



# La Crosse Fire Department

Division of Community Risk Management

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<http://www.cityoflacrosse.org/your-government/departments/fire-department>



7/1/2024

BF LA CROSSE LIMITED PARTNERSHIP  
326 WEST AVE N  
LA CROSSE, WI 54601



RE: An appeal regarding the requirement to provide a 6.78' set back from the front property line at 1018 Badger St, La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Dear BF La Crosse Limited Partnership,

We have received the permit application to construct an attached wood deck that does not meet the minimum requirements set forth in the Municipal Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse (Code) regarding setbacks from the front property line.

The project as proposed is in direct violation of the following subparagraph of the Code:

Sec. 115-142. - R-1 Single Family Residence District Regulations.

(2) Front yards. On every lot in the Residence District, there shall be a front yard having a depth of not less than 25 feet, provided that where lots comprising 40 percent or more of the frontage on one side of a block are developed with buildings, **the required front yard depth shall be the average of the front yard depths of the two adjacent main buildings**, or if there is only one adjacent main building the front yard depth of said main building shall govern; provided further that this regulation shall not be so interpreted as to require a front yard depth of more than 25 feet in any case. The entire front yard shall be graded and sodded or seeded in a manner which will produce an acceptable lawn excepting such.

Therefore, if upon consideration of all of the facts surrounding this appeal in a public hearing, the Board of Zoning Appeals determines that this appeal meets all of the criteria established by the Legislature of the State of Wisconsin, as interpreted by the Supreme Court of the State of Wisconsin for the granting of variances, the Board of Zoning Appeals would have to grant a variance of **2'1-1/2"** to the required **8.915'** set back to the front property line for this project to proceed as proposed.

Sincerely,

*Kelsey Hanson*

Kelsey Hanson

Building Inspector

# Board of Zoning Appeals Standards

The Board of Zoning Appeals functions like a court, and must follow State laws and local zoning ordinances. The Board of Zoning Appeals cannot change or ignore any part of the zoning ordinance or State laws, but must apply the laws as written.

The Board may only grant a variance, special exception, or administrative appeal if the applicant provides evidence showing that they meet **all** of the legal standards for that decision. The burden of proof falls on the variance applicant, not the Board of Zoning Appeals. The legal standards the Board will use to decide on each application are shown below.

## STANDARDS FOR USE or AREA VARIANCE

- 1. **The proposed variance is not contrary to the public interest.** The purpose statement of the ordinance and related statutes must be reviewed in order to identify the public interest. Variances must observe the spirit of the ordinance, secure public safety and welfare, and do substantial justice. In considering effects of a variance on public interests, broad community and even statewide interests should be examined; the public interest standard is not confined to scrutiny of impacts on neighbors or residents in the vicinity of the project.
- 2. **The property has a special or unique condition.** The property must have unique or physical features which prevent compliance with the ordinance. The circumstances of an applicant, such as growing family or need for a larger garage, are not legitimate factors in meeting this standard. Property limitations that prevent ordinance compliance that are not unique but common to a number of properties should be addressed by amendment of the ordinance.
- 3. **The special condition of the property creates an unnecessary hardship:**
  - a. Unnecessary hardship means unnecessarily burdensome, considering the purpose of the ordinance.
  - b. Unnecessary hardship may not be self-created. An applicant may not claim hardship because of conditions which are self-imposed. Examples include claiming hardship for a substandard lot after having sold off portions that would have allowed building in compliance or claiming hardship where construction was commenced without required permits in violation of ordinance standards.
  - c. Financial hardship is not a deciding factor. Economic loss or financial hardship does not justify a variance.

## **Board of Zoning Appeals Procedure Handout**

- 1) You, or someone speaking on your behalf, should arrive at 4:00 p.m. for the meeting even if you are not listed first on the agenda.
- 2) Neighbors within 100 feet of the property (where the variance is requested) will receive a copy of the meeting notice. They may appear before the Board to speak for or against your appeal or they may write a letter in support of your appeal or against your appeal and submit it to the City Clerk's office. You may contact your neighbors and share your proposal with them so they are aware.
- 3) The Board will have received a copy of your denial letter from Community Risk Management, your variance application, and any other materials you have attached to your application. Any presentation to the Board is limited to written materials, diagrams and photographs. No electronic devices for presentations will be allowed. This restriction does not apply to the presentation by Community Risk Management. Public hearings before the Board may be limited to ten (10) minutes for the proponents, ten (10) minutes for the opponents and a three (3) minute rebuttal for each side. The Board reserves the right to extend these time limits as it determines.
- 4) The Board follows the criteria listed on the previous page to determine whether or not your request meets the standards set forth by the Wisconsin Supreme Court.
- 5) If the Board grants your appeal, after you receive your letter of the Board's decision, you may apply for your building permit. The letter will be mailed to you within a week, after the meeting has taken place.