

Variance Application
54 Myrtle Avenue
Block 215, Lot 24
Borough of Metuchen, Middlesex County, New Jersey
Project #2199-010

Narrative of Proposal

We have been residents of Metuchen since 2017 and wish to construct improvements and additions to our existing single family home. When we moved to Metuchen, Jen was pregnant with our oldest daughter; now we're a family of six, with four small children - a five-year-old daughter, a three-year-old daughter, and 15-month-old boy/girl twins. With our expanded family, we are hoping to have a comfortable home for our family, long-distance relatives, and our kids' friends, as they get older.

Since the time we were pregnant with our second child, we have been monitoring the Metuchen housing market to see if there were any options for a larger home. Over the years, and especially during the pandemic, we found three things to be true: 1) it is difficult to compete with other potential buyers (many from out-of-town) in this market, 2) it is difficult to find a home that is big enough for the six of us both as living quarters and as a remote workspace, and 3) it is impossible to find a street and neighbors that we love more than the ones on Myrtle Avenue.

For the past two years, we have been working on a set of architectural plans to expand and renovate our cape-style home. Between the pandemic, the birth of our twins, caring for our young family, and juggling careers, the process to actually begin this project has been arduous. However, one thing has kept us going throughout it all - we know that Metuchen is where we want to live, work, and raise our family.

The plans that are approved by the Zoning Department make a number of compromises in order to conform with the ordinances. Our variance requests and rationale are as follows:

- A pre-existing non-conforming left side setback will be lessened by 3" due to the skew of the structure relative to the property line. This lessened setback, along with a substandard lot width will also require a combined side yard setback variance.
 - We would like to eliminate the setbacks in the mudroom and on the 2nd floor, in order to gain usable space, simplify construction, and improve the exterior look.
- The building coverage variance is due to the inclusion of the covered front porch in the calculation.
 - We would like to have a covered front porch and back deck for leisure space, which requires a building coverage variance. We are eager to have a porch from which we can watch our children play with their friends outside and ride their bikes in the street.
- The project will add a one car garage to the home and a double width driveway is proposed, exceeding the allowable 12' width for ease of access to the garage and allowing us to be able to park in the driveway at the same time.
 - We would like to have a driveway and driveway apron wide enough for 2 vehicles, so that we can take them off of the public street and safely back both vehicles straight out.

- The front walkway will access the driveway. This reduces the impervious covering in the front yard while providing a path to the existing sidewalk.
 - We would like our front door walkway to connect to our driveway, rather than straight out to the sidewalk, in order to preserve as much yard as possible.

We are grateful for your consideration as we navigate this process to build our forever home in Metuchen.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Alan Johnson and Jennifer Zimmerman. The signature for Alan Johnson is on the left, and the signature for Jennifer Zimmerman is on the right, connected by a horizontal line.

Alan Johnson & Jennifer Zimmerman