



Village of Saranac Lake

Community Development Department

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**DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES 5:00PM
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2024**

This meeting will be held in the Village Board Room and may be viewed through ZOOM Enter at the side door of the building, 39 Main Street

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5184919884?pwd=Nk5ISVZQNjgvdS9tbitMZG93M2xZUT09>

Meeting ID: 518 491 9884

Passcode: 704556

ATTENDANCE

Development Board Members:

Elias Pelletieri, Chairperson, Present

Bill Domenico, Present

Meg Cantwell-Jackson, Present

Dan Reilly, Present

Rick Weber, Present

A. Approval of Minutes

Elias Pelletieri opened the meeting at 5:00pm.

- Motion to approve November 5, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes by Domenico, seconded by Reilly. Pelletieri asked for a Roll Call Vote.
Roll Call: Cantwell-Jackson, yes; Domenico, yes; Reilly, yes; Weber, no vote; and Pelletieri, yes.
Meeting minutes approved.

B. Application of: Mark Legeza and Michaelle Chojnacki, 67 Old Military Road, Area Variance Application

Board Action

- Application of: Mark Legeza and Michaelle Chojnacki, 67 Old Military Rd., area variance application seeking approval of one side yard setback variance to build a garage addition to primary residence, Tax Map Parcel #32.150-1-17.000.
Tabled from the last meeting. There was a public hearing last week where Mark gave a description of the project. Allie says that the setback goes right to the property line and it could be moved more to the west side. Katrina commented that the issues with that would include steep slopes and construction difficulties. Mark now has a few quotes, stating that his current design is around \$50,000 and the hillside would be around \$75,000 for just foundation. There would be just as much issues and less garage space. There is no other house around it that is conforming. Looking at a rendering of it in front of the house, Bill asks if it isn't in the hillside at all. Mark responded no, that this option looks goofy. Michaelle comments that there is no front door and you would need to go through the garage. Mark says that there is a good chance that price will go up as they build. Rick states that he is new to this project and still catching up. Asks if they rotate the footprint and rotate it 90 degrees in front of the drive as an option. Meg

responds that this was discussed last meeting and that is what she brought up. Mark says that it would only move it 8/10 feet into the hill. Dan asks what the length is. Mark says it's 25 feet. Dan asks if the back is about 8 feet and Mark says yes. Dan asks if they would have to blast for the original design. Mark comments that there may be some builders but overall no. The neighbor, Lisa Patchki, comments that the garage next to the house is fine with her and that it offers more privacy. Mark asks if it would affect anything negatively? Lisa says the only thing would be angle of the roof which goes back and not towards their property. Lisa says this would add value to them and they are already close. It is a cottage community and it wouldn't take away from the value. Rick asked the height of the garage. Mark says it would be the same as the house at 25 feet. Dan said you wouldn't even see it unless you drive up their driveway. Rick commented that the staff report was not updated since last meeting. Katrina responded saying it was not; nothing has changed besides other options that are not viable, if anything devalues that house. Allie said that it will be changed to self-created on staff report. Dan said there seems to be no issue with the property value changing, all three people want the project. Said that new owners either like it or not and it isn't pertinent. Bill said the master plan for district H is to maintain the character of the neighborhood. Dan said all other houses are at zero setback or around zero, plus on Cliff Road there is zero setback houses. This is a hard place to build and shouldn't be such a concern. It is only affecting this one cul de sac. Rick commented that it isn't just the neighbors but, in the future, someone could be trying to buy in the neighborhood it could determine whether they buy or not. Believes there could be other alternatives. Dan asks where the proposal was taken. Mark says it was the front of the house. Dan asks if it could be moved farther back. Rick says the garage could move back to a one floor with the second floor moved somewhere else as an addition. Dan said it's cheaper to go up instead of somewhere else. Rick says precedent is a concern. We should grant the minimum variance if possible. Focus on discussing the staff report and get to a decision with adding minimization of variance. Dan comments that the new rendering is of the new minimization. Rick says yes, it is. Dan says not for a neighbor though. Bill comments that it is in an easy spot to build but pushed to property line. Second option is not a great spot and is blocking the front but it is cost effective. The board has listened to the construction concerns if it's the spot that is fully attached to the main house. Mark says that creates a small entry to the kitchen. Allie agrees with Rick about the staff report and says that 3 questions are already answered and it's really about minimum variance. Lisa says moving it into the hill in-front of the house would be less desirable and cramped. The neighbors wanted to stay but couldn't stay because they couldn't afford a garage she said. Michaëlle says that there can be potential for a 3rd bedroom. So, if they do sell or leave the area it would be a good place for a multi-family home. Dan comments that Saranac Lake is not a place for families right now unfortunately. Katrina says that it is also about the height. Does it have to be that tall? Could it be less slanted? When it is there, it may look like a large structure. Could they make it look more like the area? Rick asks if the connection to the house could be reduced? Mark said yes, they had talked about that. They would lose 2 windows; more space and a porch foundation. Bill said they should vote on building envelope then let applicant design on that envelope, meeting the needs and the budget. Then get the project reviewed by Code Enforcement. Katrina asks if they can vote then whatever the outcome, come back with a new idea. If moved forward, go through a site plan review. Meg said it is a tight spot. She agrees with Dan that it is what it is and they know what they are buying when looking. Allie says that 60 feet is a high building. Meg comments that there should be a little give and take with the odd shaped properties. Rick says that if they have to keep doing that then they may need to revisit code. This is not the same as a site plan review. Dan comments that a variance is intended to help people. Bill motions the original location as presented being right to the property line. Bill called the motion, Meg seconds the motion. Dan says that he agrees with 6 inches. Mark states that's fine if needed. Dan says it is the conditions from the last meeting. Rick asks what was motioned. Allie asks if we exhausted all alternative locations. Bill said the

applicant is holding true to their idea. He doesn't think a dollar increase will be substantial. Dan comments that he doesn't think the quote is accurate, if anything it is higher. Allie says if they vote for zero, they need to say how they got there. The north side is a tall structure and would block view. The west side would cost more. The front side wouldn't fit in the neighborhood and would be too steep. Bill comments that he is also saying that 's the only way to build. Allie responds that is not true. Bill responds then why vote yes? Any move is more expensive. Mark comments if it is moved into the hill, it becomes the same cost as the house which would become silly. Bill said the number for him would be 4 feet. Mark says that the pantry is 6 feet. Dan said that would eliminate windows. Katrina said the minimum needed for a garage is 12 feet. Mark said it is currently at 17 feet. Allie asks if they should motion as presented. Bill says yes, as originally proposed at zero feet with building right to the property. Dan and Meg vote yes, Bill, Rick and Allie vote no. Allie says they can reapply and that he needs other alternatives. Right now, he is giving max and no setback. Rick denied because of similar reasons as Allie and he was not part of previous meeting. He would like to see more options but he also doesn't have the full picture. Katrina comments that he could get a front yard variance, maybe have it unattached or is having it connected the easiest. Other options. Mark said it would be a deal breaker if it isn't connected and if it is in front of the house it would be ugly and he wouldn't want to block Mount Pisgah. Rick says with the second story it would be a new space to look at Mount Pisgah. Bill voted no because 4 feet is his number he would approve. Meg voted yes, as a professional she understands with this shape of property it is difficult. Possibly explore other options but she understands why it is how he designed it. Katrina commented that January 7th is the next meeting if they want to come back. Mark asked if there is any guidance of what they want and would approve. Allie responds that it depends on the eight and layout and he doesn't care about the height. Bill said another option would be in the front of the road. Mark responds that it is 300 feet downhill and was told that it has to be livable. Allie asks if he could have an accessory building in the front. Katrina responds if that's really what they want, we can look into it.

- Motion to approve the Area Variance for a side yard principle building addition.
Motion: Domenico seconded by: Cantwell-Jackson Pelletieri asked for a Roll Call Vote.
Roll Call: Cantwell-Jackson, yes; Domenico, no; Reilly, yes; Weber, no; and Pelletieri, no.

C. OLD BUSINESS

- The Village Board is still working towards the Short-Term Rental law info. The Village Board is awaiting answers from the Village Lawyer (Matt McArdle) in regard to the cap exemptions.
- 25 of 86 pre-existing STR permits have applied for renewal. January 15 is the deadline for renewal. All addresses have been vetted with the police.
- Code amendments are ongoing.
- Maplink is our new interactive map that will be live on our website this week. Rick asks if he can get access to the link to test it. Katrina responds that it will be live so anyone can access it.

D. NEW BUSINESS

- The SEQR memo from Wendel was referenced in regard to J2 district amendment and how to go forward with the J2 and Emergency Services building. Come to the meeting on Monday for more about this. Allie asks who is the lead agency? Katrina comments that she will let them know.

E. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Reilly Second: Cantwell- Jackson

Pelletieri asked for a Roll Call Vote.

Roll Call: Cantwell-Jackson, yes; Domenico, yes; Reilly, yes; Weber, yes; and Pelletieri, yes. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Meeting was officially adjourned at 6:30 pm

Meeting Minutes prepared by; Community Development Assistant, Bayle Reichert