

## Zoning Board of Adjustment Meeting Minutes

**Location:** Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

**Date & Time:** January 16, 2025 6:30PM

**Board Members Present:**

Ashley Rowe – Chairman  
Aaron Leff  
Katrina Labrecque  
Alan Williams

**Alternate Board Members Present:**

Steve Smith

**Others Present:**

Robert Fletcher, Minutes Recorder

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:30PM and indicated the closing date for new applications to be filed for the agenda for the regular February 20, 2025 meeting is Thursday, January 30, 2025. He recognized Board members Aaron Leff, Katrina Labrecque, Alan Williams, and Steve Smith as present, and appointed Steve Smith as a voting Board member.

**New Business**

**Case #462**, Request for a Variance under Article 1.4.1, Section C (*Side and Back Yards*) to demolish an existing non-conforming garage and construct a 36' by 24' garage with an additional 10' by 12' that would come within 14' feet of the easterly side setback, which is 11' closer to the side boundary than current ordinances allow. (8 Fire Road 268, Tax Map 26, Lot 4)

The Chairman asked the applicant to present the case. James Anderson, 8 Fire Road 268, outlined his plan to replace the existing garage that is about 40-years old, needs a new roof, which is sagging, and has rotting siding. The new structure would be 24-feet by 36-feet, which would square up the structure and add storage space. The garage would have a second story with a dormer, which would only be used for storage. Electric service would be the only utility to the structure, and there are no plans to make it a livable space. He considered using Berry Surveying and Engineering to survey the property and obtain a Shoreland Permit; however, the cost was too high. He separately applied for and received a Shoreland Permit from NHDES.

Mr. Anderson indicated that he considered several options for the location of the new garage. He initially wanted to locate the structure with the rear wall in the same location as the current garage and increase the structure width on the driveway side. This would not change the setback from the property side boundary; however, the front of the structure would project over the underground utility line to the house on the property. He also considered siting the structure in a location further back on the property; however, this location would also be over the underground utility and require expansion of the driveway. He determined that the best, and most economical, option would be to add the two-feet to the rear the structure, which would place it two-feet closer to the property side boundary. He

used a 2018 Site Assessment Sketch to depict the location of the new structure and its relative location to the current garage.

The Chairman asked the Board if they had any questions. Alan Williams asked if there were any boundary marker pins on the property that delineated the side boundary near the garage. Mr. Anderson indicated that the boundary was marked with pins. The Chairman pointed out that Mr. Anderson did not provide plans prepared and certified by a land surveyor that would accurately depict the side boundary setback for the new structure. When considering the granting of a setback Variance, the Board must be able to reference a certified plan which clearly indicates structure setback distances. Mr. Anderson had hand-drawn the structure location on the 2018 Site Assessment Sketch with non-certified side boundaries.

Mr. Anderson indicated earlier that his choice for the structure location was based on a financial hardship if he were to use any alternate location due to the cost of utility and/or driveway relocation. The Chairman advised Mr. Anderson that financial hardship does not satisfy the criteria for granting a Variance, and other structure locations presented would not require a setback Variance. The Chairman suggested adding the two-feet of the structure on the driveway side, which would result in no change in the side boundary. This would place the proposal under the guidelines of a Special Exception due to the expansion of a non-conforming structure without making it more non-conforming. A plan prepared and certified by a land surveyor that would accurately depict the side boundary setback for the new structure would still be required.

After considering this information, Mr. Anderson asked for a continuance. Alan Williams made a motion for a continuance to the February 20, 2025 Zoning Board meeting, which was seconded by Aaron Leff and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed. The Chairman advised Mr. Anderson that if he needed more time, he should notify the Town office in advance of the February meeting.

### **Other Business**

The Chairman asked the Board to review the minutes from the December 19, 2024 meeting. Alan Williams 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 in attendance at the meeting.

The Chairman stated that the adaptation of Rules and Procedures for the Town of Strafford Zoning Board of Adjustment in approximately 2020 was not recorded in the Zoning Board meeting minutes and needs to be officially readopted. The document was initially developed with use of an example from the Office of Strategic Initiative. The Board reviewed this document in its entirety and found no need for modification. The Chairman asked for a motion to adopt the Rules and Procedures as written, which was so moved by Aaron Leff, seconded by Alan Williams and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed. This document will be included in the Town of Strafford records.

In order to comply with the Rules and Procedure guidelines, the Board must elect both a Chairman and a Vice Chairman annually. Aaron Leff made a motion to elect Ashley Rowe as Chairman, which was seconded by Katrina Labrecque and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board

members. The motion passed. Ashley Rowe made a motion to elect Katrina Labrecque as Vice Chairman, which was seconded by Alan Willims and voted upon verbally in the affirmative by all voting Board members. The motion passed.

There being no further business before the Board, the Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Aaron Leff moved to adjourn, which was seconded by Katrina Labrecque and voted on in the affirmative by all Board members. The meeting adjourned at 7:13PM.