

CITY OF PIQUA, OHIO
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS MEETING MINUTES
MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT COMPLEX – COMMISSION CHAMBERS
6:00 P.M. – TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021

TO ORDER

At approximately 6:00pm Chairperson Skip Murray called the meeting to order. The Introductory Statement of BZA Duties were outlined as well as the order of business to be followed. Meeting conduct procedures were reviewed and those in attendance were sworn in. All present were asked to stand and raise their right hand. The Chairman administered an oath to all present to testify before the BZA asking them to swear or affirm to tell the truth, and to acknowledge their intent to abide by the oath administered by stating, "I do" or "opposed". All present stood and took the oath to tell the truth with all persons present stating "I do".

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Skip Murray, Joe Wilson, April Dankworth, David Fishback, Wayde Davis

MEETING MINUTES

Approval of the minutes of October 27, 2020 Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting minutes were approved with one minor change to the roll call record.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION BZA 01-21

A Resolution to consider a reduced side setback for an accessory building at 1104 Washington Ave

Kyrsten French, City Planner provided the staff report.

Kyrsten noted that the applicant has requested a variance to build a carport less than 3 feet from the side lot line. The applicant plans to set their proposed building back approximately 2 feet from the side lot line. Kyrsten noted that the site in question is located in the traditional grid network of the city, where it is common for side setbacks of existing structures to be less than 3 feet. Additionally, the neighbor to the south who would be most affected by the variance request supports the applicant's request to build within the setback area. A letter in favor from a second neighbor was presented. Given that the neighbor's home is roughly 6 feet from the shared lot line, and the applicant is building to meet the location of their existing driveway, staff has no concerns over safety.

Don Stonerock, owner and applicant, came forward. He explained that an existing foundation remains on the site where a garage used to sit. He also noted that if he was required to change the location, it would mean moving his existing driveway as well.

The board deliberated and agreed that similar variances have been granted and that this request was reasonable given the location and circumstances.

After no further public comment or deliberation, a motion was made by Joe Wilson and seconded by Dave Fishback. Resolution BZA 01-21 was approved with a 5-0 vote.

RESOLUTION BZA 02-21

A Resolution to consider a non-paved surface for an RV outdoor storage facility at 1704 Commerce Drive

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Kyrsten French, City Planner provided the staff report.

Kyrsten noted that the applicant has requested a variance to build a gravel storage facility to store commercial vehicles. It was explained that a few modes of thinking were weighed in the proposal with the request. The City's ordinance specifies that all parking surfaces must be paved and there is little adopted guidance on how best to design a site that is not.

Staff recommends that areas where employees and customers park always be paved, and this use of a facility should in this case be considered separate from a facility that is meant primarily for outdoor storage. It is recommended that the nonconforming existing parking lot be paved prior to the expansion of the gravel storage area. Staff believes this will answer the question of fairness to neighbors across the street who have made heavy investments into their properties, as well as taking this lot the next step forward toward the desired community standard.

Previous actions on setbacks have been somewhat inconsistent throughout time on the how close outdoor storage may be in relation to the site's frontage. The community desire for polished frontages in industrial districts prompts the question of how best to place outdoor storage to be less visible.

Some examples of outdoor storage with gravel surfaces are recommended to only be placed in the rear yard of a lot. This is true particularly where storage is less than perfectly organized. In cases of outdoor storage of junk vehicles or construction materials, adherence to this rear-yard only standard along with heavy screening is the recommendation. Others gravel storage facilities in the city have been sited much closer to the property line e.g. Camping World and Piqua Store n Lock.

The site plan as proposed maximizes the storage area by bringing it 50 feet from the front property line. Given this proximity, the applicant has agreed to use a wrought-iron fence type material to line the front of the storage area and plant trees every 30 feet to provide screening. Kyrsten noted that the plans submitted are preliminary and do not factor the potential need for stormwater retention. If stormwater retention that has attractive qualities, like a stormwater pond, is required and conditions allow, staff will direct the applicant to place the pond in front of the storage facility as an additional buffer.

Sheryl Queen, owner of Queen Exhibits, 1707 Commerce Drive – Piqua came forward. Ms. Queen asked for clarification on what kind of storage was anticipated as well as the location around the structure. She expressed her opinion that the plans presented do not align with the presentation that she, as well as other business owners in the area are going for. Ms. Queen noted that she believes that this business could cause traffic issues as well as potentially increase crime in the area.

The board members discussed and noted that they had several questions for the owner of the property and potential occupant on their proposed plans. The board unanimously discussed that there was not enough details in the plans provided and showed concern that the neighbor did not favor the request. The Board expressed concern over the limited setback, and the possibility of the site being used for disorganized or junk outdoor vehicle storage in the future. They were also concerned that the owner of the property was not more engaged with the proposal. The board was hesitant to impose year-long restrictions on reapplying. Because of the lack of clarity and representation on the item, tabling the item was proposed.

After no further public comment or deliberation, a motion was made by Joe Wilson to table Resolution BZA 02-21 and seconded by April Dankworth. Resolution BZA 02-21 was tabled with a 5-0 vote.

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OTHER BUSINESS

Skip Murray noted that his second five year term with the Board of Zoning Appeals was going to expire in March of 2021. Mr. Murray announced his formal resignation, just shy of ten years being the chair of the BZA. Staff and board members thank Mr. Murray for his time and service.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business before the Board, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. With all those present in favor the meeting was adjourned at 6:33 P.M.

Attending the meeting to prepare the meeting minutes provided herein was Bethany Harp, City of Piqua Development Department. Comments requesting corrections, additions or deletions to the content of this record should be directed to Ms. Harp at bharp@piquaoh.org.