

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals was held on
Thursday, January 11, 2018
At 7:30 P.M. in City Council Chambers, City Hall, Alexandria, Virginia.

The proceedings of the meeting were recorded; records of each case are on the web at alexandriava.gov/dockets and on file in the Department of Planning and Zoning.

Members Present: Laurence Altenburg, Chair
Daniel Poretz
Lee Perna
Jonathan Buono
Timothy Ramsey

Members Absent: Walter Marlowe

Staff Present: Mary Christesen, Planning & Zoning
Sam Shelby, Planning & Zoning

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

1. Chairman Altenburg called the January 11, 2018 Board of Zoning Appeals to order at 7:30 P.M. Mr. Marlowe was excused. All other members were present. Mr. Poretz recused himself from docket items 2 and 3.

NEW BUSINESS

2. BZA Case # 2017-0036
1210 Trinity Drive
Public hearing and consideration of a request for a variance to construct a single-family dwelling behind the required established average front setback; zoned R-12/residential single-family.
Applicants: SW Trinity Development LLC by Steve Kulinski, architect

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ACTION: On a motion made by Mr. Buono, seconded by Mr. Yoo, the Board of Zoning Appeals moved to approve BZA Case #2017-0036 subject to all applicable codes, ordinances, and staff recommendations. The Board did not take a vote.

On a motion made by Mr. Yoo, seconded by Mr. Perna, the Board of Zoning Appeals moved to table the discussion of BZA Case #2017-0036 pending the presentation of the next docket item – BZA Case #2017-0038. The second motion carried on a vote of 5 to 0 with Mr. Poretz recusing and Mr. Marlowe absent.

On a motion made by Mr. Yoo, seconded by Mr. Perna, the Board of Zoning Appeals moved to resume discussion of BZA Case #2017-0036. The motion carried on a vote of 5 to 0 with Mr. Poretz recusing and Mr. Marlowe absent.

The original motion to approve was carried on a vote of 5 to 0 with Mr. Poretz recusing and Mr. Marlowe absent.

Reason:

The application met the criteria for a variance as outlined in the staff report.

Discussion:

Chairman Altenburg asked for clarification regarding the front setback required by section 7-2503(A); that strict application requires the new dwelling to be constructed at the average established front setback of 31.70 feet and not behind it.

Speakers:

Justin Sparrow, property owner, and Steve Kulinski, architect, presented the case and answered questions from the Board.

David Gage, 306 Princeton Boulevard, spoke in opposition to the request. Mr. Gage acknowledged the value of the tree but stated that there would be unintended consequences

that would cause substantial detriment to adjacent properties if the variance were granted. Mr. Gage expressed concerns about the scale and mass of the proposed dwelling and detached garage as compared to that of the existing dwelling.

Anna Braun, 304 Princeton Boulevard, spoke in opposition to the request. Ms. Braun acknowledged the tree as an asset to the neighborhood but was concerned about the loss of trees in the rear of the subject property and the water drainage issues that could result.

Ann Loughlin, 1303 Trinity Drive, spoke in opposition to the request. Ms. Laughlin expressed concerns about the compatibility of the new dwellings with the existing neighborhood. She was also concerned about the construction impact on the existing trees on the lot.

Brian Murphy, 509 Canterbury Lane, spoke in support of the request; stating that the requested setback would be safer for vehicular traffic along Trinity Drive.

Susan Hodges, 1314 Trinity Drive, spoke in support of the request; stating that removal of the tree would be a substantial loss to the neighborhood. Ms. Hodges explained that the current houses along Trinity Drive have an appearance of an established front setback. She went on to state that construction of the proposed dwelling at the required setback would make it appear out of character with the existing dwellings.

3. BZA Case # 2017-0038
1208 Trinity Drive

Public hearing and consideration of a request for a variance to construct a single-family dwelling behind the required established average front setback; zoned R-12/residential single-family.

Applicants: SW Trinity Development LLC by Steve Kulinski, architect

Speakers:

Justin Sparrow, property owner, and Steve Kulinski, architect, presented the case and answered questions from the Board.

Ludwig Gaines, 302 Princeton Boulevard, expressed concerns about water run-off and drainage issues, the location of the proposed dwelling and its impact to adjacent neighbors, and the health of the trees in the rear yard. Mr. Gaines asked the Board to defer the request.

David Gage, 306 Princeton Boulevard, expressed concerns about the removal of 13 trees that provide privacy to adjacent property owners. He asked the Board consider conditions to mitigate effects of the proposal on adjacent properties including reducing the footprint and height of the dwelling, revising the location of the garage, and preservation of trees or other landscaping to maintain privacy.

Brian Murphy, 509 Canterbury Lane, spoke in support of the request; stating that if the request were not granted it could cause visual impairment along the Trinity Drive blockface.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ACTION: On a motion made by Mr. Perna, the Board of Zoning Appeals moved to deny BZA Case #2017-0038. The motion failed because it was not seconded.

On a motion made by Mr. Yoo, seconded by Mr. Perna, the Board of Zoning Appeals moved to resume discussion of the previous docket item – BZA Case #2017-0036. The motion carried on a vote of 5 to 0 with Mr. Poretz recusing and Mr. Marlowe absent.

On a motion made by Mr. Yoo, seconded by Mr. Ramsey, the Board of Zoning Appeals moved to approve BZA Case #2017-0038 subject to all codes, ordinances, and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 5 to 0 with Mr. Poretz recusing and Mr. Marlowe absent.

Reason:

The application met the criteria for a variance as outlined in the staff report.

Discussion:

The Board generally agreed with staff analysis, but some members expressed doubt that construction of the dwelling at the required front setback would affect the tree. These members were also concerned that a hardship did not exist.

OTHER BUSINESS

4. Election of Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary

Mr. Altenburg was appointed chair on a vote of 6 to 0. Mr. Yoo was appointed vice chair on a vote of 6 to 0. Mr. Perna was appointed secretary on a vote of 6 to 0.

5. Mary Christesen, Zoning Manager, provided a follow-up to a request from the Board regarding clarifications of lot line discrepancies for BZA Case #2017-0035 (200 East Monroe Avenue).

MINUTES

6. Consideration of the minutes from the December 14, 2017 Board of Zoning Appeals hearing.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS ACTION: On a motion made by Mr. Poretz, seconded by Mr. Ramsey, the Board of Zoning Appeals moved to approve the December 14, 2017 minutes as amended.

ADJOURNMENT

7. The Board of Zoning Appeals hearing was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.