

Zoning Board of Appeals
Branford, Connecticut 06405

Minutes

The Branford Zoning Board of Appeals meeting utilizing Zoom of August 18, 2020 was called to order at 7 pm by Chairman James Sette utilizing Zoom. Also attending: ZEO Daniel Brennan, Ass't. Town Planner Kaitlyn Piazza and Members Leonard Tamsin, David Laska, Brad Crerar and Peter Berdon. Absent: Barry Beletsky and Donald Schilder.

Jim Sette announced that 20/8 – 3: 303 Holdings LLC, 303 Main Street will be tabled until September 15, 2020.

During the meeting there was considerable audible feedback hampering hearing of the applicants.

Old Business

20/7 – 3. 544 West Main Street. Applicant Arian Prevalla, Location Approval (DMV K-7 Form) for a used car dealer license in accordance with CGS Sec. 14-54. Jim mentioned that most members would remember the application presented originally last month when Peter Berdon had some concerns about the footprint on the site plan. He also was aware of the location being in close proximity to the Jefferson Road intersection with Route 1, which might create a more hazardous situation in an area already known for many traffic accidents. The Board felt that, although there was general agreement that the Applicant has done a great deal in cleaning up on the property and has a record of building well designed establishments elsewhere, there remained many questions concerning his future plans.

After a lengthy discussion concerning the history of the site and changes in the area since it had been approved in 1977. As Peter Berdon confirmed that the plans for the other two abutting lots held in ownership by the applicant would merge all three if this was approved. He also expressed concern that due to the closeness to the stop light at the Jefferson Road intersection with Route 1, should the lots be merged, the curb cuts would create a dangerous situation and expressed that it would be difficult to approve this Location Permit without knowing more where those curb cuts would be located to keep them out of the State's right of ways and exactly how the applicant plans to develop the entire site which is tight and considering the frontage of the properties is in the State Highway right of way and pointed out that so the applicant chose to have it continued rather than be denied and will seek professional help in laying out the plans. (Continued to September 15, 2020 keeping the public portion open to give the applicant time to collect and present a new more comprehensive site plan.)

New Business

20/8 – 1. Andrew and Laurie Gwiazda, 5 Evergreen Place: Laurie Gwiazda representing explained that they would like to build an 8 foot by 32 foot porch on the front of their house. The area is mixed development with many homes with porches. Her hardship is that due to the curve of the road the Town owns some 15 ft. which leaves her with 27 ft. where the regulations call for 30 feet, therefore the porch would extend 3 feet into the front property line. Peter Berdon confirmed that the one foot overhang does not require a variance. She described the open porch as roofed, and Jim Sette suggested in his motion to grant the variance with conditions that the porch not be enclosed and not used for human habitation. On a second by Peter Berdon, the variance was granted with conditions 5/0, with Leonard Tamsin, Brad Crerar and David Laska voting agreement.

20/8 – 2. Donald J. Fucci and Barbara Fucci, 45 Cedar Street: Barbara Fucci introduced her daughter Heather, and she represented the application as being a one and a half story house and wishes to add an addition to make it a full two story dwelling on the existing footprint. Building codes have changed since the original house was built, changing the dimension of building materials. The neighborhood is made up of many two and three story homes and if approved would match her own home which is adjacent to it. There would be no change to the existing footprint, it's only height which is still within and it's best to do this while doing outside renovations and replacing roof on existing footprint. Granted on motion by Jim Sette, second by Peter Berdon with Leonard Tamsin, David Laska, Brad Crerar in agreement. The variance was granted 5/0.

20/8 – 4. Elizabeth R. Prete, Trustee/The Elizabeth R. Prete Revocable Trust, Owner/Peter Hentschel/Applicant, 285 Thimble Island Road: Jim Pretti, of Criscuolo Eng. represented that house is located on a corner lot at Thimble Islands Road and Long Point Road. The home dates back to the 1890's with small rooms and that both additions would conform to the regulations. There is much ledge on the site, along Long Point Rod, a new septic system is being installed leaving little room elsewhere, due to the rock out cropping on the back corner. The knoll to the rear of the property is almost as high as the second story. The modest increases would make the house more livable. Rather than request further variances inasmuch as the front stairs which are no longer in use infringe on the setback line, the plan was to remove them, however Peter Berdon felt they were a historical point and he made the motion to grant as requested consistent with the site plan with the modification that the stairs on Thimble Islands Road side need not be removed. The motion was seconded by Jim Sette, with Leonard Tamsin, Brad Tamsin, Brad Crerar and David Laska in agreement.

On the motion by Jim Sette the Minutes of July 21, 2020 were approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mary Leigh Bianchi