

Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting

Location: Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

Date & Time: March 15, 2022 7:00PM

Voting Board Members Present:

Ashley Rowe – Chairman
Alison Brisson – Vice Chairman
Aaron Leff
Katrina Labrecque

Non-Voting Board Members Present:

Genny Rizzotti - Alternate

Others Present:

Natalie Moles, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Economic Recovery Coordinator
Dan Howard, Strafford Building Inspector
Robert Fletcher, Minutes Recorder

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:02PM and indicated the closing date for new applications to be filed for the agenda for the regular April 21, 2022 meeting will be March 31, 2022.

The Chairman asked the Board members if they had reviewed the minutes of the February 17, 2022 meeting, and all indicated they had. Alison Brisson made a motion to accept the minutes as written, which was seconded by Aaron Leff and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all Board members.

The Chairman informed the Board that a couple Alternate Board members would be stepping down and a couple of the Board members would not be able to attend meetings due to personal reasons. As a result, there is one spot open for an Alternate Board member, and the Board received a request from Genny Rizzotti to be appointed to this position. The Chairman asked for a motion to accept the appointment of Genny Rizzotti as an Alternate Board member, which was so moved by Aaron Leff and seconded by Alison Brisson. All members of the Board voted verbally in the affirmative and the motion carried. Genny Rizzotti left the meeting to be sworn in by the Town Clerk.

The Chairman indicated he would need to recuse himself due to a conflict of interest which left only four Board members to address the case before the Board. He allowed the applicant to decide whether to proceed or request a continuance until the next meeting with a full Board. The applicant decided to proceed, and the Chairman turned the meeting over to Vice Chairman, Alison Brisson.

The Vice Chairman recognized Board members Aaron Leff, Genny Rizzotti and Katrina Labrecque as present and appointed Genny Rizzotti as a voting member.

New Business

Case #435: Steven and Fiona Myers are requesting a Variance to Article 1.4.1, Section C of the Zoning and Land Use Ordinances in order to construct a 10 foot by 26 foot, 7 inch first floor addition with a full basement on the left, easterly, end of their existing nonconforming home. The new addition would come within 16.8 feet of the northeasterly side boundary, which is up to 8.2 feet closer to the side boundary than ordinances allow. Front and rear setbacks would be met. (169 Bow Lake Estates Road, Tax Map 23, Lot 96).

The Vice Chairman asked the applicant to address the case. Steven Myers described the Variance request, indicated the purpose of the addition was to provide office space due to “work-at-home” requirements, stated the addition would not infringe on the adjoining property, and indicated a professional contractor would construct the addition. He also made reference to a previous addition to the other side to the residence, and indicated this addition would be similar in size and structure.

The Board reviewed the application documents, and the Vice Chairman asked if the Board had any questions or comments. There being none, she opened the Meeting for Public comment at 7:10PM, and having heard none, closed the Meeting to Public comment at 7:10PM.

The Vice Chairman expressed concern regarding the addition being used as a third bedroom which the current septic system would not support. The applicant assured the Board that there was no closet in the addition and there were no plans to upgrade the septic system.

The Board addressed the five criteria to be met for a proposal to qualify for the granting of a Variance as presented by the applicant in the Variance request application.

- Granting the Variance would not be contrary to the public interest since the proposed addition does not infringe on the abutter’s property and the new construction is in line with the current house architecture.
- The spirit of the Ordinance would still be observed since the proposed addition would only effect the side property line setback. All other setbacks are met.
- Granting the Variance would provide substantial justice since the proposed addition allows establishment of professional office work space and improves kitchen work space and storage.
- The values of surrounding properties will not be diminished as a result of granting the Variance since new construction is in line with current house architecture, construction will be completed by a licensed contractor, and the home owners take pride in their property and curb appeal.
- The proposed use of the property is reasonable and Variance denial would result in an unnecessary hardship since planned land usage complies to current structure egress, the proposed addition does not infringe on abutter’s property, and current pricing favors construction at this time.
- Variance denial would limit reasonable use of the property since remote work imposed on the owner could not be conducted efficiently.

The Board agreed that the five criteria for the proposal to qualify for the granting of a Variance had been met. The Vice Chairman asked for a motion to approve application for Variance as presented, which was so moved by Aaron Leff and seconded by Katrina Labrecque. All members of the Board voted verbally in the affirmative, and the motion passed.

There being no further business before the Board, the Vice Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Aaron Leff moved to adjourn, which was seconded by Genny Rizzotti, and voted on in the affirmative by all Board members. The meeting was adjourned at 7:22PM.