

BEFORE THE BOARD OF APPEALS FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

DIANA MCKENZIE

*

Appeal No. AP2009-057

RICHARD G. & WANDA L. HAWKINS

*

Appellants

OPINION

This action is a request for a variance from the minimum 40' front yard setback to 24' for the construction of an addition. The subject property is located at 13815 Countryside Drive, Maugansville, Maryland, is owned by the Appellant, and is zoned Residential Rural.

A public hearing was held before the Board on October 28, 2009. No opposition was presented to this appeal.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The following findings of fact are made by the Board, based upon the testimony given and all data and other evidence presented, and upon a study of the specific property involved, as well as the neighborhood:

1. Appellant Diana McKenzie proposes construction of a 16'x24' addition to her existing residence on the subject property to accommodate her disabled children.
2. The subject property is a corner lot, and its size, shape, and topography necessitate locating the addition as proposed, and hence, the variance.
3. The proposed relief will be compatible with the neighborhood, as other homes have similar additions.
4. No one testified in opposition to this request.

RATIONALE

This Board has authority to grant a variance upon a showing by the Appellant of practical difficulty or undue hardship. Sections 25.2(c) and 25.56, Zoning Ordinance for Washington County, Maryland. "Practical Difficulty" may be found by the Board when: (1)

strict compliance would unreasonably prevent the use of the property for a permitted purpose or render conformance unnecessarily burdensome; and (2) denying the variances would do substantial injustice to the applicant and a lesser relaxation than that applied for would not give substantial relief; and (3) granting the variance would observe the spirit of the Ordinance and secure public safety and welfare. Section 25.56(a).

Appellant's proposed use is a reasonable and permitted use of the property. Strict compliance is unnecessarily burdensome and impractical given the size and shape of the lot, its topography, and the location and layout of the existing dwelling thereon. No evidence was presented that the proposed use was incompatible with the neighborhood; disruptive of neighbors' quiet enjoyment of their properties; detrimental to surrounding property values; generative of excessive odors, dust, gas, smoke, fumes, vibrations, or glare; generative of traffic that would exceed the capacity of existing infrastructure; or that the proposal was an inappropriate use of land or structure. Failing to grant this variance would serve no public purpose, and it would deny Appellant a reasonable expansion of a principally-permitted use of the property. The proposal does not engender any opposition from Appellant's neighbors and the proposed placement of the structure is the most logical given the features of the lot. Therefore, we feel that the grant of this request advances the spirit and purpose of the Ordinance.

Based upon all of the testimony and evidence presented, this Board finds that the subject request does not adversely affect the public health, safety, security, morals, or general welfare, nor does it result in dangerous traffic conditions, or jeopardize the life and property of neighborhood residents. Accordingly, for the reasons set forth herein, this appeal is hereby GRANTED with the condition set forth below.

Condition

1. Appellant shall comply with the recommendations of the Land Development Engineering Department regarding parking spaces immediately to the east of the proposed sign location as expressed in its memorandum of October 26, 2009.

BOARD OF APPEALS
By: Bert Iseminger, Chair

Date Issued: November 25, 2009