

**METUCHEN ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
MINUTES**

February 10, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:45pm by Daniel Topping, Chairman, who read the statement in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Present: Catherine McCartin
Angela Sielski
Judith Sisko
Byron Sondergard
Brian Tobin, Vice Chairman
Daniel Topping, Chairman

Iris Delgado, Alt. II
Robert Renaud, Esquire
Christopher Cosenza, Planner
Patricia Kaulfers, Zoning Official
Denise Hamilton, Secretary

Absent: John Schumann, Alt I
Jonathan Rabinowitz
Robert Mannix, Engineer

21-1214 Aamir Motiwala – Applicant requires bulk variance approval due to existing non-conforming setback conditions for addition of a garage to the first floor and addition of a second floor. (Carried 2.10.22)

326 Durham Avenue Block 40 Lot 37

Mr. John Wiley, Applicant's Attorney, stated that new exhibits would be presented along with professional testimony.

Mr. Aamir Motiwala was sworn in by Mr. Renaud. He is sole owner of Grand Home Investments LLC, which is the entity that owns 326 Durham Avenue.

Mr. Wiley stated that the application would be changed to show Grand Home Investments, LLC as the property owner.

Mr. Motiwala shared his screen to display pictures of both the subject and neighboring properties. He explained that renovations had been made to 324 Durham Avenue.

Mr. Topping opened the floor for questions.

A resident of Weston Street requested removal of the light located at the side of 326 Durham Avenue because it shines inside her house.

Mr. Wiley was agreeable to that request.

Mr. John Riggio, Architect, was sworn in by Mr. Renaud. He has been a licensed architect in New Jersey since 1989 and had previously appeared before Land Use Boards. He was accepted by the Board as an expert witness.

Mr. Riggio testified that the proposal includes the addition of a second floor onto the existing structure. The house sits irregular on the property. It is a standard job with some alterations to the first floor. The existing footprint would not be changed. The addition to the second floor requires variances due to existing front and side yard non-conforming setback conditions.

Mr. Motiwala displayed the first-floor plan.

Mr. Renaud questioned the house fronting on Westinghouse Street although it has a Durham Avenue address.

Mr. Cosenza responded that the rear yard is opposite the shortest front, and with the house having two fronts, the Durham Avenue address is permitted.

Mr. Riggio explained the floor plan includes four stairs in the back leading into the house. A new staircase will be placed inside the house to access the second floor and cellar. A family room, dining room, and kitchen will be included on the first floor. The proposal is to widen the first floor by the left side of the garage and the right side of the house. The garage will be increased from a one to a two-car garage.

Mr. Cosenza mentioned that Applicant had reduced living space to gain the extra garage space. The rear portion of the house is currently encroaching on the garage.

Mr. Riggio responded that there was an exterior door, not an entrance to the inside of the house, and that had been eliminated to permit extra space for the garage. It was not a living space. They will remove that entrance with its steps to the basement to create a two-car garage. It would align with the existing non-conforming side yard.

Mr. Renaud requested specifics on what would be removed.

Mr. Riggio responded that the roof would be removed to initiate the construction downward. There would be a new roof. The interior wall between the garage and inside of the house would remain. The exterior walls would remain, with the exception of the wall to the left side. The rear wall to the right side would be removed.

Mr. Cosenza explained that with more than 50% of the house being removed, the application would fall within the category of a new house, and possibly require additional variances. The proposal is to add 147 square feet to the first floor, 1,430 square feet to the second floor, and based on these numbers the application should be for a new house. He inquired about the rear side porch.

Mr. Riggio responded that the porch is a new addition. It would be within the setback requirements although exact dimensions had not yet been determined.

Mr. Wiley mentioned that that the new porch would possibly require a variance.

Mr. Renaud suggested the application be carried due to all the changes presented.

Mr. Cosenza stated that landscape sections should be included for review with the new application, as well as design, so variances could accurately be determined. The bulk standard setback requirements should also be clarified.

Mr. Wiley suggested a future meeting with the Planner to review variances and other details prior to the Board hearing. He requested to have the application carried.

Mr. Topping requested precise numbers at the next meeting.

Mr. Renaud announced that the hearing would be carried to March 10, 2022, at 7:45pm, 500 Main Street, and no additional notices would be given.

Mr. Topping concluded the New Business portion. There were no additional comments. The floor was closed.

CORRESPONDENCE:


Minutes for January 13, 2022

Motion to approve was made by Ms. McCartin and seconded by Mr. Sondergard. Voice vote, with all in favor, the minutes were approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Sondergard and was seconded by Ms. McCartin, with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,


D. Hamilton