



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Minutes - Final

Board of Zoning Appeals

Friday, March 9, 2018

7:00 PM

3rd Floor Conference Room

Special Meeting - Called per order of two members of the board.

Call to Order, Roll Call

Present: 4 - James Cherf, Charles Clemence, Anastasia Gentry, Lu Seloover

Excused: 3 - Douglas Farmer, Carol Haefs, Philip Nohr

Variance appeals:

2603

An appeal regarding the regulation that limits the number of garages to one at 2530 and 2536 7th St. S., La Crosse Wisconsin.

Barb Benson, 400 La Crosse Street, representing Fire Prevention & Building Safety, is sworn in to speak. The owners have applied for a building permit to construct a new single-family dwelling with an attached garage at this address which is 2530-2536 7th St. S. The property currently has an existing detached garage the owners are proposing to keep. Municipal Code 115-142 (a) (2) states that accessory buildings are limited to one private garage. A variance to allow the owners to have two private garages on the property will need to be granted for this project to proceed as proposed.

Benson shows a picture of the lot that would result after they have combined the two parcels. She also points out the lots on an aerial photo of the area. She points out which garage they want to keep and the buildings on the two parcels that will be demolished. She shows a picture of the garage that was taken from the riverside area. Cherf asks if a garage, whether it is attached or detached, would be considered an accessory building. Benson states you are limited to one garage; it doesn't matter if it is attached or detached. Clemence asks if the issue is just the number of garages and not the size or amount of the yard it takes up; Benson states that he is correct.

Speaking in favor:

Dave Erickson, 3120 Farnam Street, is sworn in to speak. Erickson states that he and his wife are the property owners of these two lots. He has two letters from neighbors on the north side of his properties that are in favor and he gives them to the Board. Erickson states that the reasoning in keeping the one garage is that they are combining two lots. If they left it as a single lot it would be an extra wide house on a single lot. Erickson states that you have to have a home on a property; you can't leave a garage there by itself without combining the lots. Erickson states that if they didn't combine the lots, they might have enough room for the house, but not enough side-clearance.

Erickson says they are asking to keep the extra garage because they have use of it and the house they are taking down had a two-car garage on it; they are just trying to

keep the clutter out of there. They worked for five years cleaning up the back yard and it was quite the undertaking. This would keep everything from sitting around. Erickson says in essence it would be behind the new house, except the northern edge of it. Clemence asks if they are going to build on one lot and if the other will be just extra space and yard for them. Erickson responds that Habitat for Humanity is going to remove the unwanted buildings and they will place the new house so it sits more towards the middle of the two combined lots. Clemence confirms that it will all be one parcel.

Gentry asks why they can't they attach the garage to the house and Erickson responds that it is full; it has antique cars and recreational stuff in there and he thinks it would be better inside a building rather than outside. Gentry asks how big it is and Erickson says the detached is a three-car garage and the one that they are building is a 2.5-car attached garage.

Barb Erickson, 3120 Farnam Street, is sworn in to speak. Barb gives the Board pictures that she took this week to show how much greenspace they will still have in the back of the yard. She says they are taking down two houses, two garages, and a metal shed in the front and backyard. She says the hope is that it will clean things up for the nursing home across the street, the people on the river, and the neighbors. She says all of the neighbors are trying to keep the area cleaned up. She adds that they have had trouble in the neighborhood with homeless people that had broken into a neighbor's house last summer. She says that is why they would like to keep as much inside as they can.

Barb says that they still have a green space. Dave has two mustangs, two motorcycles, and three-wheeler for plowing the garage they are asking to keep; they also want to keep it because it's only 11 years old. She says it would be a shame to tear it down. She points out where the house will be. Clemence asks if the house will stay and Barb states that it is actually the existing garage that they will keep. He asks her to again point out where the house would be and she says it will be more toward the middle. The elderly neighbor has a shed on the property and that they are getting rid of along with another shed in the back yard, the two houses, and two garages. Seloover asks where the new house will be sitting and Barb responds by showing where it will be in the pictures that she had taken.

Barb says that their hope is that they can put a garage door on both sides of the new garage so Dave can drive from the existing garage through the new one and right to the street. Seloover asks if the only access to the garage is from the new one; Barb responds that they are going that route so they don't have to drive through the yard. Clemence asks where the street is; she points it out and Seloover confirms on which side the river is. Barb adds that they own another lot to the south, so their nearest neighbor to the south is a little way off. Cherf asks if she will point the three lots that they own on the aerial map. She says they own 2530, 2536, and 2540 and she shows what they would like to tear down. She reiterates that they need two garages to keep their boat trailers, cars, etc. inside. It will be an asset to nursing home for everything to be cleaned up.

Speaking in opposition: none

Cherf: For item 2603, to grant the variance to allow the existing 3-car garage to remain. We find that the proposed variance is not contrary to the public interest as there is no harm to the public interest; this is actually improving the area. The property has a special or unique condition; it is a double-lot due to that size and there is ample room without sacrificing green space. The special

condition of the property creates an unnecessary hardship; they are not able to adequately secure property without the extra out-building. Gentry seconded.
The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Cherf, Clemence, Gentry, Seloover

Excused: 3 - Nohr, Farmer, Haefs

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:24 p.m.