

Zoning Board of Appeals
Town of Branford
Branford, Connecticut

Minutes

The Branford Zoning Board of Appeals meeting of September 15, 2020 was called to order at 7 pm by Chairman James Sette utilizing Zoom utilizing Zoom by remote technology as authorized by Executive Orders 7B and 7L and the following applications were heard.

Those attending: were ZEO Daniel Brennan, Ass't. Town Planner Kaitlyn Piazza and Members Leonard Tamsin, David Laska, Donald Schilder and Peter Berdon. Absent: Barry Beletsky and Brad Crerar.

(There was considerable audible feedback during the meeting due to my attending by phone which hampered hearing some of the conversations).

Old Business:

Chairman Jim Sette announced that 20/8 – 3: 544 West Main Street. Arian Precally had been withdrawn.

20/8 – 3. P & D 303 Main Holdings, LLC, Owner/ Rich Cobb, Applicant, 303 Main Street: Rich Cobb described the building which he bought in 2018 as being built in the 1800's on farmland and was probably built as a restaurant prior to the road. He explained that there would be no change in the footprint and if it was to be kept as a single family house, there would be no problem, however, it is planned to be renovated to a two family, which has slightly less lot area per dwelling unit on a slightly smaller lot. This is located in a BR zone, so parking poses no problem and there is shrubbery between the abutting neighbors. He further explained that there was no intention to tear the building down but it will be upgraded with new windows and siding.

Although Peter Berdon felt it would be an attractive addition and an improvement, though he felt there might be restrictions pertaining to curb cuts on Route 1, however they have access to Bradley Street and curb cuts will be addressed when they get to Planning and Zoning for site plan approval. David felt the hardship was a small long narrow lot and agreed it would be an improvement.

On the motion made to approve by Jim Sette, second Don Schilder, members David Laska, Peter Berdon and Leonard Tamsin were in agreement and the variances were granted unanimously, 5/0.

New Business

Due to the necessity for Jenifer Acquino to attend another meeting the application she was representing was heard out of order.

20/9 – 4. Town of Branford (Fire Headquarters), Owner/ Jenifer Acquino, Ass't. Town Engineer, 39-49 North Main Street: Jenifer explained the pollinator type or garden that will be local perennial flowers favored by birds, bees and butterflies that will be a continuous pathway to

encourage them with seating for people to enjoy them. The area where it will be installed is a perfect setting, however there is a need for signage. The variance is necessary in order to allow installation of two permanent 18" x 24" freestanding educational signs large enough to be read from the walkway.

On Jim Sette's motion, seconded by David Laska, the requested variance was granted 5/0 with the full board in agreement.

20/9 – 1. ABCS Properties, LLC, Owner/David Chew, Applicant, 802 East Main Street: David Chew introduced his Engineer Jim Pretti and Atty. Robert Harrington who will present the application which was described as property created in the 1800's with the house located in the middle of the property with two units and a one and a half space garage, with commercial buildings located in the front. The plan is to turn the garage into an apartment unit. They will not be enlarging it, simply changing its use and the reason for a variance can be questioned because the regulation speaks to ground floor units, and only two would be considered as ground floor because the second floor unit has always been allowed and the lot area needed for this third unit according to the regulations is 120,000 sf where the property only has 62,437. The changes from the garage to a unit will not change to the looks of the existing building. He pointed out that there are many much larger buildings in the area, such as Evergreen Woods and the Transfer Station.

David Laska agreed with the Attorney's contention that there are only two ground floor units, being that the third one is on the second floor in the existing 1800s house and Peter Berdon agreed that it depends on interpretation of the regulation, since you will only have two ground floor units without need of a variance and also if your first floor was commercial you could have additional units on the second floor. They will have to go to Planning and Zoning for special exemption in any case where that matter can be taken up. On the Motion by Jim Sette, seconded by Don Schilder, the decision to grant was 5.0 with Peter Berdon, David Laska and Leonard Tamsin in agreement.

20/9 – 2. Michelle Tournas, 198 Hotchkiss Grove Road: Jim Pretti, Criscuolo Engineering represented the application as being an existing 2,200 sf garage located on the corner of Hotchkiss Grove and Eight Avenue which will be torn down and replaced with a 22x24 ft, new garage, with a purposed 18 ft. high to allow for storage space above. Leonard Tamsin didn't feel 18 ft. high was too aggressive and the abutting neighbor who spoke in favor of it found it to be no problem. The hardship is that the existing garage is under size for today's larger vehicles. They also must go to Planning and Zoning for approval for the height over 15 ft.

On Jim Sette's motion to grant, with David Laska's second, Donald Schilder, Lenard Tamsin and Peter Berdon voted yes and the variance was granted 5/0.

20/9 – 3. Christopher and Alison Voets, 8 Beechwood Road: Chris Voets described having a 16x24 ft. existing deck where he will place a 9 x 16 ft. swim spa for exercise, with an attached deck with a railing around it. Due to a septic system and ledge on the property, it is the only and natural place for the pool. They did not submit an A-2 Survey and used their own measurements in planning the pool, but will need a location survey to present as an 'As Built' and if anything is off, it will be a problem they will have to deal with.

On the motion to grant by Jim Sette, with Donald Schilder's second, the vote by Peter Berdon, David Laska and Leonard Tamsin granted the variance 5/0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Leigh Bianchi