



MINUTES
COHASSET PLANNING COMMISSION
305 NW FIRST AVENUE
WEDNESDAY, November 1, 2023 – 6:00 P.M.

1. Call Meeting to Order: Chair Josh Casper called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call

- a. Present: PC Members Josh Casper, Steve Lavalier, GiGi Pehrson, Mike Rock, Lucas Thompson
- b. Absent with Notice: PC Member Scott Gerling, PC Member Harlow Zeppelin
- c. Ex-Officio Members Present: Zoning Officer Tony Valtinson
- d. Others Present: Jean Anderson, Chris Monson

3. Review and Approve the Agenda

- a. Additions: None
- b. Deletions: None

A motion was made by Steve Lavalier to approve the agenda as presented. GiGi Pehrson seconded the motion. Voting in favor: Josh Casper, Steve Lavalier, GiGi Pehrson, Mike Rock, Lucas Thompson; Voting against: None; Absent Scott Gerling, Harlow Zeppelin. Motion carried.

4. Resident Input: None

5. Approve October, 04 2023 Planning Commission Minutes:

A motion was made by Mike Rock to approve October 04, 2023 as written. GiGi Pehrson seconded the motion. Voting in favor: Josh Casper, Steve Lavalier, GiGi Pehrson, Mike Rock, Lucas Thompson; Voting against: None; Absent Scott Gerling, Harlow Zeppelin. Motion carried.

6. PH1

(Public hearings start at 6:05 p.m.) To act on a Variance Request from JEAN ANDERSON to add a 15ft. by 18ft. deck to a Non-conforming structure. Located at 3089 WOODLAND DR (PIN# 05-410-0050) and legally described as AUDITORS 1ST SUBDIV OF LOT 2, LOT 5, SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 55 NORTH, RANGE 26 WEST, ITASCA COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Zoning Officer Tony Valtinson reviewed packet of information for 6. PH1 including the reason for variance request and other applicable information as follows:

1. Area map (page 2-3).
2. Site plan (page 4).
3. Applicant's findings (page 5).
4. Blank findings (page 6).
5. Information regarding original variance to build home granted on 08-06-2014. (Pages 7-12)
6. CITY OF COHASSET LAND USE CONTROLS ORDINANCE section 10.07 ZONE DISTRICT DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS, 10.071 DIMENSIONS (Page 13)

Chair Josh Casper explained that ten years ago, the Planning Commission approved a previous variance for the original build but the deck was not built at that time. Chair Josh Casper further explained the previous variance and its relation to this variance request.

Zoning Officer Tony Valtinson reviewed communications from neighbors in support /against proposed variance. Zoning Officer read a letter submitted by a neighboring property. Chair Josh Casper reminded that the new variance request is not asking for anything in addition to what had already been approved in the original variance request granted ten years ago.

Chair Josh Casper asked Jean Anderson if she had anything to add.

Jean Anderson clarified dates of build/move in.

Chair Josh Casper asked Planning Commission if they had any questions. There were several comments made regarding this lot being a tight lot and that other lots in the area are tight lots as well.

Zoning Officer Tony Valtinson stated that Jean's neighborhood has five structures that do not meet setbacks, including her house. Valtinson spoke about the sizes of the lots in that neighborhood.

Chair Josh Casper asked for any other comments for or against the variance.

Chair Josh Casper asked for a motion.

A motion was made by Steve Lavalier to accept the variance request as presented. GiGi Pehrson seconded the motion.

Chair Josh Casper closed public hearing portion.

Chair Josh Casper moved to Findings of Fact.

1. Are there practical difficulties in complying with the zoning ordinance? "Practical difficulties" means that the property owner has proposed improvements are reasonable

(economic considerations alone shall not constitute “practical difficulties”), yes ____, no ___? Why do you need the proposed improvements?

GiGi Pehrson read the question and answered yes. GiGi Pehrson read the question regarding the need for the proposed improvements. There was discussion held that the request is something that was planned from the beginning of building her home. All agreed.

2. Are the circumstances, which justify the variance unique to the property and not created by the applicant, yes ____, no ___? Why can't the proposed improvements meet the setbacks?

Steve Lavalier read the question and answered yes it not conforming. Steve Lavalier read the question regarding the setback. The house has been at the same setback and its following the house. All agreed.

3. If granted, will the variance maintain the essential character of the locality, yes ____, no ___? Are the proposed setbacks significantly different than others setbacks in the locality?

Lucas Thompson read the question and answered yes. Lucas Thompson read the question regarding proposed setbacks. The lot is extremely narrow and it's like when they divided it they used the square footage because it's long versus using a width factor in it therefor it makes it impractical to meet the setbacks. All agreed.

4. If granted, will the variance be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance, yes ____, no ___?

Mike Rock read the question and answered yes. All agreed.

5. If granted will the variance be consistent with the comprehensive plan, yes ____, no ___?

Josh Casper read the question and answered yes. We are for people enjoying their properties and the surroundings then having a deck facing the lake is taking advantage of that. All agreed.

Chair Josh Casper asked for any other comments for or against the variance.

Chair Josh Casper asked for a motion.

Chair Josh Casper asked Zoning Officer Tony Valtinson to restate the motion.

Valtinson restated the motion. A motion was made by Steve Lavalier and Seconded by GiGi to approve the variance as requested to add a 15ft. by 18ft. deck to a Non-conforming structure. Located at 3089 WOODLAND DR (PIN# 05-410-0050) and legally described as AUDITORS 1ST SUBDIV OF LOT 2, LOT 5, SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 55 NORTH, RANGE 26 WEST, ITASCA COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Roll call Vote was held. Voting in favor: Josh Casper, Steve Lavalier, GiGi Pehrson, Mike Rock, Lucas Thompson; Voting against: None; Absent Scott Gerling, Harlow Zeppelin. Motion carried.

Zoning Officer Tony Valtinson explained to the property owner and the public that there is a 15-day appeal period.

7. PH2

(Public hearings start at 6:05 p.m.) To act on a Variance Request from MIKE and JANE-ELLEN MONSON for an expansion to an existing attached garage and to construct a deck on a Non -Conforming structure which would include a variance of no less than a 4 foot setback from North Property line (ordinance states minimum of 15ft) as well. Located at 3007 OLD GOLF COURSE RD (PIN# 05-500-0040) and legally described as LOT 4, SECTION 25, TOWNSHIP 55 NORTH, RANGE 26 WEST, ITASCA COUNTY, MINNESOTA.

Zoning Officer Tony Valtinson reviewed packet of information for 7. PH2 including the reason for variance request and other applicable information as follows:

1. Area map (page 2-3).
2. Site plan (page 4-10).
3. Applicant's findings (page 11).
4. Blank findings (page 12).
5. CITY OF COHASSET LAND USE CONTROLS ORDINANCE section 10.07 ZONE DISTRICT DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS, 10.071 DIMENSIONS and 10.073 B.
6. (Page 13-14)

Zoning Officer Valtinson stated that he received one communication from a neighbor who supported the request.

Valtinson stated that there are 5 structures from the boat landing to the North end of Old Golf Course Rd that do not meet setbacks and 3 of them are on Old Golf Course Rd.

Chair Josh Casper asked Valtinson about septic setbacks for neighboring property. Valtinson stated that he spoke with Itasca County and they would be fine with the setback as proposed.

Chair Josh Casper asked Chris Monson had anything to add. Chris Monson did not have anything to add at this point.

Chair Josh Casper and Planning Commission members discussed deck vs. patio as well as the expansion and size of garage with Chris Monson. Additionally there was discussion held regarding clarification of dimensions and setbacks.

Chair Josh Casper asked for any other comments for or against the variance.

Chair Josh Casper asked for a motion.

A motion was made by Mike Rock to accept the variance request as presented. GiGi Pehrson seconded the motion.

There was discussion between Planning Commission members and Zoning Officer about non-conforming structures and setbacks as it relates to this request. Steve Lavalier questioned if anyone making this request would be allowed a variance to encroach the neighbor. Josh Casper explained that the Planning Commission would look at each request individually. Josh Casper further explained that if there were other options for the land owner to build without encroaching the neighbor it would be considered. Josh Casper added that in this case there are no other options.

Mike Rock amended the motion to accept the variance request as presented for the garage expansion and the deck with the condition that the deck extend no farther than the west roofline. GiGi Pehrson seconded the motion.

Chair Josh Casper closed public hearing portion.

Chair Josh Casper moved to Findings of Fact.

1. Are there practical difficulties in complying with the zoning ordinance? “Practical difficulties” means that the property owner’s proposed improvements are reasonable (economic considerations alone shall not constitute “practical difficulties”), yes ____, no ___? Why do you need the proposed improvements?

Mike Rock read the question and answered yes. Mike Rock read the question regarding the need for the proposed improvements. It is an existing non-conforming structure on a very narrow lot and the proposed improvement is needed to increase garage stalls for storage of vehicles and equipment. GiGi Pehrson, Lucas Thompson, Josh Casper agreed. Steve Lavalier disagreed.

2. Are the circumstances, which justify the variance unique to the property and not created by the applicant, yes ____, no ___? Why can’t the proposed improvements meet the setbacks?

Lucas Thompson read the question and answered yes. It is already a nonconforming structure. Steve Lavalier read the question regarding the setback. The house has been at the same setback and its following the house. All agreed.

GiGi Pehrson, Mike Rock, and Josh Casper agreed; Steve Lavalier disagreed.

3. If granted, will the variance maintain the essential character of the locality, yes ____, no ___? Are the proposed setbacks significantly different than other setbacks in the locality?

Steve Lavalier read the question and answered. Steve Lavalier read the question regarding proposed setbacks. Steve Lavalier pointed out that now the ordinance exists

and if the variance is granted the setbacks will not be met. Lucas Thompson stated that it is similar to other structures in the area.

Lucas Thompson, Mike Rock, GiGi Pehrson, and Josh Casper agreed; Steve Lavalier disagreed.

4. If granted, will the variance be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance, yes ____, no ____?

GiGi Pehrson read the question and answered yes.

Mike Rock, Lucas Thompson, and Josh Casper agreed; Steve Lavalier disagreed

5. If granted will the variance be consistent with the comprehensive plan, yes ____, no ____?

Josh Casper read the question and answered yes. Non-conforming structures were there before the ordinance was put into place. Pokegama Lake is a recreational lake and this is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mike Rock, GiGi Pehrson, and Lucas Thompson agree; Steve Lavalier disagreed

Valtinson restated the motion. A motion was made by Mike Rock and seconded by GiGi Pehrson to accept the variance request from MIKE and JANE-ELLEN MONSON for an expansion to an existing attached garage and to construct a deck with the condition that the deck extend no farther than the west roofline on a Non -Conforming structure which would include a variance of no less than a 4 foot setback from North Property line (ordinance states minimum of 15ft) as well. Located at 3007 OLD GOLF COURSE RD (PIN# 05-500-0040) and legally described as LOT 4, SECTION 25, TOWNSHIP 55 NORTH, RANGE 26 WEST, ITASCA COUNTY, MINNESOTA.

Roll call Vote was held. Voting in favor: Josh Casper, GiGi Pehrson, Mike Rock, Lucas Thompson; Voting against: Steve Lavalier; Absent Scott Gerling, Harlow Zeppelin. Motion carried.

Zoning Officer Tony Valtinson explained to the property owner and the public that there is a 15-day appeal period.

8. FYI's: None

Adjourn: Chair Josh Casper adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Submitted by Zoning Officer Tony Valtinson
Approved: 12/06/2023