

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR OCTOBER 24, 2007

The Regular Session of the Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Wednesday, October 24, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. in City Council Chambers, 100 N. Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Chairperson Carol Kuhnke.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: (7) W. Carman R. Eamus, D. Gregorka,

R. Suarez, C. Kuhnke, K. Loomis and D. Tope

(arrived at 6:15 p.m.)

Members Absent: (2) C. Carver and C. Briere

Staff Present: (3) M. Kowalski, M. Lloyd and B. Acquaviva

A - APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A-1 The Agenda was approved as presented without objection.

B - **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

B-1 Approval of Draft Minutes of the September 26, 2007 Regular Session.

Moved by D. Gregorka, Seconded by, K. Loomis, "that the minutes of the September 26, 2007 Regular Session be approved as presented."

On a Voice Vote - MOTION PASSED - UNANIMOUS

C - <u>APPEALS & ACTION</u>

C-1 707, 709 and 711 Packard Street - 2007-Z-020

Sahba La'al is requesting one variance from Chapter 59 Section 5:167 (Required Parking) of 13 parking spaces from the required 21 parking spaces, 8 parking spaces exist on site.

Description and Discussion:

The subject parcel is located at 707-711 Packard. The parcel is zoned C1A (Commercial District) and is located near the corner of Packard Road and State Street. The parcel contains one 4-story 9,332 square foot building with 5 apartments and 3,300 square feet of retail space. The parcel also contains one small parking lot with 8 parking spaces reserved for the residential units. The variance is being requested due to the addition of one apartment on the 4th floor of the building. The petitioner has indicated that this apartment has existed historically and is not new construction. However, during an inspection of the premises by the Ann Arbor Housing Department, inspectors discovered that this unit was not listed in the rental housing database. As such the rental unit is consider new floor area if the petitioner wished to utilize the space as habitable. Because of the added floor area, the addition of this apartment triggers the need for an Administrative Amendment to the approved site plan.

In order to be approved through the administrative amendment process, the site has to be brought up to current city codes. The site can satisfy all requirements of applicable city codes except for the vehicular parking requirements. The petitioner received variances for parking lot dimensional landscaping requirements in 1980. Based on Chapter 59 (Off-Street Parking) requirements the site is required to have 21 parking spaces total based on the square footage of uses within the building. Of the 21 spaces, 13 are required for the retail portion of the building and 8 are required for the residential units. The 8 spaces existing on-site are reserved for the residential units.

While the building and surrounding parcels are constructed in a 'downtown' development pattern with zero setbacks and minimal off-street parking, the parcel is not located in the DDA district, so off-street parking is required for new or expanded uses. Most buildings, including the subject building, in the immediate vicinity were constructed around 1920 and as such they are non-conforming for many code requirements. The area is heavily populated by student housing and as a result most of the traffic for retail uses is generated by pedestrians and not vehicles.

Questions to Staff by the Board

R. Eamus (to M. Kowalski) – Where is the fourth floor of this building? (It's recessed; you can't see it from the street level).

Petitioner Presentation

Sahba La'al was present to speak on behalf of the appeal. He stated that the third floor apartment has been an apartment for the caretaker. Now that the situation has changed, they would like to make that apartment into a rental unit, and this is what triggered the need for this variance. In the 1980's, there was a variance given for parking, but the retail space was never mentioned.

- K. Loomis How is current parking allocated? Are there eight spots and five units? Is it one spot per unit and then the others for public visiting the store? (I believe five or six are for the apartments). (Mr. Lagos (the owner) was present and stated that those spaces are for both retail and the apartments).
- D. Gregorka How many residents are in the current apartment units and how many additional residents would be added with the new unit? (Mr. Lagos stated 9 total spaces currently and 11 with the proposed new apartment if the variance is granted).
- D. Gregorka (To M. Kowalski) With the additional apartment, are eight spaces adequate to cover the parking requirements for this? (No. This would end up being six units, and it is one and a half spaces per unit, so they would be one shy).
- Mr. La'al stated a correction on the number of apartment units there are four existing, and the proposed would make it five. We need seven and a half and we have eight spaces.

Public Commentary - None.

Discussion by the Board

K. Loomis – I'm concerned with the amount of spaces and how they're allocated, if they're not earmarked for the residents there – but this wouldn't stop me from supporting this. This is within a student area, although they wouldn't need to park their cars there.

D. Gregorka – The spaces there are supposed to be 'tied' to the residences there, and the fact that they aren't is a bit of a concern. To support this, I'd like to have these tied to the motion, but this is a downtown area, and most people in that area don't have off-street parking anyway. I don't have an issue if we can tie spaces to them.

K. Loomis – Can we tie these to the variance? (M. Kowalski – If you make it part of your motion).

C. Kuhnke – (To M. Kowalski) – If our ordinances require parking for the residential units, what stops an owner to use those for other purposes? (Nothing. If it's on a site plan, we could enforce it on the site plan – those are required for those residential units, but otherwise, no).

M. Lloyd – Stated that it's a product of site management, by whoever owns that property. Typically, if we discover there are problems associated with parking, we would review the circumstances and do enforcement out there, so ultimately, the housing inspections unit would have to deal with that. From a day-to-day event, that's a site management. We grant approval, expecting that the management there will comply with what we require – if not, we commence enforcement.

D. Tope – The practice for many in apartments in the student area is that while the owners comply as nearly as they can for allotted spaces, there are landlords in the area who rent the parking out to non-residents. If you rent the unit, you're not guaranteed that you'll have a parking space that is supposed to be provided for that resident. That's the marketplace. Tagging a parking space to a unit that we're allowing to built would be difficult to enforce. There is no legal connection to the resident and the parking space.

C. Kuhnke – It seems the concept is to provide more parking when you provide more housing but that doesn't necessarily take place (Correct).

 R. Eamus – I support flexibility in this area. The zoning requirements, especially for parking envision more than this historical commercial development, and I think you have to keep flexibility in this area. The parking requirement is a 'formula,' and it's for a site plan, and this doesn't require one for the parking. I wouldn't be in favor of tying this to the motion. I'm in favor keeping this area both residential and commercial.

MOTION

Moved by K. Loomis, Seconded by D. Tope "in regard to Appeal Number 2007-Z-020, 707, 709 and 711 Packard Street, that based on the following findings of fact and in accordance with the established standards for approval, the Zoning Board of Appeals hereby grants a variance from Chapter 59, Section 5:167 (Required Parking) of 13 parking spaces from the required 21 parking spaces.

a) The alleged hardships are peculiar to the property and results from conditions which do not exist generally throughout the City

 b) That the alleged hardships or practical difficulties, or both, which will result from a failure to grant the variance, include substantially more than mere inconvenience, inability to attain a higher financial return, or both.

c) The variance, if granted, will not significantly affect surrounding properties.

- 157 d) The circumstances of the variance request are not self-imposed.
 - e) The variance request is the minimum necessary to achieve reasonable use of the structure."

On a Voice Vote – MOTION PASSED – UNANIMOUS (Variance Granted)

C-2 <u>2145 Amelia Place – 2007-Z-021</u>

Jim Scrivens is requesting permission to alter a non-conforming structure and one variance from Chapter 55 Section 5:29 (R1B, Single-Family) of 2 feet from the required side setback of 5 feet for an addition to the existing house.

Description and Discussion:

The petitioner is proposing to build an approximately 26 square foot one-story addition to the existing house for enlargement of the kitchen. The addition will measure 13 feet long and extend 2 feet into the required side open space. The required side setback is 5 feet and the petitioner is requesting permission to allow a 3 foot side setback. The parcel has an irregular front lot line due to the location on the end of a cul-de-sac. The house is nonconforming for a corner of the attached garage located within the front setback. The existing setback for the garage is approximately 28 feet and the required front setback is 30 feet.

Questions to Staff by the Board

- D. Tope The purpose of side setbacks are to really provide a buffer for the neighbor.- where is the neighbor? (M. Kowalski points out their location). Also, the foundation is set in closer than it actually looks, as the bay window would jut out.
- D. Gregorka Asked staff for a clarification as to how it is measured. I thought we measured from the foundation? (M. Kowalski It's 'livable space,' so because this increases the square footage, it's measured to the wall. Because this sticks out, it's considered floor area. (Discussion on other elements that don't count as 'floor area').

<u>Public Commentary</u> – None. (The chair mentioned four supportive communications that were received on behalf of this appeal, including the impacted neighbors who are in the back of the lot).

Petitioner Presentation

Mr. Jim Scrivens with Reuter and Associates Architects was present to speak on behalf of the appeal. He stated that he had nothing to add to the staff report and that he was available to answer questions or clarify any issues if needed. He stated that they had looked at other solutions to this addition, but encountered too many hardships with each proposal.

Questions to Staff by the Board - None.

Discussion by the Board

MOTION #1

VIOTION #1

Permission to alter a Non-Conforming Structure:

Moved by K. Loomis, Seconded by R. Eamus, "concerning Appeal Number 2007-Z-021, 2145 Amelia Place, that based on the following findings of fact and in accordance with the established standards for approval, the Zoning Board of Appeals hereby grants permission to alter a non-conforming structure.

- a) The alteration complies as nearly as practicable with the requirements of the Zoning Chapter.
- b) The alteration will not have a detrimental effect on neighboring property, per the attached plans.

On a Voice Vote – MOTION PASSED – UNANIMOUS (Permission to Alter a Non-Conforming Structure - Granted).

MOTION #2

Variance:

Moved by K. Loomis, Seconded by D. Gregorka, "concerning Appeal Number 2007-Z-021, 2145 Amelia Place, that based on the following findings of fact and in accordance with the established standards for approval, the Zoning Board of Appeals hereby grants a variance from Chapter 55, Section 5:29 (R1B, Single-Family) of 2 feet from the required side setback of 5 feet to permit expansion of the existing house 3 feet from the side property line.

- a) The alleged hardships are peculiar to the property and results from conditions which do not exist generally throughout the City
- b) That the alleged hardships or practical difficulties, or both, which will result from a failure to grant the variance, include substantially more than mere inconvenience, inability to attain a higher financial return, or both.
- c) The variance, if granted, will not significantly affect surrounding properties.
- d) The circumstances of the variance request are not self-imposed.
- 242 e) The variance request is the minimum necessary to achieve reasonable use of the structure, per the attached plans."
- 244 On a Voice Vote MOTION PASSED *UNANIMOUS* 245 (Variance Granted).

C-3 <u>200 East William Street (NW Corner of William at Fifth Street) – 2007-Z-022</u>

Mike Jacobson is requesting one variance from Chapter 47 Section 4:20 (Curb Cuts and Driveway Approaches) of 20 feet from the required 30 feet maximum width for driveway widths onto Fourth and Fifth Avenues.

Description and Discussion:

The subject parcel is 52,403 square feet in total size and is located at the corner of Fifth Avenue, William Street and Fourth Avenue. The parcel is zoned C2A/R (Business Service/Residential District).

The existing vacant building (former YMCA) and the current AATA (Ann Arbor Transportation Authority) Blake Transit Center will be razed. The petitioner is proposing to construct a 282,000-square foot (usable), mixed-use building that includes a transit center, 46,000 square feet of office uses, 100 housing units, a 230-room hotel, a 23,000-square foot banquet facility, and 4,200 square feet of ground floor retail space. The proposed transit center will function as the main terminal for the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority. It is proposed to be located on the ground floor of the north side of the site. Access to the terminal will be provided from Fourth and Fifth Avenues.

In February of 2006 City Council approved a previous version of this plan and in March of 2006 the petitioner was granted four variances from the ZBA, as detailed below:

- 1) A variance to allow drive widths of 40 feet for two-way drives on Fourth and Fifth Avenue, exceeding maximum allowed per code by 10 feet;
- 2) A variance to allow drive widths of 22 feet for one-way drives on Fourth and Fifth Avenue, exceeding maximum allowed per code by 2 feet;
- 3) A variance to allow a drive width of 20 feet for a two-way drive on Fifth Avenue, 4 feet less than required by code;
- 4) A variance to allow a total of 5 curb openings exceeding the maximum allowed by 2 curb openings.

In September 2007 the petitioner submitted a revised site plan for this location. The revised plan will utilize three of the exiting variances granted by the ZBA in March 2006. The new variance request will replace the previous variance that allowed 40 foot drive widths on Fourth and Fifth Avenues. As a result of revised plans by the AATA the petitioner is now requesting a variance to allow 50 foot drive widths on Fourth and Fifth Avenues an increase of 10 feet in width over the previously approved variance.

The variance being requested is related to the function of bus use by the AATA. Currently, on the combined site four curb cuts exist with a total of 164 feet of curb openings. The project as proposed will have five curb cuts for a total of 154 feet of curb openings, a decrease of 10 feet. The variance is discussed in detail below:

The petitioner is requesting driveway widths 20 feet wider than the maximum 30 feet allowed by Chapter 47 for two-way drives. This increased width is needed because of the 40 foot length of the AATA buses. The busses cannot make the turn without running over adjacent curbs; current standards are not designed to accommodate the length of busses. The petitioner has provided detailed turning radius diagrams that graphically illustrate this problem. This variance will affect one driveway on Fourth Avenue and one driveway on Fifth Avenue.

(The Board discussed the previously granted variance and whether that could just be

amended or whether it required a new variance to address this request. It was determined that although the driveways are in basically the same locations, the initial plans called for

underground parking and this plan does not. M. Kowalski explained that since the 'use' of

this building has changed, it had to go back to City Planning and well as City Council and

D. Tope - Asked if the drive that is the widest is a two way drive. (Yes, this is why the

increase is needed. It essentially removes the busses from along Fourth Avenue). So that's decreasing traffic along Fourth? (Correct). I think anything that allows it to function properly

D. Gregorka – (Clarified the variance required to grant – in essence, replacing request #1).

good 'per the submitted plans,' and the plans have changed.

W. Carman - I would argue that the plan has changed and that we should once again

approve those. I don't have a problem with these, but in any other instance where we granted some variances and they changed, we might not agree to those. These are only

M. Lloyd – Stated that this would be coved by stating "per the attached plans" with the new

W. Carman - Restated that the old plans are not valid now, so 2, 3 and 4 should be re-

Mike Jacobsen was present to speak on behalf of the appeal. Mr. Jacobsen introduced

representatives of the AATA and Smith Group Architects who were also available to answer

Regarding the initial request, the plan was to house 12 of the Transit Authorities 15 busses inside the terminal. In the interim, we've studied the problem, and it is now possible to

provide space inside for all 15 busses inside this location. This will help to eliminate the noise

and pollution from the street, and we have a new ventilation system planned to disperse the

fumes and the public benefit will be greatly enhanced. The issue of widening the curb cut to

D. Gregorka - If we didn't grant this, you could still operate on the plans and variance previously approved? (Petitioner - The most likely result is that two busses would remain on

R. Eamus - (Directed to the AATA Representative) - The busses will be able to stack heading west and how much of a lane is there between the busses? (It will be tight, but there

ZBA, but the plan itself is essentially the same, except one driveway is ten feet wider).

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Questions to Staff by the Board:

is a definite benefit to the area.

granted. (M. Lloyd – You can do that).

enable this to happen is why we are here.

Questions of the Petitioner by the Board:

the street, and the busses would have to swing even wider).

plans attached.

questions.

Petitioner Presentation

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- in at a quarter to and a quarter after the hour and would leave straight out following behind each other, unless they're waiting for a late transfer, where others could go out around it.
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- will actually be two lanes). So, you could have four busses in that fifty feet? (The idea is that they are coordinated - we have a 'pulse' system where all the busses come 350

The original design had twenty feet for entering and exiting to the parking ramp, and now you're using that to have trucks to go in and out? You're not asking for a variance for that?

(No. That's essentially a loading dock/trash receptacle area where the trucks will back in and pull out).

Public Commentary – None.

Discussion by the Board

R. Eamus - The other subject brought up at the Planning Commission was the amount of driveway that pedestrians had to walk past. It's somewhat a concern, but as Donna mentioned, this plan has the added benefit of lessening the congestion on the street, so I think this is a good idea. One thing not pointed out, but discussed at the CPC at length, was that you can use the walkway on the north side and cross over. I'm in favor of this.

K. Loomis – I think there are plenty of reasons to support this, but want to echo what Wendy said earlier that we need to pass all four variances as the plans have changed.

D. Gregorka – I also support the variance.

MOTION

Moved by D. Gregorka, Seconded by W. Carman, "that in the case of 200 E. William Street, Appeal Number 2007-Z-022, that based on the following findings of fact and in accordance with the established standards for approval, the Zoning Board of Appeals hereby grants a variance from Chapter 47, Section 4:20 (Curb Cuts and Driveway Approaches):

1. A variance to allow drive width of 50 feet for two way drives on Fourth and Fifth Avenues, exceeding the maximum allowed per Code by 20 feet.

2. A variance to allow drive widths of 22 feet for one way drives on Fourth and Fifth Avenues exceeding the maximum allowed per Code by 2 feet.

3. A variance to allow a drive width of 20 feet for a two-way drive on Fifth Avenue, 4 feet less than required by Code, and

4. A variance to allow a total of 5 curb openings exceeding the maximum allowed by 2 curb openings <u>due to the following findings of fact:</u>

a) The AATA Transit Center functions are unique and do not exist anywhere else in the city.

b) A transit center of this size could not be effective or operate effectively without wider drives than are currently permitted by our code. This wider drive allows the busses to be pulled into the new facility and off of Fourth Avenue.

c) The granting of the variance would allow the Transportation Authority substantial justice and allow them to continue a public benefit in the most efficient manner possible since city code does not address unique site design and usage requirements of a transit center.

d) The variance will allow the Transit Center to operate efficiently while maintaining public safety and minimizing conflicts of turning into and out of the facility, per the attached plans.

On a Voice Vote - MOTION PASSED - UNANIMOUS (Variance Granted)

C-4 <u>1307 East Stadium Boulevard – 2007-Z-023</u>

Lawrence Lup is requesting one variance from Chapter 55 Section 5:28 (R1C, Single-Family) of 10 feet 6 inches from the required rear setback of 30 feet for an addition to the existing house.

Description and Discussion:

The subject parcel is located at 1307 East Stadium Boulevard. The parcel is zoned R1C (Single-Family Residential District) and is located on the corner of East Stadium and Montclair. The house was built in 1937 and is 973 square feet.

The petitioner is proposing to build several additions to the house, including converting the existing garage to living space. These additions will increase total floor area of the house to 1,546. All additions to the house conform to zoning requirements except the area being converted from garage to living space. The one car attached garage currently extends 10 feet 6 inches into the rear setback. The garage is not nonconforming since garages are allowed to be placed in the required rear open space. However, conversion of the garage space to living space would require a variance because it would place living space within the required rear open space, which is not permitted. A new one car attached garage will be built next to the new living space and will be 8 feet 10 inches from the rear property line.

<u>NOTE:</u> (M. Kowalski noted that contrary to his initial report, the entire existing garage would NOT be converted to living space, but rather just the area <u>above</u> the existing garage-this does not change the request, as it is still adding living space added closer to the property line).

Questions by the Board to Staff

W. Carman – Is the space (shown on drawings a hatched lines) behind the garage considered non-conforming as well? (M. Kowalski – That is like a garage, which would be allowed, since it's not living space. That portion is storage space). The proposed living space does not extend over that area).

Petitioner Presentation

Mr. Rob Reimenschneider of Riemco Development, Inc., was present to speak on behalf of the owner, Laurence Lup. The contractor explained the storage area above the garage and also stated that the staff report represents their proposal.

Audience Participation - C. Kuhnke - Stated there were several letters of support.

Discussion by the Board

R. Eamus – (To M. Kowalski) – Why is it that this house is set back so far from Stadium? (The required setback is only thirty feet; I think it's just the way the house was built).

457 D. Gregorka - What we're really looking at is a variance on their rear setback, which from 458 Montclair looks like the side setback? (Correct). If we approve the variance, they end up with 19'4" for a rear setback? (Correct. The garage does not count – not living space). 459

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465 466 Moved by K. Loomis, Seconded by D. Tope, "concerning Appeal Number 2007-Z-023, 1307 East Stadium Boulevard, that based on the following findings of fact and in accordance with the established, standards for approval, the Zoning Board of Appeals hereby grants a variance from Chapter 55, Section 5:28 (R1C, Single-Family) of 10 feet 6 inches from the required rear setback of 30 feet to permit expansion of the existing house 19 feet 6 inches from the rear property line.

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a) The alleged hardships are peculiar to the property and results from conditions which do not exist generally throughout the City due to the age it was built and its position on the lot.

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b) That the alleged hardships or practical difficulties, or both, which will result from a failure to grant the variance, include substantially more than mere inconvenience, inability to attain a higher financial return, or both.

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c) The variance, if granted, will not significantly affect surrounding properties.

475 d) The circumstances of the variance request are not self-imposed.

> e) The variance request is the minimum necessary to achieve reasonable use of the structure per the attached plans."

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On a Voice Vote - MOTION PASSED - UNANIMOUS (Variance Granted)

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D. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS** – None.

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E. **NEW BUSINESS** – Reappointments of Gregorka and Kuhnke.

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F. **REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS**

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G. **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – GENERAL – None.**

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ADJOURNMENT

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Moved by D. Gregorka, Seconded by R. Eamus, "that the meeting be adjourned." On a Voice Vote - MOTION PASSED - UNANIMOUS

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Chairperson Carol Kuhnke adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

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(Submitted by: Brenda Acquaviva, Administrative Support Specialist V -Zoning Board of Appeals)

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Carol Kuhnke, Chairperson

//-28 07 Dated ZBA Minutes