

VILLAGE OF FREEVILLE
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING MINUTES
September 09, 2024

The Village Zoning Board of Appeals met at the Village Hall, 5 Factory Street, Freeville, NY, on Monday, September 09, 2024.

Call to Order:

The Meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairperson Kristen Olson.

Present:

Chairperson Kristen Olson, Vice Chairperson Anusuya Rangarajan, Members Marcus Griffith, David Lampman, and Michael Whalen; Residents Jason Cuykendall and Cynthia Cuykendall; Applicant Ralph Varn.

Approval of Minutes:

Member Whalen motioned to approve the Minutes from the Board's most recent meeting (held on June 10, 2024), seconded by Member Lampman. All Members present voted Aye.

Privilege of the Floor and Discussions:

Member Whalen motioned to open the Floor for public discussions. Member Griffith seconded the motion.

Village residents Jason Cuykendall and Cynthia Cuykendall of 12 Groton Avenue were present to discuss their concerns about the size of the lot at 0 Groton Avenue and their concerns for safety, given the recent fire at 10 Groton Avenue.

Member Whalen motioned to close privilege of the floor. Member Griffith seconded. All Members present voted Aye.

Chairperson Olson noted that some ZBA members still need to achieve their training goals for 2024-25. There was also a question as to whether or not the Village would pay for training opportunities that had an associated cost.

Variance Request:

The Board discussed the application for an area variance made on August 14, 2024, regarding the property at 0 Groton Avenue (tax parcel #4.-2-4). Chairperson Olson noted that a building permit was submitted on August 13, 2024, and was denied by the Village's Code Official, Casey Drader, on August 16, 2024. Chairperson Olson also noted that the proposed action would require area variances for the road frontage, minimum lot size, and side yard setback requirements; and that it would be reviewed by the Tompkins County planning department under General Municipal Law 239. Chairperson Olson also summarized the test for granting area variances upon which the Board must base its final decision and reminded the Board that it

must also take into account whether approval of the variance would align with the goals set forth in the 2013 Village of Freeville Comprehensive Plan. Members reviewed the building permit application and variance application submitted by the applicant, including a set of plans and drawings of the proposed dwelling.

The applicant, Ralph Varn, was present and addressed the Board. Mr. Varn stated that he purchased the property as a “building lot” and noted that other houses in the Village have similar [i.e., nonconforming] lot dimensions and road frontage. Mr. Varn added that the house is designed to be narrow, given the limitations of the lot size, in order to maximize the side yard setbacks.

Member Whalen asked Mr. Varn if there was anything else he might consider to adjust the design to better meet the zoning requirements.

Mr. Varn replied that he intended to construct a 3-bedroom, 2-bath dwelling, with as much setback as possible given the constraints of the lot.

Vice Chairperson Rangarajan asked if the house could be scaled down to better fit the limitations of the lot. Mr. Varn replied that if the proposal were to adhere to the minimum side yard setback of 25 feet, the house would only be about 7 feet wide.

The Board discussed the need to set a public hearing date as well as the requirement to render a decision within 62 days after the public hearing.

A public hearing was tentatively set for October 9th at 7:00pm, pending confirmation of Code Official Casey Drader’s availability. The applicant was satisfied with this date. The Board discussed the need to place an advertisement in a local newspaper in accordance with public hearing requirements.

Meeting Adjournment

Chairperson Olson entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was made by Member Whalen and seconded by Member Rangarajan. All Members present voted Aye. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting:

The next Zoning Board of Appeals meeting will be a public hearing on the matter of the variance request for 0 Groton Avenue, to be held on October 9th, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in Freeville Village Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen V. Olson,
Chairperson, Zoning Board of Appeals