

MINUTES

CITY OF WOOSTER BOARD OF BUILDING & ZONING APPEALS

August 3, 2023

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Stewart Fitz Gibbon, Chairman of the Board of Building and Zoning Appeals, called the meeting to order. Board members Jason Anderson, Jeff Battig, Martha Bollinger, Stewart Fitz Gibbon, and Mark Reynolds were present at the meeting. Board member Ben Gunn was absent. Vincent Marion, Planning and Zoning Manager, represented the City of Wooster.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Martha Bollinger made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2023, meeting of the Board of Building and Zoning Appeals. Jason Anderson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

III. APPLICATIONS

BZA-23-9.

Kristen Swenson requested an area variance from Planning and Zoning Code Section 1115.04(a) to allow an addition within the required side and rear yard setbacks at 204 Branstetter Street with parcel number 68-00297.000 in an I-2 (General Industrial) zoning district.

Jennifer Chapman, 3218 Rainer Avenue, Columbus, stated that Verizon Wireless is requesting a variance for the setbacks for new equipment that can be placed inside the property for an existing tower. Ms. Chapman explained that Verizon Wireless wanted to put new equipment on the site to provide better service. Ms. Chapman continued that they are adding antennas on the tower and ground equipment with an ice bridge. Ms. Chapman said they would install a concrete pad with the new equipment. Ms. Chapman stated that additional equipment was inside the fence.

Mr. Marion informed the Board that the property owner contacted him following written notice and stated he was unaware of the project. Ms. Chapman agreed to contact the tower company and request that contact be made.

Mr. Fitz Gibbon asked if anyone from the public would like to address the Board regarding the application. Mr. Fitz Gibbon closed the public hearing.

Mark Reynolds made a motion to approve applications BZA-23-9 as presented. Jason Anderson seconded the motion.

Mark Reynolds voted yes and stated that the neighborhood's character would not be altered because the equipment would be inside the fenced area.

Jason Anderson voted yes and stated that the application's spirit and intent meet the criteria.

Martha Bollinger voted yes for reasons cited by the Board.

Jeff Battig voted yes for reasons cited by the Board and approved other similar variances.

Stewart Fitz Gibbon voted yes for reasons cited by the Board, noted no public input against the variance, and was a modest request with what exists.

The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

BZA-23-10.

Louise Keating requested an Area Variance from Planning and Zoning Code Section 1125.03(b) to allow parking to be located off-site at 621-637 College Avenue in a C-2 (Community Commercial) zoning district.

Louise Keating, 141 East Liberty Street, stated that the meeting before this with the Planning Commission resulted in favorable recommendations for a split of the property that contains the house from the separate parcel owned by the First Presbyterian Church. Ms. Keating explained that the commission also recommended a zoning change for the newly created parcel to be R-2, the same district that applies to the other residences north of the property. Ms. Keating continued that none of the changes resulted in any physical change to what is currently on the site nor the action requested to approve the off-site parking. Ms. Keating stated that the frontage of the new lot contains the church's previous manse, which is 50 feet. Ms. Keating explained that the property was used previously by non-profit corporations that were church tenants. The parking and access came in from the church's main access drive on College Avenue. Ms. Keating continued that the church wishes to return this property to general residential use. Ms. Keating stated that this would allow the church to redirect resources into other areas that are more direct to its mission. Ms. Keating noted that a manse was becoming obsolete because it was initially acquired. Ms. Keating explained that as a part of the split of the lot, the house parcel would receive a nonexclusive easement or ingress and egress over the current church lane. Ms. Keating continued that it would include two existing parking areas immediately south of the house parcel. Ms. Keating noted that the driveway to the north of the residence was on the property line but not a shared drive. Ms. Keating stated that the garage would remain with the church for exterior maintenance.

Mr. Marion stated that Planning Commission approved the proposed split dependent on the approval of the variance.

Mr. Fitz Gibbon asked if anyone from the public would like to address the Board regarding the application. Mr. Fitz Gibbon closed the public hearing.

Jason Anderson made a motion to approve applications BZA-23-10 as presented. Martha Bollinger seconded the motion.

Jason Anderson voted yes and stated that the lot size was unique, conditions were unusual, and no use for the church and fits the criteria very well.

Martha Bollinger voted yes and stated that. The variance was the minimum necessary possible use of the land.

Mark Reynolds voted yes for reasons cited by the Board. He stated that the application meets the criteria for whether the property owner's predicament feasibly can be obviated through some method other than a variance. He explained that there were not a lot of great options and made the best of the situation.

Jeff Battig voted yes and stated that the way the property lines and the variances were an excellent application.

Stewart Fitz Gibbon voted yes for reasons cited by the Board. The application was a unique situation in an older neighborhood for a great community facility, and the church works hard to be good neighbors with the most reasonable outcome.

The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mark Reynolds made a motion to adjourn. Jeff Battig seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Stewart Fitz Gibbon, Board of Building and Zoning Appeals Chairman

Carla Jessie, Administrative Assistant