

**Minutes Meeting of May 31, 2006** – Murphy, Liebold

Members Present: Robert Cadle, Alison Manugian, Megan Mahony, Chase Duffy

Acting Chairman Cadle convened the Murphy hearing by reading the Legal Notice. He noted that there is a four member board, requiring a unanimous vote. The applicant opted to proceed with a four member board.

Chris Murphy, applicant, said that he is not sure if he needs both a special permit and a variance. He said that he wants to take down a rear portion of the existing house, consisting of a laundry room, family room and study, as well as a utility shed/work space. He noted that the shed is built on sills with no foundation and is very unsteady and is not a permanent structure. He said that the rest of the main part of the house represents an addition built on field stone boulders some time ago and it is not sound enough to add onto. He said that the house is no where near modern day code, adding that the two best pictures to describe what is proposed are the plot plan submitted in addition to the color coded sketch.

Of note: the shed is attached by the roof line but can't be accessed from inside the house.

Mr. Murphy said that there is an unfinished one and  $\frac{3}{4}$  attic space attached to the full two story house. He said that he wants to construct a partial full two story and partial one and  $\frac{3}{4}$  addition. He noted that he is showing what he is maximally envisioning and will do no more and may do less. He said that he didn't show the main house on the sketch because it is not the main focus.

Mr. Cadle asked for clarification regarding how large the section to be razed is.

Ms. Mahony asked whether they are raising the roof line higher than the main house.

Mr. Murphy said that new roof line will be higher than the razed portion but not higher than the existing structure.

Discussion ensued regarding who owns the surrounding properties.

Mr. Murphy said the 18 acre field behind is owned by Peter Cole and is going to be placed in conservation restriction. He noted that some neighbors have approached Mr. Cole to purchase the field and he's not interested because he wants to keep it open. Mr. Murphy noted that he is removing 935 sq. ft. and adding 1635 sq. ft. of footprint, some of which will be two stories and some 1.5 stories, including a 2 bay garage with a home office above (1.5 stories).

Mr. Cadle asked about sewer hookup.

Mr. Murphy said that they are currently on septic but will connect to the sewer which is coming in

this summer.

Mr. Cadle asked whether there would be more bedrooms.

Mr. Murphy said that they have four now and are not increasing the number. He said that he will renovate the existing dwelling and convert one bedroom into a family room and a bedroom will be added back in the addition to keep the number at four. There will be no increase in the number of bathrooms, which is now at two and  $\frac{1}{4}$ , although he wants two and  $\frac{1}{2}$  baths when done. He said that he wants to extend the rear wall to 7.3 feet from the rear boundary, which means getting six inches closer. He noted that the filled in jog brings that section from 16 feet to 10.61. He stressed that he needed a rear variance because this is an old Victorian house and will not retain it's character unless expanded from the rear. He wants to keep the front and middle portion of the house the same, which are the parts showing from Old Ayer Road. He stressed that he wants to keep the same character as what is there today and the addition would not be a modern style. He noted that it is apparent that there was an addition constructed from inside because it doesn't meld with the rest of the house. He said that in order to do something reasonable and to create additional living space, an addition can only be extended to the southwest. He stressed that to do it properly, he needs to encroach on the 15 foot setback because otherwise he would encroach on the existing part of the house.

Mr. Cadle asked about sliding the green area on the drawing forward to avoid needing a variance.

Mr. Murphy said that every bit of moving forward moves the addition closer to the original structure.

Mrs. Duffy noted that the Murphy's have done a good job of maintaining an old structure.

Mr. Murphy said that it would be difficult to move anything closer. He said that he has to reconfigure the driveway and he doesn't want the addition to sit on the entryway.

Mrs. Duffy asked about the location of hockey field in relation to the house.

Mr. Murphy said that it is where map list assessors map 14 is written on the certified plot plan. He noted that the additional footprint is the "L".

Mr. Cadle asked about the figure of 700 feet of improvement.

Mr. Murphy said that that was about right and noted 800 feet of new footprint.

Mr. Cadle asked for clarification regarding the existing garage, which is one story and the rest of shed is 1.5 stories. Mr. Murphy said the new space will be garage and office space above the garage.

Mrs. Manugian asked about the new space that is proposed.

Mrs. Murphy said that most of the upper space over the garage, etc. is not usable now.

Mrs. Manugian asked how big the remaining portion will be.

Mr. Murphy said that there will be 1700 square feet total, spread over two stories. He noted that 900 sq. ft. is being razed, including the shed.

The Acting Chairman asked for additional comments.

Mr. Murphy noted that he doesn't think this will impact any abutters because to the rear and as far as the eye can see, there is no residential property.

Mrs. Duffy asked whether Mr. Cole's field has frontage.

Mr. Murphy said that Mr. Cole has a 40 foot area to access the field from Old Ayer Road, noting that the property has been subdivided into two pieces: the house and the field. He said that using the percentage of the overall project, the increase is relatively minor.

Discussion ensued regarding whether a variance and special permit are both required. The Board felt that both are required.

Mrs. Manugian said that she feels this is a very large addition that could really change the feel of the house, and that it could be done without any variances.

Mrs. Duffy said that she thinks that the sketch distorts the overall proposal because it shows the addition only in relation to the back part of the house.

Mr. Murphy said that he drew only that part of the house because he wanted the application to present only what is focused on in the request.

Mrs. Duffy said that she doesn't think the new addition seems too big in relation to the entire house.

Ms. Mahony said the same thing, noting that they are just making the structure more user friendly.

Mrs. Murphy said that they are working to extend in the back to keep it aesthetically pleasing, noting that pulling the addition forward was discouraged by the two designers that they worked with because the proportions would be off. She stressed that they love the house and are planning to work very hard to keep the character of the house.

Paul Kiefner, abutter, said that he is sure that what the Murphys want to construct will be an improvement to the house and the neighborhood, noting that what currently exists is a useless space. He said that he welcomes whatever they decide to do.

Mrs. Manugian suggested that if the addition can't be shifted forward, it could be made narrower.

Mrs. Murphy noted that a two car garage needs to be a certain depth.

Mr. Murphy noted that this is an older one acre lot and thus they have less flexible area to work with. He said that he has three active kids and wants to keep as much yard as possible. He stressed that he is trying to be really careful and wants to work with the character and integrity of a house constructed in the 1850's. He said that this is the best compromise scenario, noting that living in an old house has its challenges. He said that there is a barely functional bathroom on the first floor that is the size of a broom closet.

Ms. Mahony said that it seems they have done a lot to keep the house looking beautiful.

Mr. Murphy said that he has and he wants to continue to do so.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the size of the addition is an issue.

Mr. Murphy said that the extent of increasing of the nonconformity is extending the shed/garage six inches towards the rear boundary. He stressed that that is the most significant encroachment.

Mrs. Manugian said that it is a substantial addition when comparing the new part to the existing. She noted that it seems that neighbors and the Board are comfortable with it and she said she thinks she will go along with the rest of them.

The Chairman said that she should not go against what she thinks is right.

Ms. Mahoney felt that it is not really the size of the addition at issue, but setback.

Mr. Murphy said that he understands Mrs. Manugian's concerns but stressed that he is not trying to build a monstrosity.

Mrs. Murphy said that this is the largest possible scenario, noting that they are trying to really blend the addition in and reduce size, work with roof lines, etc. She said that the garage size can't fluctuate but there is some flexibility in other areas.

Ms. Mahoney asked whether they couldn't add to the field stone part of structure.

Mr. Murphy said that he wanted to keep all walls and two builders said they couldn't keep the back addition because of the condition of the foundation. He said that the actual back of the house has been problematic since they purchased the property. He also noted that they will pour a cellar.

The Acting Chairman noted that he is satisfied with the plan and thinks it is good.

Mrs. Duffy said that she is good with it.

Ms. Mahony said that it is a good plan.

Mrs. Manugian said that she still has concerns about size and maintaining conformity.

Mr. Murphy asked whether they could change anything to make the application more supportable.

Mrs. Manugian said that she wants to see a final design to ensure that the proposal is in keeping with the intent of the by-law. She said that she thinks addition living space could be gained with less increase in the non-conformity and that the rear setback could be met with a rear organization of the proposal.

Mrs. Murphy showed some rough sketches.

Mrs. Manugian asked for clarification from the Board, specifically whether the applicant is proposing to raise the entire rear of the structure.

Discussion ensued regarding the impacts of what is being proposed and how it could trigger addition permits, etc.

Mrs. Manugian said that she understands now that the increase is not so great and she is okay with it, given that even though they are razing part of structure, a variance is not required from the entire 15 feet for the length of the addition.

The applicant said that he wants the Board to vote tonight.

The Board moved to grant a special permit and variance to the Murphys to allow them to build an addition according to the plan submitted, including demolishing the unstable ell on the house, reconstructing as shown on Plan one submitted with the application and not to exceed the measurements as shown on Plan one.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The Acting Chairman convened the Liebold hearing by reading the Legal Notice.

Mr. Liebold said that he is building this unit for aging parents who are still somewhat mobile but want to prepare for when they aren't. He said that the options are limited and noted that he has to put another septic system in and has BOH approval. He said that all engineering work has been done and that it will look and feel like it has been there for 100 years. He said that it will be slightly diminutive from the existing house, with eight foot ceilings instead of nine, etc. He said that he is using Quad-Lock construction, with R48 value in terms of insulation value, noting that it is expensive but worthwhile. He said that the foundation will put in with Styrofoam blocks filled with concrete, and has a very strong monolithic pour. He stressed that the outside will look like the existing structure, noting that he has met all requirements under 218-16D. He said that he can't build behind the existing house because of a swamp and the other side of his lot has the septic system. He noted that he won't have to move the driveway and a covered farmer's porch will connect the two structures. He noted that underneath is a garage and there is space for an elevator as needed.

The Water Department memo was submitted into the record.

Discussion ensued regarding whether this addition could be construed as a separate structure.

Mr. Liebold said that is connected by lengthening an existing farmer's porch.

Discussion ensued regarding whether one could build an attached addition and add an apartment.

The Board moved to approve the application of Mr. Liebold for a special permit for an inlaw apartment, according to the information and plans submitted. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.