

1120 Fountain Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
August 22, 2022

City of Ann Arbor
Zoning Board of Appeals
301 East Huron Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dear Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals,

My family and I live directly across the street from 1115 Fountain Street, Anna Milanowski's property. Anna has asked for permission to alter a nonconforming structure and for a variance from the rear setback. We fully support Anna's request for zoning relief to allow an ADU to be added on to her house. This lot is not your typical corner lot, and as a result the usual zoning rules produce illogical results:

- The two houses South of Anna's house on Fountain Street also front on Cressfield Lane, so the huge, hilly yard between each house and Fountain Street seems like its backyard (from our perspective, those two houses aren't really Fountain Street houses – we don't know them as neighbors). According to the zoning rules, however, the long distance between Fountain Street and the rear of those houses means that Anna's house also has to have a very large setback. The result makes no sense from the perspective of the neighborhood: there's no reason to make the setback for Anna's property consistent with the "setback" for those two properties (which again, we don't view as part of Fountain Street at all).
- For Anna's property itself, the result of applying these rules is a bizarrely cramped lot: her lot's building envelope is 60 feet deep but only 17 feet wide!
- The lot next door to Anna's house on Robin Road is vacant, and the backyard neighbor's house (up a significant hill, on Cressfield Lane) is over 100 feet away.

Alteration to this structure as proposed meets the spirit of Chapter 55 and would have no detrimental effect on neighboring properties.

The lot's setbacks are definitely exceptional and peculiar to this property. Without a variance, this will remain a 984 square foot home and not bring new neighbors via an accessory dwelling unit, which we view as a missed opportunity to bring more vitality to our sometimes-lonely street. (Again, the two houses south of Anna's are basically invisible to our neighborhood; their yards facing Fountain street are a big piece of dead space that would make Jane Jacobs howl.) A 4 ¾ foot rear setback variance is tiny, and it wouldn't impact any neighbors because their homes are so far away from Anna's.

We fully support this request and hope you will grant them relief from a difficult lot situation.

Sincerely,

David Thacher