

Village of La Grange



AGENDA

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
PLAN COMMISSION and ZONING
BOARD OF APPEALS
of the
VILLAGE OF LA GRANGE

Village Hall Auditorium
53 S. La Grange Road, La Grange, IL

August 15, 2019 - 7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order: Plan Commission Roll Call; Zoning Board of Appeals Roll Call.
2. Approval of Plan Commission Minutes of June 11, 2019
3. Approval of Zoning Board of Appeals Minutes of May 16, 2019
4. Business at Hand

Training Presentation

4. Old Business
5. New Business
6. Adjournment

Individuals with disabilities and who require certain accommodations to participate at this meeting are requested to contact the ADA Coordinator at 579-2315, to allow the Village to make reasonable accommodations.

Village of La Grange
Plan Commission
Regular Meeting of June 11, 2019

A regular meeting of the Plan Commission for the Village of La Grange was held at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 11, 2019 on the second floor Auditorium Room of the Village Hall, 53 S. La Grange Road, La Grange, Illinois.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF THE PLAN COMMISSION

Chairman Paice called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Verify Quorum

Upon roll call the following were:

Present: Egan, Wentink, Schwartz, Paice

Absent: Hoffenberg

Community Development Director Charity Jones and Village Planner Heather Valone were also present.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 14, 2019

Commissioner Egan made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Wentink to approve the minutes from May 14, 2019 with no changes. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. PC CASE #251 – 4 CALLE VIEW DR. RESUBDIVISION (FINAL PLAT), DOUGLAS BROWN

Staff Presentation

Heather Valone, Village Planner, said the applicant has applied to shift the configuration of the two existing lots. Currently the property is two separate lots with one address. The applicant owns both lots, so per the zoning code it is treated as one lot even though it has two separate PIN numbers.

The applicant has petitioned to shift the existing lot line approximately 23 feet to the east. The applicant is not seeking any deviations from code currently. By shifting the lot, the applicant does make the one lot smaller, however the proposed lot still meets the minimum requirements lot size and width. There are a few structures on the property that will have to come into conformance once one of the proposed lots is

purchased separately from the other lot. The structures are the driveway, patio, a retention walls, and the existing detached garage. This would conclude staff's report.

Commissioner Egan asked after the lot line is shifted does the single family house on the larger lot conform to all of the Village requirements.

Mrs. Valone stated the single family house on the larger lot, lot 1 will meet the minimum required yards per the Zoning Code.

Chairman Paice asked the applicant to come up and make a presentation.

Applicant Presentation

Douglas Brown, applicant, thanked the Commission for their time. He said that staff did a great job with their presentation and he is available for any questions.

Chairman Paice asked if any of the Commissioners had any questions for the applicant.

Commissioner Schwartz apologized that he has not been able to drive by the property. He asked if the driveway is moved, how is the garage accessed.

Mr. Brown showed on the overhead how he will make it conform and have access to the garage. He will be signing the declaration that it does need to come into conformance if it were to be sold as a separate lot.

Commissioner Egan asked if the utility easement runs with the land, so if the lot is ever sold.

Mr. Brown said yes it does.

Plan Commission Discussion

Chairman Paice asked if there were any comments or questions from the Commission. None responded. He then called for a motion for recommendation.

Plan Commission Recommendation

Commissioner Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Wentink to recommend to the President and Board of Trustees approval of Case #251 – 4 Calle View Dr. Resubdivision (Final Plat) with one condition:

1. The applicant complies with and signs the declaration that is included in Attachment 2 of the staff memorandum.

A roll call vote was taken:

Ayes: Schwartz, Wentink, Egan, Paice

Nays: None
Motion passed

IV. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mrs. Valone said there will be a new Commissioner, Susan Mosher, at the next meeting.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

VI. ADJOURMENT

Commissioner Egan made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Schwartz to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

Minutes prepared by Peggy Halper

Village of La Grange
Zoning Board of Appeals
Regular Meeting of May 16, 2019

A regular meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals for the Village of La Grange was held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 16, 2019 on the second floor Auditorium Room of the Village Hall, 53 S. La Grange Road, La Grange, Illinois.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Pappas called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Verify Quorum

Upon roll call the following were:

Present: Finder, Edwards, Blentlinger, Pappas

Absent: Levato, O'Connor, Tussing

Village Planner Heather Valone and Trustee Mark Kuchler were also present.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 21, 2019

Commissioner Edwards made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Blentlinger to approve the minutes from February 21, 2019 with no changes. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

III. BUSINESS AT HAND:

ZBA #627 – A VARIATION FROM PARAGRAPH 3-110E1 (MAXIMUM BUILDING COVERAGE FOR AN INTERIOR LOT) TO ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ADDITION WITHIN THE R-4 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT, KATHERINE AND SCOTT LUTZOW, 229 S. ASHLAND AVE.

Chairman Pappas asked the audience to please stand and raise his/her right hand. He then administered the oath. He then asked staff to make their presentation.

Staff Presentation

Heather Valone, Village Planner, said the applicants are looking to construct an addition to the rear of the home. The property is located in the R-4 District so the maximum building coverage is 30% which is 1,858 square feet. The subject property currently has a building coverage of 32.8% which is about 174 square feet more than

what is permitted. With the proposed addition it would result in a building coverage of 33.12%, which is 193 square feet more than permitted.

In August 2017, the applicants applied for and received a variation to renovate the existing historic garage. The approved scope of work for the garage actually reduced the building coverage on the property from roughly 35% to the current coverage of 32.8%. In the single-family residential district, building coverage is considered any portion of the building at or above grade and additionally includes any eaves that are within three feet of the property line. The staff report provides some detail on what specifically on the subject property counts as building coverage.

Mrs. Valone stated the proposed addition is 48 square feet. As permitted through the zoning code, due to the cellar doors in the rear of the building, they already have about 29.5 square feet on the doors that they could build up from and not add to their building coverage. The applicant is requesting to construct a larger footprint than what exists on the cellar doors. The Commission has a number of options in making a recommendation to the Village Board which are indicated in the staff report. Lastly, provided for the Commission this evening are comments from Mr. and Mrs. Cutler who are the neighbors to the north which were received today.

Chairman Pappas said he remembers the variation for the garage because of the reduction in building coverage. He then asked for the applicant to come up and speak, however Mr. Wolf asked if he could speak first.

Public Comment

Steve Wolf, 213 Ashland, stated the applicant is only adding a 3.5 by 5 foot building on the edge to make their basement stairs safe. The applicant's stairs are just like his to where they are very narrow. He feels by making the garage 100 feet smaller they should be able to make 19 square feet work to make a basement usable. These historic homes are not made so you can fix them and make them to code. The homes were built 150 years ago. By allowing him to use the extra square feet he can make a staircase to make his basement usable.

Chairman Pappas asked if the stairway is exposed or covered.

Mr. Wolf said to get to the stairs in the house you have to walk through a closet. To make it any bigger you would have to tear the stairs apart. There is no easy way to do this besides taking the three feet off the back. He feels if they would have done this the same time as the garage it would have been allowed because he was giving back 100 square feet. Now he is trying to fix a problem that was created years before he owned the house. He does not want to see crazy additions to these historic homes but if he can square off the back of his house it would make a much better house.

Chairman Pappas asked if he was on the same side of the street.

Mr. Wolf stated he is on the same side.

Chairman Pappas asked if there were other homes on the same side of the street that were squared off in the back.

Mr. Wolf said his is squared off. There are no two homes on his block that are similar. He hopes that they can make this work and feels it will be a benefit to the neighborhood.

Chairman Pappas thanked him for his time. He then asked for the applicant to come forward.

Applicant Presentation

Scott Lutzow stated the current basement stairs are located in the only closet on the first floor. The closet is long and since it is the only closet it has cleaning supplies, vacuum, and kid's toys. Often times they have to remove items from the closet to go down and do laundry. With four kids they are doing laundry very often. They are planning on remodeling their kitchen and basement and without the addition they would not be able to bring their staircase up to code in its current location. He has provided several pictures of what his basement looks like currently. They are trying to create more usable space for their family.

They have explored several options and he was not a big fan of moving the staircase to the kitchen. This however, has been the best floor plan that they have been able to work out. By moving the stairs into the kitchen they lose storage space. The space they want to add is 3.37 by 5.66 square feet to just square off that portion of the house.

Chairman Pappas asked if the stairs outside are concrete or wooden and do they have anything over them.

Mr. Lutzow said there is a picture in staff's packet showing what the stairs look like with the cellar doors open. There is no porch or overhang covering the stairs. He explained the various pictures that were submitted in staff's packet that he provided.

Chairman Pappas asked if the stairs were covered by the eaves.

Mr. Lutzow stated they are.

Chairman Pappas asked if the cellar stairs count as coverage currently where it is.

Mrs. Valone said where they are talking about is located on the rear of the house where the cellar doors are. The eve on the side would fall under building coverage but the eve on the rear of the building does not. It is just the cellar doors which are

29.5 square feet that is being counted as existing building coverage. The doors to the cellar are raised above grade.

Commissioner Blentlinger asked if those stairs would be removed all together.

Mr. Lutzow stated that is correct.

Commissioner Blentlinger asked if there were two ovens.

Mr. Lutzow said yes there are. They have explored several options and they do a lot of entertaining where this would be needed.

Commissioner Finder asked if the chimney was going away.

Mr. Lutzow stated yes it is.

Commissioner Finder asked if in any of their previous plans have they tried building on the existing rear cellar door.

Mr. Lutzow said they have and the challenge with that is in order to get the stairs to go down and curve over you would have to move the wall of the family room and then they would lose their family room. He showed on the overhead the section of the basement that was never dug out when the family room addition was done.

Chairman Pappas asked when was the house built and does he know when the addition was put on.

Mr. Lutzow stated the house was built in 1895 and he does not know when the addition was built.

Commissioner Edwards asked if the chimney was abandoned.

Mr. Lutzow said he believes so because he does not have a fireplace. The hot water heater might be venting through it, but when they redo the basement they will be changing all of it and updating those appliances.

Chairman Pappas asked how high is the ceiling in the basement.

Mr. Lutzow stated seven feet.

Chairman Pappas asked what is preventing the current stairs from being up to code.

Mr. Lutzow said they are too narrow.

Chairman Pappas asked if there were any setback issues with the variance.

Mrs. Valone stated the property is required to have a five foot setback however the wall already exists in non-conforming so it is permitted to continue to the back. If it was a porch he would not be allowed to because it is not an exterior wall.

Mr. Wolf said most of the houses on the block are built to the north edge of the lot line and their yard is the south side of the property. His house is only 18 inches from the lot line on the north side. His neighbor's eave hangs over into his yard. The houses were pushed all the way to the north to gain usable space.

Chairman Pappas asked if the applicant had any further comments.

Mr. Lutzow stated not at this time and thanked the Commission for their consideration.

Zoning Board of Appeals Discussion

Chairman Pappas said the Commission will go through the standards for the variation. The first is if there are any particular hardships or difficulties. He asked the Commission if the applicant had demonstrated if there were any hardships.

Commissioner Finder stated he feels that the applicant did a good job demonstrating the unique physical condition. Given the staircase and it being the only closet he understands why they are doing this. The part he keeps struggling with is whether there is no other remedy and whether what they are asking for is reasonable or not.

Commissioner Blentlinger said when you look at the stairs themselves you can see the safety concern especially with children. There might be other remedies, but there was the previous reduction in lot coverage.

Commissioner Finder stated giving back lot coverage is unusual and should be kept in mind.

Chairman Pappas said another standard is that it is not self-created which since the house was built in 1895 it predates the current code. The next standard is being denied substantial right. There is a listing in the staff report of past variation requests and a lot of them are for porches or garages. The applicant is only asking for an additional 19.1 square feet.

Commissioner Blentlinger stated there might be a concrete pad outside the back door. She asked if that will encroach into the side yard.

Mrs. Valone said walkways do not have a minimum setback. They do have a walkway that does go along that side of the house, however based on their lot coverage calculation if the addition is granted they have just over one square foot of lot coverage. They will not be able to increase that landing very much without having to change part of the walkway.

Chairman Pappas read the remaining standards.

Commissioner Finder stated for the fifth standard he feels they are helping the long term survival of this historic house.

Commissioner Edwards said by making a fully utilized functioning basement it helps add value to the neighborhood and Village which satisfies the sixth standard.

Commissioner Blentlinger stated the addition will add to essential character of the area. With the remodels that have already been done on the home, it shows that they have maintained the charm of the homes in and around the area.

Commissioner Edwards said it was mentioned about squaring off rear elevations. He asked if there was something about squaring off or is it opinion based.

Mrs. Valone stated it is one of the applicant's desires to square off the basement. In the staff report they listed a number of houses that are squared off in the back. There is no zoning requirement to square off the back of the house.

Commissioner Finder said it was mentioned about how the homes on this block are hugging the northern lot line. He asked how much does the owner get taken off or penalized for the eaves on the northern edge.

Mrs. Valone stated it will depend on the roof line and the width of the eave. In regards to stormwater management, with the proposed addition they would not need to add any additional dissipation system or grading to the rear yard. It has been indicated from the applicant that they will dig out part of the basement, finish the basement, and then add a sump pump where there was not one before which will trigger a dissipation system and engineering.

Commissioner Finder said he feels that they need to look at the uniqueness of this block and how the lots are laid out. The applicant could be penalized by having his house all the way to the north like it was stated.

Commissioner Edwards stated for standard number eight, he feels that the applicant shows that there is no other remedy by the number of architects the applicant had looking at this.

Chairman Pappas asked if there were any more questions or comments. None responded

Zoning Board of Appeals Recommendation

Commissioner Finder made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Edwards to recommend to the President and Board of Trustees approval of the variation for Case

#627 to allow the construction of an addition within the R-4 Single-Family Residential District at 229 S. Ashland Avenue. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: Finder, Edwards, Blentlinger, Pappas

Nays: None

Motion passed

IV. OLD BUSINESS

None

V. NEW BUSINESS

None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Blentlinger made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Edwards to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m. A voice vote was taken:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion passed

Minutes prepared by Peggy Halper