

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING MINUTES
November 12, 2020**

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 12, 2020 in the Community Room of the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Martin called the public hearing to order at 7:30 p.m.

Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Members Berni, Dombrowski, O'Brien, Schubkegel, and Chairman Martin.

Absent: Members Lucchesi and Smetana

Also Present: Assistant Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner and Village Attorney Greg Smith

II. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 15, 2020 ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING MINUTES

A MOTION was made by Member O'Brien and SECONDED by Member Berni to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2020 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting as amended.

Ayes: Dombrowski, O'Brien, Berni, Schubkegel, and Martin.

Nays: None

Motion passed.

III. APPROVAL OF FINDINGS OF FACT FOR THE PROPOSED ZONING VARIATIONS AT 7820 AUGUSTA STREET FROM THE MEETING OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS ON OCTOBER 15, 2020 AS AMENDED

A MOTION was made by Member O'Brien and SECONDED by Member Berni to approve the Findings of Fact and recommendation as amended.

Ayes: Dombrowski, O'Brien, Berni, Schubkegel, and Martin.

Nays: None

Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF FINDINGS OF FACT FOR THE PROPOSED ZONING VARIATIONS AT 210 GALE AVENUE FROM THE MEETING OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS ON OCTOBER 15, 2020

A MOTION was made by Member O'Brien and SECONDED by Member Berni to approve the Findings of Fact and recommendation.

Ayes: Dombrowski, O'Brien, Berni, Schubkegel, and Martin.
Nays: None
Motion passed.

V. ZONING VARIATION REQUEST - 1134-1136 HARLEM AVENUE - PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Martin called the public hearing to order.

Assistant Village Administrator Scheiner read the attestation and swore in all parties wishing to speak.

Daniel Brown, property owner, asked the project architect, Drew Nelson, to present the petition.

Mr. Nelson stated that Mr. Brown came to him after he'd lost his detached two-car garage to fire and that Mr. Brown desires to replace the two-car garage. Mr. Nelson stated that the Zoning Ordinance requires two enclosed spaces and one surface parking space for each unit. He stated that primary structure is a two-flat on a 50-foot wide lot. He continued that a four-car garage and two surface parking spaces will not fit on the site and would require the use of the side yard for more. The house is located at the intersection of an alley and an enclosed four-car garage would take up more yard space and create more impervious surface. Mr. Nelson said that this type of building is not typical for the Zoning District. He said that Mr. Brown proposes to rebuild what was there previously which includes a garage with two enclosed spaces and a parking pad for two additional spaces.

Mr. Brown stated that the backyard is attractive with fencing, trees and grass, and is used by the tenants for outdoor enjoyment. To make it smaller to accommodate the parking pads would detract from the attractiveness from of the house. The house is on Harlem Avenue and the noise is very loud. Mr. Brown continued that the back yard is quiet and nice and it would be ruined if he is required to provide enclosed parking. He stated that they have gotten by with the existing parking for years.

Mr. Nelson stated the Zoning Ordinance requires a minimum lot size in the R3 Zoning District of 8,712 square feet. He stated that the lot is smaller than is what is required and he believes that the parking requirements were a reaction to building a larger multi-unit building than the existing two-flat.

In response to a question from Chairman Martin, Mr. Brown stated that the parking spaces are used by the tenants of the parking spots. He stated that each unit gets one covered spot and one uncovered spot on the parking pad. In response to a follow-up question from Chairman Martin, Mr. Brown confirmed that the tenant leases include the exclusive use of two parking spaces. Mr. Brown stated that the fifth parking space could be squeezed onto the pad but it fits two spaces more comfortably. He continued that the pad is used as a walkway to the alley for trash.

Mr. Nelson stated that the existing pad is 24 feet 7 inches and that, per Village Code, it could be striped for two legal spaces and one compact space, but a portion of the pad is currently used as a walkway.

In response to a question from Chairman Martin about whether he intends to use the concrete pad for two or three spaces, Mr. Brown stated it is not currently striped but it could be striped.

Chairman Martin stated that he is asking this question because it appeared that Mr. Brown had five spaces prior to the fire. The petition is for the garage to be replaced in kind. Chairman Martin asked if Mr. Brown would be providing five total spaces or if he was also requesting an additional variation for the number of required parking spaces. Mr. Brown said they didn't plan to change anything, just replace the garage. Mr. Nelson stated that there would be the same amount of surface and garage parking.

In response to a question from Mr. Berni, Mr. Brown stated the garage has been gone for approximately 18 months. Mr. Brown said they had made arrangements to replace it but when they tried to get a permit they discovered that replacing it was not in compliance with Village Code.

In response to a question from Mr. Berni, Mr. Brown confirmed that the existing tenants are only expecting what they had before for parking.

Ms. Scheiner read a letter into the record from one of Mr. Brown's tenants who was unable to attend the meeting but supports the requested zoning variation. Chairman Martin stated the letter would be considered as evidence regarding the requested variation.

Chairman asked Mr. Brown how often the parking spaces are filled. Mr. Brown stated that he doesn't get over to the property very often and that there are sometimes one or two spots available. He said his tenants have different schedules and the spots are used, but he doesn't know that they're all used 100% of the time.

Chairman Martin asked whether Mr. Brown had considered building two two-car garages, one in the location of the old garage and one in the location of the pad, which would provide four enclosed parking spaces. Mr. Brown stated that they would still be short on guest

parking. Mr. Martin acknowledged that they would not have two parking spots and no one is suggesting that they destroy the back yard.

Mr. Nelson stated that the new garage is a little longer than the old garage and will comply with current setback requirements.

Chairman Martin asked if there were any further questions for the applicant or anyone else who wished to speak about the application. Hearing none, Chairman Martin closed the public hearing.

Discussion and Deliberation of the Variation Request

Chairman Martin suggested that approval of the variation request be conditioned upon striping the concrete pad for three cars for a total of two enclosed and three unenclosed spaces on the property.

Mr. Berni stated that Harlem Avenue is a hardship in itself as there is no parking and that a parking pad at this property works better for guest parking and preserves open space. He stated he supports the requested variation.

Mr. Dombrowski agreed with Mr. Berni's comments.

A MOTION was made by Member Dombrowski and SECONDED by Member Berni that the requested variation be granted with the condition that the concrete pad be striped for three additional parking spaces.

Ayes: Dombrowski, O'Brien, Berni, Schubkegel, and Martin.

Nays: None

Motion passed.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Martin announced that there would be no Zoning Board of Appeals meeting in December. The next meeting will be in January and would include a continued public hearing for the requested variation at 346 Park Avenue.

A MOTION was made by Member O'Brien and SECONDED by Member Schubkegel to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Ayes: Dombrowski, O'Brien, Berni, Schubkegel, and Martin.

Nays: None

Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:

Lisa Scheiner
Lisa Scheiner, Secretary

Frank R. Martin
Frank Martin, Chairman
Zoning Board of Appeals

Date: *1/15/2021*