

**The City of Lake Forest**  
**Zoning Board of Appeals**  
**Proceedings of the April 22, 2024 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Monday, April 22, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Zoning Board of Appeals members present: Chairman Ari Bass and Board members Art Miller, Pete Clemens, James Moorhead and Mike Adams

Zoning Board of Appeals members absent: Laurie Rose and Henry Kleeman

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

**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 from the February 26, 2024 meeting.**

The minutes of the February 26, 2024 meeting were approved as presented.

**3. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of a variance from the front yard setback to allow the addition of a roof over the front porch at 872 Northmoor Road.**

**Property Owner: LoraLee Van Vleet Trust**  
**Representative: Scott Renken**

Chairman Bass asked for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he acknowledged noted that he spoke briefly with the homeowner when visiting the site but did not discuss the petition. He stated that he is able to consider that petition objectively. He invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Renken described the existing house noting that the gutter is just behind the front yard setback. He stated that the home is a simple brick home and noted the roof overhang of 18 inches. He stated that a covered front porch is proposed and explained that posts will be located on the existing five foot deep stoop to support a small roof. He pointed out that there is a mix of housing types on the street adding that all of the homes are located close to the 40 foot front yard setback. He stated that the existing uncovered stoop extends partially into the front yard setback. He stated that a simple gable roof is proposed over the stoop to mimic the gable ends of

the house, with the same pitch. He stated that other design options were explored but resulted in a further encroachment than the design presented.

Ms. Friedrich stated that the residence was built in 1957 nearly at the front yard setback line. She stated that many homes along this block of Northmoor Road have covered entries at the front door to provide protection from the weather. She stated that a variance is requested to allow porch columns and a roof over the existing stoop to encroach into the 40 front yard setback extending no closer than 36.5 feet to the front property line. She stated that a condition requiring the porch to remain open is recommended in the staff report.

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

Board member Miller stated that he is very familiar with the house and stated support for the addition of a roof over the front stoop.

Board member Adams stated that when he visited the site, he observed that the proposed columns and roof generally align with the property to the west. He stated that in his opinion, there is not a clear hardship necessitating the variance but noted that he supports the concept of a covered front porch.

Chairman Bass stated that the requested variances appear to be consistent with other similar variances that have been granted by the City in the past.

Board member Moorhead and Clemens stated support for the petition.

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

Board member Moorhead made a motion to recommend approval of a variance from the front yard setback to allow the addition of columns and a roof to provide a covered front porch using the existing front stoop. He stated that the variance will allow the columns and roof to extend no closer than 36.5 feet to the front property line consistent with the site plan presented to the Board. He stated that the recommendation is based on the findings as detailed in the staff report which are adopted by the Board as part of the motion. He stated that as a condition of approval, the porch must remain open and not be enclosed.

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

**4. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of a variance from the front yard setback for a replacement residence and variances from the side and rear yard accessory structure setbacks for a replacement detached garage at 1129 Griffith Road.**

**Property Owner: Andres Merits Trust (Andres Merits, trustee)**

**Representative: Diana Melichar, architect**

Chairman Bass introduced the agenda item and asked for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Melichar stated that the property is Mr. Merits' childhood home, and he plans to return to the neighborhood where he grew up to gracefully age in place. She explained that the house is not in good condition and that although consideration was given to repairing and upgrading the house, demolition and construction of a new home is proposed. She noted that original plat of subdivision provided for a 25 foot front yard setback adding that the Code was later changed to require a 40 foot setback in the GR-3 zoning district. She stated that the footprint of the new house is nearly the same as the footprint of the existing home. She noted that encroachment of the new house into the front yard setback will be slightly less than the existing condition. She stated that maintaining the 25 foot front yard setback will allow the new residence to be aligned with other homes on the street. She stated that a variance is also requested for the new detached garage. She explained that the property is 60 feet wide at the street frontage and narrows to 40 feet at the rear of the property. She noted that the existing garage, at 18.5 feet wide, is too narrow to accommodate two cars. She stated that the new garage is proposed at 24 feet wide. She stated that the new garage will be setback from the property lines the same distance as the existing garage. She pointed out that if the garage is located to comply with the setbacks, the rear yard will be very limited. She stated that the variances are requested based pm the existing characteristics of the neighborhood. She stated that the variances will allow the new structures to be sited in a manner the preserves, rather than alters, the essential character of the property and the streetscape. She stated that the shape of the lot and setbacks as originally imposed by the plat of subdivision are unique to this property. She stated that the conditions on which the variance requests are based are not the result of the actions of the current or a previous property owner. She stated that the proposed variances will not impair light or air to neighboring homes, increase congestion on public streets, threaten public safety, or diminish property values in the neighborhood.

Mr. Prado noted that the proposed demolition and replacement structures are scheduled for review by the Building Review Board next month. He reviewed that a variance from the front yard setback is requested to allow a new residence to be sited consistent with the original 25 foot front yard setback reflected on the plat of subdivision and consistent with the pattern of setbacks along the street. He stated that a new detached garage is proposed, and variances are requested to allow it to

be sited consistent with the existing detached garage. He stated that findings in support of the variances are detailed in the staff report.

In response to questions from Board member Miller, Ms. Melichar reviewed the exterior materials of the proposed residence. She stated that the new home will have an elevator. She confirmed that the existing foundation is not in good condition. She explained that to renovate the house, the house would need to be lifted and the foundation replaced.

In response to a question from Board member Clemens, Ms. Melichar stated that she has not received any communications from neighbors.

In response to a question from Board member Clemens, Mr. Prado confirmed that notice of the petition was mailed to surrounding properties in accordance with standard City practices.

In response to the question from Board member Adams, Mr. Prado confirmed that the Building Review Board will consider the demolition based on the applicable criteria. He confirmed that the condition of the foundation will be a consideration.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Bass invited public comment. Hearing no requests to speak, Chairman Bass invited final questions and comments from the Board.

Board member Moorhead stated that he is supportive of the petition adding that the petition appears to meet the variance criteria.

Board member Adams stated that he is supportive of the variances and noted that the proposed structures are located in nearly the same footprint as the existing structures.

Hearing no further questions or comments from the Board, Chairman Bass stated support for the variances adding that the information provided about the current condition of the structure was helpful. He invited a motion.

Board member Moorhead made a motion to recommend approval of variances from the front yard setback and from accessory structure side and rear yard setbacks for a new residence and new detached garage on property located at 1129 Griffith Road. He stated that the variances are recommended based on the finding detailed in the staff report and are adopted by the Board as part of the motion. He stated that the residence is permitted to encroach no closer than 25 feet into the front yard setback and the garage no further than the existing garage both consistent with the site plan presented to the Board.

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

**5. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of a variance from the side yard setback to allow modifications to the roof on the existing detached garage at 285 Rose Terrace.**

**Property Owner: Sean and Molly Andersen**

**Representative: Tom Dobbins, architect**

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

Mr. Dobbins stated that the owners are out of town on a long planned trip but submitted a letter to the Board. He stated that the proposed changes will not be visible from the streetscapes. He stated that there are many nonconforming conditions in the neighborhood. He stated that the existing second floor above the garage has limited headroom and the petitioners propose to raise the roof to make the space habitable. He stated that the steeper pitch roof reduces the existing encroachment into the side yard but creates a new flat roof area within the side yard setback. He stated that a letter in support of the project was submitted by the neighbors to the south. He stated that other modest improvements are proposed to increase the functionality of the property. He reviewed images of the area where the roof will be modified and explained why the variance is needed.

Mr. Prado stated the property is unusually shaped and is currently developed with three structures. He stated that the scope of work is limited to the garage and changes the current encroachment into the setback only slightly due to modifications planned for the garage roof. He stated that a side yard variance is requested to allow modifications to the roof form within the setback. He stated that the furthest extent of the encroachment will remain at four feet.

Hearing no questions from the Board, Chairman Bass Invited public comment. Hearing no requests to speak, Chairman Bass invited final questions and comments from the Board.

Board member Miller commented that there are arborvitae in the area which will likely screen the proposed changes from the neighbors' views.

Board member Moorhead expressed support for the variance noting that the applicable criteria are satisfied.

Board member Adams also expressed support for the variance.

Chairman Bass acknowledged the letter submitted by the neighbors in support of the project. He stated support for the variance. Hearing no further questions or comments from the Board, he invited a motion.

Board member Adams made a motion to recommend approval of a side yard variance to allow modifications to a portion of the garage roof which currently encroaches into the setback. He stated the extent of the encroachment will remain the same, at four feet, with some changes to the massing within the setback area. He stated that the recommendation is based on the findings as detailed in the staff report which are adopted by the Board as part of the motion.

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

**5. Public testimony on non-agenda items.**

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

**6. Additional information from staff.**

Ms. Friedrich stated that the next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Tuesday, May 28.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Luis Prado  
Assistant Planner