CITY OF Bloomington ILLINOIS

MEETING MINUTES
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS - REGULAR SESSION
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2024, 4:00 PM

The Zoning Board of Appeals convened in regular session at 4:00 PM, November 20, 2024. called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Terry Ballantini	Vice Board Chair	Present
Victoria Harris	Board Member	Present
John Poling	Board Member	Present
Matt Steinkoenig	Board Member	Present
Michael Straza	Board Chair	Present
Nikki Williams	Board Member	Present
Zachary Zwaga	Board Member	Present

City Staff present included Jon Branham, City Planner; Kelly Pfeifer, Director of Development Services; Alissa Pemberton, City Planner; John Myers, Assistant City Planner; and Laura Keeran, Stevenson Fellow

Public Comment
No public comment was provided.

Consent Agenda
Items listed on the Consent Agenda are approved with one motion; Items pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion are listed and voted on separately.

Vice Board Chair Ballantini made a motion, seconded by Board Member Zwaga, to approve the consent agenda as presented.
Roll call.
AYES: Board Chair Straza; Vice Board Chair Ballantini; Board Member Harris, Board Member Poling, Board Member Steinkoenig, Board Member Williams; Board Member Zwaga
Motion passed.

Item 4.A. Review and approval of the minutes of the October 16, 2024, regular meeting of the Bloomington Zoning Board of Appeals.

Regular Agenda

The following item was presented:

Item 5.A. V-10-24 - Public hearing, review, and action on a request submitted by Aruthra, LLC, for approval of Variances to allow a reduction or removal of requirements in a Planned Unit Development, a minimum lot area per dwelling unit of less than 3,300 square feet, and a reduced corner front yard, for property generally located north of the intersection of Fox Creek Road and St. Ivans Circle, consisting of approximately 6.57 acres. PIN: 21-18-153-009.

Mr. Branham presented the staff report with a recommendation for approval. He reviewed the overall project and process. He described the nature of the variance requests - to allow subdivision of the property for fee simple ownership of the units. He identified that the item was continued due to a lack of quorum at the last meeting. He reviewed the standards for review as outlined in the report.

Vice Board Chair Ballantini inquired about any changes since the last meeting. Mr. Branham stated a landscape plan had been provided, as per the condition of the Special Use Permit recommended approval. Ms. Pemberton added that the Applicant has continued to work with the City Engineering staff on various items.

Board Chair Straza opened the public hearing.

David Armstrong (Attorney for the Applicant) explained modification to the drainage areas since the previous meeting. He stated the primary reason for the variance requests was for ownership purposes. He provided other updates and highlighted the challenges in developing the property.

Jon Johnston (5 St. Ivan's Circle) expressed concerns with the proposed development, including roadway design, street parking, environmental impact, and pedestrian access.

Board Chair Straza closed the public hearing.

Vice Board Chair Ballantini made a motion, seconded by Board Member Harris, to establish findings of fact that the standards for approval of the Variances are met, that carrying out the strict letter of the Code does create a practical difficulty or particular hardship for the petitioner, and to approve the Variances with no conditions.
Roll call.
AYES: Board Chair Straza; Vice Board Chair Ballantini; Board Member Harris, Board Member Poling, Board Member Steinkoenig, Board Member Williams; Board Member Zwaga
Motion passed.

The following item was presented:

Item 5.B. V-12-24 - Public hearing, review, and action on a request submitted by Illinois Wesleyan University, for approval of Variances to allow reduced required parking setbacks and reduced required parking lot landscaping for the property located at 1011 N. Main Street. PIN: 14-33-390-001.

Mr. Branham presented the Staff Report with a recommendation for approval. He reviewed key site conditions, as well as adjacent zoning and uses. He stated the proposal was to provide additional parking related to an expansion of a campus facility located north of the site. He reviewed the standards for review as outlined in the report.

Board Chair Straza opened the public hearing.

Mike Sewell (Representative for the Applicant) provided further background on the project. He stated the property is challenging for any development. He noted they would be providing detention at the site. He described other parking areas located nearby and the lack of landscaping.

Board Vice Chair Ballantini inquired if the proposed parking would be adequate. Mr. Sewell concurred.

Board Member Poling inquired about the existing building located at the site that was planned to be demolished. Mr. Sewell stated the building was formerly utilized as a church and office building and had little architectural or historic value.

Board Chair Straza closed the public hearing.

Board Member Williams made a motion, seconded by Board Member Poling, to establish findings of fact that the standards for approval of the Variances are met, that carrying out the strict letter of the Code does create a practical difficulty or particular hardship for the petitioner, and to approve the Variances with no conditions.
Roll call.
AYES: Board Chair Straza; Vice Board Chair Ballantini; Board Member Harris, Board Member Poling, Board Member Steinkoenig, Board Member Williams; Board Member Zwaga
Motion passed.

The following item was presented:

Item 5.C. V-13-24 - Public hearing, review, and action on a request submitted by Brent Ericson, for approval of a Variance to allow a reduced required rear yard setback for the property located at 2204 Tori Ann Lane. PIN: 15-30-251-007.

Mr. Branham presented the Staff Report with a recommendation for approval. He reviewed key site issue and identified surrounding zoning and uses. He stated the proposed addition would be replacing an existing screened-in porch in the same location. He reviewed the standards for review as outlined in the report.

Chair Straza opened the public hearing.

Brent Ericson (Applicant) provided further background of the request. He stated the screened-in porch had been attached to the residence for an extended time and he was seeking to make the structure a permanent enclosure. He stated he would not be expanding the existing footprint.

Chair Straza closed the public hearing.

Board Member Harris made a motion, seconded by Board Member Williams, to establish findings of fact that the standards for approval of the Variance are met, that carrying out the strict letter of the Code does create a practical difficulty or particular hardship for the petitioner, and to approve the Variance with no conditions.
Roll call.
AYES: Board Chair Straza; Vice Board Chair Ballantini; Board Member Harris, Board Member Poling, Board Member Steinkoenig, Board Member Williams; Board Member Zwaga
Motion passed.

The following item was presented:
Item 5.D. V-14-24 - Public hearing, review, and action on a request submitted by Natalie Whalen, for approval of a Variance to allow a driveway less than three (3) feet from the side lot line for the property located at 1205 Greenlawn Drive. PIN: 14-34-378-004.

Mr. Branham presented the Staff Report with recommendation for approval. He reviewed key aspects of the site. He noted the work had already been completed. He identified key site issues and the surround zoning and uses. He reviewed the standards for review as outlined in the report.

Chair Straza opened the public hearing.

Natalie Whalen (Applicant) provided further background on the request. She described the narrow nature of the driveway access to the detached garage and the need to widen the driveway. She noted other properties in the direct vicinity had similar conditions.

Board Member Zwaga inquired when the work was completed. Ms. Whalen stated a few years ago, likely 2019.

Vice Board Chair Ballantini inquired if the Applicant resided at the residence. Ms. Whalen stated she did not reside there but rented the property.

Jennifer James (1203 Greenlawn Drive) stated her concerns with the driveway and issues with the owner.

Vice Board Chair Ballantini requested Ms. James to focus her comments to items relevant to the request. He inquired how staff responded to work without a permit and potential next steps. Ms. Pemberton explained the process for work identified to have been completed without a permit and code compliance.

Chair Straza closed the public hearing.

Vice Board Chair Ballantini made a motion, seconded by Board Member Zwaga, to establish findings of fact that the standards for approval of the Variance are met, that carrying out the strict letter of the Code does create a practical difficulty or particular hardship for the petitioner, and to approve the Variance with no conditions.
Roll call.
AYES: Board Chair Straza; Vice Board Chair Ballantini; Board Member Harris, Board Member Poling, Board Member Steinkoenig, Board Member Williams; Board Member Zwaga
Motion passed.

New Business

Mr. Branham welcomed new Board Members Poling and Steinkoenig.

Adjournment

Board Member Zwaga made a motion, seconded by Vice Board Chair Ballantini, to adjourn the meeting.
AYES: Board Chair Straza; Vice Board Chair Ballantini; Board Member Harris, Board Member Poling, Board Member Steinkoenig, Board Member Williams, Board Member Zwaga
Motion passed.

The Meeting Adjourned at 4:56PM

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

Michael Straza

Michael Straza, Board Chair

Jon Branham

Jon Branham, Staff Liaison