
**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
January 18, 2017, 5:15 P.M.
Neighborhood Empowerment Center - 600 W. Maple Street**

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Marcie Alling at 5:20 p.m. Ms. Alling read the BZA introduction. Roll call was taken.

Present: M. Alling B. McGrain K. Whitfield J. Leaming J. Quick

Absent: M. Rice E. Horne K. Litwiller J. Hovey

Staff: S. Stachowiak

A quorum of at least five members was present, allowing voting action to be taken at the meeting.

II APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Mr. McGrain, seconded by Mr. Quick to approve the agenda as written. On a voice vote, the motion carried 5-0.

III. HEARINGS/ACTION

A. BZA-4026.16, 125 E. Elm Street

The public hearing was held on January 12, 2017. A quorum was not present at this meeting.

Aaron Brown, 123 E. Elm Street, expressed concerns about the proposed house design as it does not fit in with the neighborhood. He said that he does like that the house will have setbacks that are consistent with the neighborhood.

Mike Doerr, Forsberg General Building, 2422 Jolly Road, Okemos, spoke in support of the request on behalf of the applicant. He said that the house design that was included in the packet is not necessarily the one that will be built, although the dimensions will be the same as what is shown on the site plan that was included in the packet. He showed the board some other possible designs.

Gina Pons-Schultz, Forsberg General Building, 2422 Jolly Road, Okemos, spoke in support of the request on behalf of the applicant. She said that she and some of her colleagues recently attended a conference in Portland, Oregon at which the house designs that Mr. Doerr provided were discussed. She said that these small houses are very desirable to a lot of people and the intent is to build more of them in the City.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that this is a request by this is a request by Forsberg General Building, LLC for variances to construct a new single family home at 125 E. Elm Street that would have a 15 foot setback from the front property line and 16.1 feet from the rear property line. Section 1258.07 of the Zoning Ordinance requires a building setback of 20 feet to the front property line and Section 1258.09 requires a building setback of 25 feet from the rear property line. Variances of 5 feet to the required front yard setback and 8.9 feet to the required rear yard setback are therefore, being requested. Staff recommended approval on a finding that the variance would be consistent with the practical difficulty criteria of Section 1244.06 (c) and the impact criteria of Section 1244.06 (e), as detailed in the staff report for this application.

Ms. Stachowiak said that while there is a practical difficulty that warrants a variance because the lot is too small to comply with all setback regulations, she is concerned about the appearance of the house as it is not characteristic of other houses in the neighborhood. She said that at the public hearing, the applicant's representatives were asked to consider other house designs that would be more consistent with the neighborhood in which it will be located.

Mr. Doerr said that they still intend to construct the style of house that they originally proposed. He said that with substantial landscaping, which they intent to install, it will look much different than it does on the sketch.

Mr. McGrain stated that he is concerned about the house not fitting in with the rest of the neighborhood. He said that there is a practical difficulty involving the size of the lot because without a setback variance, the site would be unbuildable. Mr. McGrain said that the next door neighbor is in attendance and has expressed concerns about the appearance of the house. He said that some of the other neighbors may share these same concerns. Mr. McGrain asked the applicants to meet with the neighbors and make a strong effort to establish good relationships in the neighborhoods.

Mr. Leaming also encouraged the applicants to meet with the neighbors regarding house design. He stated that the variances are warranted based on the criteria set forth in the ordinance and therefore, he will be voting in favor of the request.

Mr. Quick agreed.

Mr. McGrain made a motion, seconded by Mr. Leaming to approve BZA 4026.16, for variances of 5 feet to the required front yard setback and 8.9 feet to the required rear yard setback to permit the construction of a new single family home at 125 E. Elm Street that would have a 15 foot setback from the front property line and 16.1 feet from the rear property line, on a finding that the variances are consistent with the practical difficulty criteria of Section 1244.06 (c) and the impact criteria of Section 1244.06 (e).

Vote	Yes	No
Alling	X	
Quick	X	
Leaming	X	
Whitfield	X	
McGrain	X	

On a roll call vote (5-0), the variance request was approved.

IV. OLD BUSINESS – None

V. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes of Regular meeting held on September 15, 2016

Mr. McGrain made a motion, seconded by Mr. Quick to approve the minutes from the September 15, 2016 meeting, as printed. On a voice vote (5-0), the motion carried unanimously.

VII. NEW BUSINESS - None

IV. **ADJOURNMENT AT 5:31 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Stachowiak, Zoning Administrator