



Town of Groton Massachusetts Zoning Board of Appeals

Meeting Agenda and Minutes

September 21, 2016 – Tallent

Present

Cynthia Maxwell, Chairman
Robert Cadle, Member
Jay Prager, Member
Bruce Eason, Member

Not Present

Berta Erickson, Associate Member
Mark Mulligan, Member

A quorum was attained. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm.

Meeting Minutes

Discussion ensued regarding what a four-member board would mean to the applicants as one board member was late and not answering phone calls or texts.

Tallent Variance

Chairman Maxwell convened the hearing by reading the legal notice.

The applicants opted for a four-member board, understanding that the decision needs to be unanimous.

Mrs. Tallent said they want to add onto the existing garage to make a new garage and breezeway and turn the existing garage into a family room. She said that a corner lot requires 50 feet setback from both streets and the addition will be approximately 30 feet from one boundary.

Member Prager said that without the breezeway there would be eight more feet of setback.

Mrs. Tallent said that two bedroom windows would be lost.

Chairman Maxwell asked about the removal of trees.

Mrs. Tallent said the trees were being removed anyway.

Member Prager said a variance is complicated and thus, noted that there are options that would be less drastic.

Mrs. Tallent said that it would be much more difficult and less attractive with no breezeway.

Member Cadle asked whether the existing driveway would be turned to lawn.

Mrs. Tallent said it would.

Member Cadle said the driveway seems like it is going to be significantly wider.

Mrs. Tallent said yes, from 16 feet to 24 feet.

Member Prager said that it looks like the garage could be located behind the house even though the septic system is there.

Mr. Tallent said it would not make sense because of the grading behind the house.

Discussion ensued regarding the site work that would be necessary.

Chairman Maxwell asked about the width of the breezeway.

Mrs. Tallent said it would be 8x8

Member Easom said he thinks the garage could be placed on the other side of the house with a minimal setback variance.

Mr. Tallent said that would put it much closer to the neighbor and they would need to relocate the oil delivery pipe.

Member Prager said that no variance would be required if the garage and breezeway were located on the northerly side of the house.

Mrs. Tallent said that that would not allow egress into the house. She said the existing house is a tri-level and thus the garage would need to be raised to meet the level of the house, including a foundation beneath.

Member Easom suggested adding a few steps to get into the house if it were on that side.

Discussion ended regarding what moving the garage to the north would mean.

Member Cadle said that although the proposed plan makes sense, this doesn't meet the criteria of a variance.

Member Prager said there is no explanation from a builder as to why the garage can't be placed on the north side.

Mr. Tallent said that it didn't make sense to put the garage on the side close to the abutter.

Member Prager said it would still meet setback requirements and the neighbor's house is further away from the lot line.

Discussion ensued regarding variance criteria (soil conditions, shape, topography, etc).

Member Easom said it does not meet soil issue requirements, the shape of lot is a square, and maybe there are few issues due to topography, but the lot issue is location rather than shape.

Member Cadle said a corner lot is not a shape issue.

Member Prager reiterated that the board needs some reason specifically as to why the garage can't be put on the south side of the house.

Member Cadle asked about the chimney on the north side.

Mrs. Tallent said it is in the living room and thus an entrance would go directly into living space, noting that the kitchen is on the other side.

Member Easom made a motion to continue the hearing to October 19, 2016 at 7:15 pm. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Other business

Minutes and Bills

One Groton Herald bill was signed.

Chairman Maxwell made a motion to approve minutes from August 3, 2016. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Member Easom made a motion to adjourn at 7:45 pm. The motion was seconded and all voted aye.

Minutes approved 10/19/16.