

**The City of Lake Forest**  
**Zoning Board of Appeals**  
**Proceedings of the September 27, 2021 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Monday, September 27, 2021 at 6:30 p.m., in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Zoning Board of Appeals members present: Chairman Michael Sieman and Board members Pete Clemens, James Moorhead, Ari Bass, Nancy Novit, Laurie Rose and Lisa Nehring.

Zoning Board of Appeals members absent: None

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 Sieman**

**2. Consideration of the minutes from the August 23, 2021 meeting.**

The minutes of the August 23, 2021 meeting were approved as submitted.

**3. Consideration of a request for a variance to allow expansion of the driveway within  
the front yard setback at 1191 Estes Avenue.  
Property Owners: Jennifer Mullarkey and Kristin Hendricks**

Chairman Sieman introduced the agenda item and asked the Board for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he swore in all those intending to speak and invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Mullarkey described the improvements she and her partner have made since purchasing the home about 18 months ago. She noted that they learned that the gravel portion of the driveway, the parking pullout, was installed without a permit. She noted that they propose to push the parking pad to the east and modify the shape of the asphalt driveway. She noted that shifting the parking area east brings it more into compliance with the zoning setbacks than the current configuration. She described the landscaping proposed along the north property line noting arborvitae and other bushes are planned.

Ms. Friedrich noted that the property is a corner lot in the Lake Forest Heights Subdivision. She noted that property is zoned R-2 and does not meet the current minimum lot size or width for that district. She noted that at some point in the past,

without a permit, a former property owner expanded the driveway by adding a parking pad in the front yard setback. She noted that the petitioners bought the property about 18 months ago and were not aware of the nonconforming status of the parking pad. She acknowledged that shifting the parking pad as proposed is more conforming to the Code than the existing condition but noted that a variance is still required. She noted that landscaping is proposed around the parking area to screen it from view from the neighboring properties to the west and north. She stated that the width of the driveway, at the widest point, is 25.5 feet. She noted letters from neighboring property owners in support of the project are included in the Board's packet.

Chairman Sieman invited questions from the Board.

In response to questions from Board member Nehring, Ms. Mullarkey confirmed that the downspouts will be adjusted in relation to the new walkway.

Board member Bass complimented the petitioners on their work to date to improve the property.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Sieman invited public testimony, hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Board.

Board member Nehring complimented the work completed to date on the property by the new owners.

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

Board member Moorhead made a motion to recommend approval to the City Council of a variance to allow a reconfigured parking pad and driveway at a width of up to 25.5 feet within the front yard setback consistent with the site plan submitted to the Board.

The motion was seconded by Board member Rose and approved by a vote of 7-0.

**4. Consideration of a request for a variance to allow expansion of the driveway within the corner side yard setback at 80 Winston Road.  
Property Owners: Elizabeth and Russ Erick**

Chairman Sieman introduced the agenda item and asked the Board for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he swore in all those intending to speak and invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Ervick described the project, widening the driveway at 80 Winston Road to allow for off street parking for three cars. He noted that currently, there is only room for two

parked cars on the driveway. He noted that the existing driveway is 20 feet wide and the proposed driveway is 26.5 feet wide.

Ms. Friedrich noted that the property is a corner lot in the Northmoor neighborhood. She noted that the garage faces Winston Road and, at the closest point, is 6.5 feet from the east property line and encroaches into the corner side yard setback. She confirmed that the driveway is currently 20 feet wide. She noted that the property owners have a third car and are looking to expand the driveway 5 feet to the north and 1.5 feet to the south for a total width of 26.5 feet. She stated that the proposed width will allow the driveway to accommodate three parked cars and will allow the parkway tree located to the south of the driveway to remain.

Chairman Sieman invited questions from the Board.

In response to questions from Chairman Sieman and Board member Rose, Ms. Friedrich noted that the proposed driveway will be approximately 5 feet from the ginkgo tree in the parkway. She confirmed that the City Arborist reviewed and is comfortable with the proposed driveway layout.

In response to questions from Board member Nehring, Ms. Friedrich stated that the widths of the other driveways in the neighborhood were not reviewed by staff. She noted that the property is unique due the siting of the garage 6.5 feet from the property line.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Sieman invited public testimony, hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Board.

In response to questions from Board member Bass, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that the petitioner's contractor will widen the curb cut.

In response to questions from Chairman Sieman, Mr. Ervick stated that the expanded driveway will serve his family and future owners well.

Board member Novit stated her support for the petition and pointed out that the proposed change helps to preserve the existing housing stock in Lake Forest.

Board member Nehring and Rose agreed with Board member Novit.

Chairman Sieman stated support for the variance and hearing no further comments from the Board, he invited a motion.

Board member Nehring made a motion to recommend approval to the City Council of a variance to allow a driveway with of up to 26.5 feet within the corner side yard setback consistent with the site plan submitted to the Board.

The motion was seconded by Board member Clemens and approved by a vote of 7-0.

5. **Consideration of a request for variances to allow portions of the driveway for a new house proposed on the property to be wider than permitted within the front yard setback and to be located within the side yard setback. The property is located at 1000 Grandview Lane.  
Property Owners: Steven and Nancy Hannick  
Representative: Diana Melichar, architect**

Chairman Sieman introduced the agenda item and asked the Board for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he swore in all those intending to speak and invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Melichar described the overall project and surrounding neighborhood. She noted that consideration was given to rehabilitating the existing house but after review, a demolition was found to be the best solution. She noted that the site is heavily wooded. She stated that as they worked through siting options for a new house, it was determined that the existing driveway is non-conforming with respect to the side yard setback. She noted that although the driveway will be shifted somewhat with the site plan for the new house, it cannot be shifted to fully comply with the setbacks in the Code. She noted that fully complying with the setbacks is difficult due to existing trees which are intended for preservation, the significant grade change on the property, the curve and grade of the road and the fire hydrant in the parkway. She noted that the project meets the standards for a variance and creates a better, more compliant condition than exists presently while preserving trees and avoiding the fire hydrant.

Ms. Friedrich explained that the overall project on the site includes demolition of the existing residence and construction of a replacement residence. She stated that the Building Review Board will review the design aspects of the project. She noted that in designing and siting the replacement house, the petitioners explored various options. She noted that due to several factors including the grade change across the property, the trees and a City fire hydrant, the site plan proposes to keep the driveway in the same general location as exists today. She noted however that the driveway is shifted slightly and as a result is less non-conforming than the existing driveway. She stated that variances are requested to allow the driveway to be configured as proposed. She stated that the new driveway is shifted south to the extent possible while maintaining a safe distance from the fire hydrant and a parkway tree. She noted that the proposed driveway is wider than the existing driveway within the front yard setback to accommodate a motor court. She noted that the motor court extends into the 12 foot side yard setback within the 40 foot front yard setback. She noted that the petitioner provided auto turn studies to demonstrate the need for the driveway as proposed in order to allow for adequate

maneuvering space into and out of the garage. She noted that there are letters in support of the petition in the Board's packet.

Chairman Sieman invited questions from the Board.

In response to questions from Board member Nehring, Ms. Melichar confirmed that the spruce trees north of the motor court will remain and should tolerate the construction activity.

In response to questions from Board member Clemens, Ms. Melichar noted that the driveway apron is 12 feet wide and will not be used for parking.

In response to questions from Board member Rose, Ms. Melichar confirmed that the auto turn study were based on vehicles of various sizes. She stated that the study was completed by Bleck Engineering.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Sieman invited public testimony, hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Board.

In response to questions from Chairman Sieman, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that variances setbacks.

Board member Moorhead stated support for the variances. He acknowledged the petitioners' thoughtfulness in exploring options and the practical challenges on the site including the trees, grade change and fire hydrant. He stated that the project appears to satisfy the standards for a variance.

Chairman Sieman agreed with Board member Moorhead's comments adding that the plan presents a sensitive proposal for upgrading the existing housing stock. He stated that the proposed driveway is an improvement over the existing conditions.

Board member Bass agreed with Chairman Sieman's comments. He stated that he grew up in a home with a fire hydrant near the driveway and it was not an issue.

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

Board member Nehring made a motion to recommend approval to the City Council of variances to allow the driveway for the new house to encroach into the front and side yard setbacks consistent with the site plan submitted to the Board. She stated that the recommendation is subject to a recommendation in support of the petition from the Building Review Board.

The motion was seconded by Board member Novit and approved by a vote of 7-0.

**6. Consideration of a request for variances from the front yard and lot-in-depth setbacks to allow additions and alterations to the existing historic structures located at 425 N. Sheridan Road.  
Property Owner: Lisa Wolfe**

Chairman Sieman introduced the agenda item and asked the Board for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest.

Board member Rose noted that she met the petitioner on site but noted that the petitioner only directed her to the staking on the site and there was no discussion of the substance of the petition.

Hearing no further Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest, Chairman Sieman swore in all those intending to speak and invited a presentation from staff.

Ms. Wolfe explained that the property was originally part of the White Oaks Estate, established in 1910. She reviewed the preservation work that she and her husband have completed to date on the gate house, entrance pillars and the wall since purchasing the property. She noted that she and her husband are designers and spent considerable time studying the site and determining the best way to renovate and add to the property to meet their family's needs while preserving the historic buildings. She noted that the existing structures on the property include the gate house fronting on Sheridan Road and a detached garage. She noted that as proposed, the project includes additions to connect the gate house and the detached garage, conversion of the detached garage to living space and additions to that structure. She stated that a new detached garage is proposed on the east side of the property, in compliance with the accessory structure setbacks. She noted that the driveway along the north side of the property is shared with the lot in depth to the east, 427 N. Sheridan Road, which she and her husband also own. She noted that the property has an irregular shape and as a result, the proposed additions to the existing structures require variances from the front yard and lot in depth setbacks. She noted that several other site design options were considered and for various reasons, were not pursued. She reviewed the elevations with the proposed additions and the existing and proposed landscaping which she noted will screen views of the existing and the proposed structures from Sheridan Road and from the neighboring properties on Thorne Lane residences.

Ms. Friedrich confirmed that the property was originally part of a larger estate. She stated that the petitioners recently purchased the property and as noted, have completed various improvements on the property to date. She noted that the petition includes a request for two variances; a variance from the front yard setback for an addition to connect the gate house and to the existing detached garage, and a lot in depth variance from the north property line. She added that both of the required setbacks are 50 feet. She noted that the proposed detached

garage complies with the accessory structure setback requirements and does not require a variance. She noted that the petitioners explored various options for adding to the existing structure and ultimately the plan presented was determined to be their preferred plan. She noted that the proposed plan locates the additions internal to the site, facing the ravine and College property to the north. She acknowledged that the additions will be viewed from the lot in depth to the east, 427 N. Sheridan Road which shares the driveway easement. She noted that the project will be considered by the Historic Preservation Commission because the property is in the historic district. She added that building scale and height variances for the proposed detached garage are requested from the Historic Preservation Commission. She noted one letter was received in support of the petition and one in opposition specifically to the proposed detached garage.

Chairman Sieman invited questions from the Board.

In response to questions from Board member Novit, Ms. Friedrich stated that based on information currently available, the building scale variance will be for approximately 600 square feet over the allowable square footage for the property. She reiterated that the building scale variance is under the purview of the Historic Preservation Commission.

In response to questions from Chairman Sieman, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that the Historic Preservation Commission will also hear the request for a height variance.

In response to questions from Board member Novit, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that the setback is measured from the property line, not the driveway.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Sieman invited public testimony, hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Board.

In response to questions from Board member Novit, Ms. Wolfe explained that the additions are on the north façade to avoid impacting the rear yard and the connection between the two structures is placed in the most logical location.

In response to questions from Board member Novit, Mr. DiGanci stated that the additions as proposed best preserve the gate house as the entrance element on the property. He noted that the gate house could is not overpowered by the additions as proposed.

In response to questions from Board member Rose, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that the 427 N. Sheridan Road property is a separate legal lot.

In response to questions from Board member Bass, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that no setback variance request is requested for the detached garage.

Board member Bass noted that the additions are directly adjacent to the ravine, immediately to the north.

Board member Clemens noted that he walked the site and in his opinion, the properties on Thorne Lane will not be impacted significantly by the proposed garage. He noted however that the 427 N. Sheridan Road property is closest to the detached garage.

In response to questions from Board member Nehring, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that the additions to the existing structures are the subject of the variance requests.

Board member Moorhead agreed with Board member Novit's comments. He noted that most of the proposed improvements that are the subject of the variance request are outside of the buildable area. He stated that this project could have an impact on the 427 N. Sheridan Road property. He noted however that focusing just on the additions that require a variance, the criteria appear to be satisfied. He noted there will be more building mass closer to the 427 N. Sheridan however, the mass appears to be mitigated by the ravine which is adjacent to both properties. He stated support for the variances but acknowledged that this is a difficult petition.

Board member Nehring stated support for the variance pointing out that vegetative screening will remain to screen the structures.

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

In response to questions from Board member Moorhead, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that the Historic Preservation Commission will review the design aspects of the project as well as the rule on the requested height and building scale variances.

In response to questions from Board member Novit, Ms. Friedrich confirmed that the Historic Preservation Commission will review all design aspects of the project as well as the building mass and height for which variances are required.

Chairman Sieman stated support for the variances and agreed that the petition is a difficult one. Hearing no further comments from the Board, he invited a motion.

Board member Moorhead made a motion to recommend approval to the City Council of variances from the front and lot in depth setbacks to allow additions and alterations as depicted on the plans submitted to the Board. She noted that the recommendation is conditioned on approval from the Historic Preservation Commission.

The motion was seconded by Board member Nehring and approved by a vote of 7-0.



**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 the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 25, 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle E. Friedrich  
Planning Technician