

UNION VALE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

VIA ZOOM

7:30 pm

March 1, 2022

Members Present: Chairperson Jane Smith and Board members Dennis Dunning, Ilana Nilsen, and John Hughes, Michael McPartland

CALL TO ORDER / DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Chairperson Jane Smith determined that there was a quorum for the Zoning Board of Appeals (“the Board”) to conduct business and called the meeting to order.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

BUSINESS SESSION

Board approved minutes from February 1st meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

PROJECT NAME

- Peter Rodrigues Garage Area Variance
Owner: Peter Rodrigues
Applicant/Engineer: Brian Stokosa
15 Liberty Way. Parcel # 6660-00-728306

PROJECT DETAILS

- Application for an area variance of 254 sqft for a proposed 1,754 sqft detached garage, whereas the maximum size allowance in RA3 Zone is 1,500 sqft. Proposed structure meets setback requirements.
§ 210-17A (5)

The Board began by discussing a March 1, 2022 email from George Kolb to Jane Smith (Subject: RE: code definition of garage). The Board understood the conclusion of the email to be that: 1) the height of the proposed accessory structure for 15 Liberty Way, calculated by George Kolb in accordance with the definition of “Height, Building” in Section 210-86,” is 16’ 8 ½; 2) that this building height does not exceed the 20’ limitation stipulated in Section 210.17.A(1); and therefore, 3) the 16’ 8 ½” building height is in compliance with Section 210.17.A(1).

Chairperson Smith then asked the applicant to explain justification for the proposed variance.

Mr. Stokosa recapped the details of the proposed project, stating the homeowner is looking to build a detached garage approximately 1630 sqft, resulting in the need for a 130 sqft variance. The homeowner would like to obtain a net zero energy cost by installing solar on the detached garage to supplement the geothermal system installed in the dwelling. He commented that according to the solar provider they would need 64 panels to meet his energy demand. He also explained that more than half the garage would hold a

woodworking shop & charging station for an electric vehicle. Mr. Stokosa continued that the current garage in the home is not deep enough to accommodate his pickup truck, and the owner would like the new garage to park his pickup truck and lawn equipment in and under; it will not be a habitable space with no running water and no heat.

There was a discussion about the location of the structure and whether it was the only viable option. There were questions about the voltage and size of the panels being installed and Mr. Stokosa stated these were a newer panel that produces efficiently, and that due to the size of the residence this is why 64 panels are needed. He continued to say that the solar company designed the system based on the energy that was being used in the previous year, plus the addition of the new structure. Member Nilsen had concerns about potential glare from the Bruzgal side; Mr. Stokosa assured that glare should not be an issue.

There was further discussion about the installation of panels and how plans are approved by fire department, building inspector & installed by a licensed electrician. The Board's main concern was that the system be properly sized for the current usage of the home and that it will not over produce, and would like the applicant to provide more documentation on these issues.

Mr. Stokosa stated that an alternative to reducing 5 panels would not necessarily shrink the overall size of the structure as it is still needed to house the vehicles, equipment & shop and would still need to apply for a variance for the building. The Board stated they would like to see documentation that backs up the solar company's determination that the proposed size of the system is justified and would be authorized.

Member Dunning stated that the request for a variance would be more compelling as needed for the planned installation of solar panels, and more information on those specifics would be helpful to the Board in making it decision. Member McPartland also noted that the applicant is also seeking a variance due to the other items within the structure that would put the building over the 1,500 sqft threshold.

Chairperson Smith made a motion, unanimously accepted by the Board to continue the public hearing until more documentation is submitted addressing the questions raised at this meeting, and requested that a representative from the solar company be present.

REGULAR SESSION / OLD BUSINESS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

The Board discussed if they would like to continue to hold Zoom meetings due to the continuing presence of COVID in the community; all the members agreed to continue holding meetings via Zoom until further notice.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, a motion was made by the Chairperson Smith and unanimously accepted by the Board, to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 PM.

The next regular/public meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals is scheduled for **Tuesday April 5th, 2022 at 7:30 PM.**

The agenda will close on **March 22nd 2022, at 12:00 Noon.** Items for consideration at the **April** meeting must be received by that date.