stated that a shade structure, an open pergola, is desired by the property owners to enhance the outdoor space on the east side of the home adding that the traditional looking pergola encroaches into the 40 foot setback. He stated that the structure will remain open. He presented the landscape plan noting the extensive plantings proposed including arbor vitae along the east property line. He noted that there is a fence on the east property line that was recently installed. He stated that the pergola will have limited, if any, visibility from off of the site. He presented the conceptual rendered elevations of the home and pergola with the fence and planned landscaping. He stated that a variance is also requested to allow the roof eave on the east side of the house to encroach slightly into the 40 foot setback again noting that the standard side yard setback in the zoning district is ten feet. He noted that the depth of the eave is important from an architectural perspective and presented a section to illustrate the depth of the eave. He noted that the Code allows eaves to encroach into the front yard setback which in this case is applied to the side yard. He presented the floor plan noting that removing 18 inches to avoid the encroachment of the eave and gutter would be meaningful due to the narrowness of the house.

Mr. Prado reviewed that variances are requested to allow an open pergola and the eave and gutter to encroach into the side yard lot in depth setback on the east side of the house. He noted that the subject property is the front lot of a lot in depth subdivision. He stated that the purpose of the application of the wider front yard setback to the portion of a front lot of a lot in depth subdivision is to screen the home on the front lot from the adjacent driveway to the residences in the rear. He stated that the staff report offers findings in support of the variances given the uniqueness of the property. He stated that the design aspects of the proposed residence will be considered by the Historic Preservation Commission at an upcoming meeting.

Chairman Bass invited questions from the Board.

In response to a question from Board member Adams, Mr. Witmer confirmed that the encroachment of the eave occurs on the east side of the property, on the side where the pergola is located.

In response to a question from Chairman Bass, Ms. Czerniak stated that in this case, the transfer of 30 feet of the property to the parcel to the west was the result of settling litigation. He stated that in response to neighbors' concerns about the potential for the condominium building to impact the Westminster streetscape, a single family home was constructed to the north of the condominium building, on a lot that benefitted from the transfer of the 30 feet. She stated that the land transfer was not initiated solely by a previous or the current owners of the property.

In response to a question from Board member Gibson, Mr. Witmer stated that the pergola will help define the outdoor living space and will offer more permanence and perhaps be less visible from off of the site than a seasonal umbrella.

In response to Board member Giannelli, Mr. Prado explained that the subject property is the front lot of a subdivision and is adjacent to the driveway which provides access to the two lots to the rear. He stated that the front yard setback is applied to both the street side, the front of the property, and to the side yard which is adjacent to the neighbors' driveway. He clarified that the application of the front yard setback does not have to do with the orientation of the house.

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

Board member Adams acknowledged the challenge presented by lots in depth. He stated that the proposed encroachments are minimal.

Board member Gibson observed that there appears to be plenty of vegetation on the neighboring property to the west as well as proposed vegetation in the front yard to screen the new home from the street.

Board member Brewer stated support for the pergola noting that it adds personality to the house and is modest in size.

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 the eave on the east side of the residence to encroach into the lot in depth side yard setback no more than 18 inches and to allow an open pergola to encroach no more than 13 feet 5 inches into the lot in depth side yard setback at 375 E. Westminster. He stated that the motion is based on the findings detailed in the staff report which are adopted as part of the motion. He stated that the

Board's comments are incorporated as additional findings. He stated that the motion includes a condition requiring the pergola to remain open.

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

5. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of variance to allow reconstruction of non-conforming pillars and a gate in the front yard setback at 916 W. Old Mill Road.

Property Owner: The Chicago Trust Company DEV – 4896 (Aiden Marquez 100%)

Representative: Evan Perry, contractor

This item was withdrawn at the request of the petitioner.

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 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Czerniak
Director of Community Development