

**Branford Zoning Board of Appeals  
Town of Branford  
Branford, Connecticut 06405**

**Minutes**

The Branford Zoning Board of Appeals met on Tuesday December 15, 2020 via remote technology as authorized by [Executive Orders 7B and 7I](#) to conduct Public Hearings on the following applications.

Chairman James Sette called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Those present were ZEO Daniel Brennan and members David Laska, Peter Berdon, Leonard Tamsin, Brad Crerar and Barry Beletsky. Absent: Donald Schilder.

ZEO Dan Brennan announced that the first new item, 20/12 – 1. Loredana Pascarella, RCG Associates, LLC. 155 West Main Street, Appeal of ZEO Cease and Desist Order dated September 28, 2020 had been **withdrawn prior to the meeting**.

**Old Business:**

20/11 – 1. Talia Polino, Owner/Matthew Nobile Reale, Applicant, 29 Hotchkiss Grove Road: This item had been continued from the prior month and Attorney Timothy Lee who was representing the applicant requested that the application be heard out of order so he could have time to confer with his client and the Board agreed to his request.

**New Business**

20/12 – 2. Natalina and Daniel Zweeres, 186 Laurel Hill Road: Jim Pretti, Criscuolo Engineering represented the applicants request for a variance for an interior lot setback from 50 ft. to 38 ft. for proposed in-ground swimming pool. The lot is in a subdivision accessed by a common driveway and the shape of the lot which requires 50 ft. setbacks from all property lines which also has to meet setback requirements concerning the septic and leaching fields it leaves little room for a 15x36 ft. in-ground pool and there is no other location available. The Interior Lot 50 ft. setbacks is the hardship.

On the motion by Jim Sette, second by Brad Crerar who were joined in voting by Barry Beltsky, Peter Berdon and David Laska as Leonard Tamsin hadn't joined the group as yet. **Granted 5/0**

**Old Business:**

20/11 – 1. Talia Polino, Owner/Matthew Nobile Reale, Applicant, 29 Hotchkiss Grove Road: Attorney Timothy Lee explained that the plans call for front and side yard setbacks on a nonconforming property to expand the existing second floor by adding a new shed dormer and a new front entry portico over the existing entry steps. The existing side garage would be removed and replaced by the construction of a new 1-1/2 story garage with a master bedroom above it. It is currently a three bedroom home, but due to the pandemic circumstances require added workspace and a bedroom needs to be reconfigured for it. Loss of a bedroom will be replaced by this new addition.

Response from Janet Valentine , 33 Hotchkiss Grove Road adjacent to the left of the property, objected and was not favor of the application. There was also opposition by neighbors to the right side of the property, Lori Laudano and Robert Nuzzello, Jr., 25 Hotchkiss Grove Road, (full letter in file),

who explained that the current garage was built with no permit only 3 ft. off their property line and if extended will be higher and longer, appearing as a 30 ft. long, 28 ft. high fence adjacent to their property blocking sunlight necessary for drying out their septic system and leaching fields which serve two houses. The house to the rear at 29A occupied by Sharon and Bill Reynolds was converted from a barn built in 1899 and was served by an old road now abandoned. Two new leaching fields have been installed to serve both homes at great expense after they brought the property. The claim continued that no other house in the area has a structure so close to their property line and going up even higher would be very much out of character. Homes in the area are quite close together and there would be no way emergency vehicles could access these houses in an emergency. The current garage is low profile and going higher would infringe even more.

Attorney Lee requested that the application be **continued to January 19, 2021** so he can examine the variance and possibly adjust the side line request and the Board agreed to the continuation advising him that if there are any changes to the request, a new application should be submitted.

### **New Business: (continued)**

20/12 – 3. Alan and Cynthia Brooks, 94 Stannard Avenue: The applicants had received a previous variance for a garage in 2003 to be allowed 10 ft. from the street but never built it. There are large oak trees which damage the cars parked in the driveway and ledge and a retaining wall leaving little area for a walkway around a garage whereas a car port would offer protection for their cars without having to contend with in building a garage. The board wanted to see exactly what the carport would look like and exactly where it would be located which were not available at the meeting, so it was suggested that they arrange for them and the hearing was **continued continued to January 29, 2021**.

20/12 – 4. Laura Adair, 25 Second Avenue: Matthew Reale, the builder who is doing the renovations, represented the application described as a summer cottage that needs to be improved and to do so required gutting the existing enclosed front porch and extending it the full length of the front of the house to allow expansion of a downstairs bedroom and also allow for a second floor porch stacked over current existing footprint. Peter Berdon questioned the need for allowing the porch to extend across the entire front of the house, and it was explained that it was necessary because it is currently located in the center and by extending it would be simply be filling in the two areas to either side and also make the front of the house look more uniform. Peter hadn't realized it was only two small 7 ft. areas to either side that would be expanded and agreed with the premise.

So, on the motion by Jim Sette, with a second by Brad Crerar, Leonard Tamsin, Peter Berdon and David Laska agreed and the **variances were granted 5/0**

20/12 – 6. Deepti Pradhan and Suresh Shenoy, 15 Millwood Drive: Ms. Shenoy represented that the small 9 ft. mudroom to the front of the home to add mud room at front entrance, showing a site plan with exact numbers needed in order to do so.

Because there were enough members present, Brad Crerar was excused from the meeting and Barry Beltesky replaced him. On Jim Sette's motion to approve, seconded by David Laska, Barry Beletsky, Leonard Tamsin and Peter Berdon voted to **grant the variance 5/0**.

20/12 – 5. Richard and Ellen Skinner, 52 Stannard Avenue: The Applicants explained that they currently have a garage, however to make it more accessible they would like to build another at the front of their home. After describing the preferred location Peter Berdon asked what the hardship was and Mr. Skinner explained that the location was to avoid covering windows that would result in darkening the inside of the home.

Peter could see no hardship since covering windows does not fit that description and if the

garage was not to be located in the front of the house, there would be no need to waive the narrow street requirement and he also expressed that the PZC drew up the regulations addressing this very thing in order to protect the aesthetic and property values of the neighborhood.

On Jim Sette's motion to deny and Barry Beletsky's second, the Board was unanimous voting to **deny the application. 5/0.**

**Other Business:**

Action on Minutes of October 20, 2020 - Approved

Action on Minutes of November 17, 2020 – Approved

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Leigh Bianchi